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"Seeds, Blossoms and in Bloom": Explorations of Identity and Plurality of
Meanings in the Growth of Cultural Tourism and the
Aboriginal Heritage Gardens

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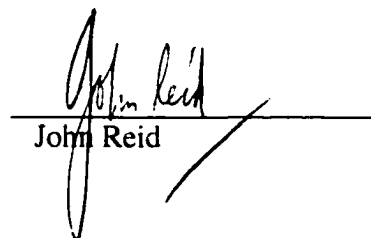
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John Reid

Abstract

This thesis explores, through authorial voices, contents and meanings of an Aboriginal tourism initiative in Eel River Bar First Nation, New Brunswick. Such meanings are constructed and are intimately linked with endogenous cultural tourism development. Built on a syncretic approach that views notions of identity, self and culture as creative composites, this thesis moves beyond dualisms and dichotomizations that emphasize either oppositional or essential conceptions of identity. By investigating what the Aboriginal Heritage Gardens mean to the community of Eel River Bar First Nation, this thesis shows that our identity is informed by both core and relational elements and the meanings attached to the Gardens are multiple and varied. Symbols and signs, both past and present, indigenous or invented, are treated as important resources to exploring identity and the self. An exploration of these subjective meanings through a socio-economic development initiative is one way of establishing how the process of cultural construction and revitalization is taking place.
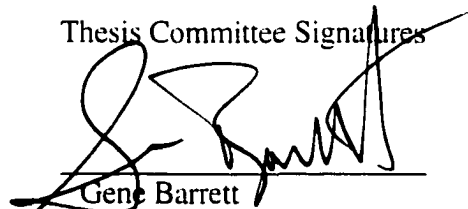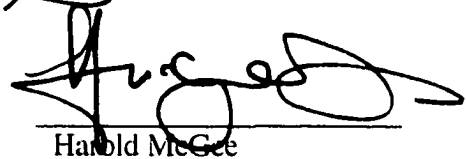
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Date: September 17, 1999

To all my relations

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Preface and Acknowledgments

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I would like to begin with an informal narrative in order to illustrate the reasons why I have embarked on this particular scholarly journey. It may appear rather unorthodox to begin in this manner but the purpose of this narrative is to clarify why my research is important, not only to me, a newly self-identified Aboriginal woman, but perhaps to countless others who find themselves searching for their own identity amidst fragmentation and internal conflicts. The following story will contextualize this thesis and illustrate that my research is not necessarily a grandiose enquiry but rather a micro one that attempts to put the self, or rather, my self, at its very centre. The conceptual baggage to follow will inevitably provide information about myself and position me in relation to my research questions and research process in an immediate and central way (Glaser and Strauss 1967 in Kirby and McKenna 1989: 21).

My Story

There are two photographs that stand out in my memory that clearly define my past. The first photograph (a portrait in fact) is one of me and my brother, both sparkling clean, sitting on our parents' 1970s tabletop stereo. We are wearing similar purple polyester suits and we appear quite healthy and content. A distinctive feature of this photograph is that we are each wearing intricately beaded headbands. These headbands combined with our dark hair and our dark almond shaped eyes, illustrate without a doubt that we are two beautiful Mi'kmaq children.

The second photograph, taken at approximately the same time as the first, portrays my brother and I dressed quite formally and still looking very handsome; he is wearing a suit and I am wearing a white gown with a veil. It is my First Communion. I clearly remember the joy and excitement of that day. My non-Native grandparents are standing

nearby and they are visibly quite proud of me. It was a momentous day and many relatives from near and far came to celebrate.

What these two photographs symbolize is that my past is subdivided by two contrasting elements. On one side is my Native past and on the other my non-Native past. The history of my life has been a constant give and take, an acceptance and denial of my Mi'kmaq identity (from my mother) as well as my Acadian identity (from my father). The conscious desire to find a balance in my self-identity is a quest that began in my early adulthood and to some measure is still continuing today. I now understand that my inner conflict is the legacy left to me not only by parents or grandparents, as I had always believed, but by the Canadian State and dominant societal narratives, which clearly set up the parameters by which the Canadian Indian defines herself/himself.

In 1985 a significant change occurred in my life: my mother indicated that I had Indian status. I did not know for certain what she meant because I was at that stage a mainstream suburban teenager who identified more with white society than with anything remotely Aboriginal. She said to me that I was born prior to her marriage to my father and therefore was considered a status Indian according to the Indian Act. She, on the other hand, had loss her status upon marrying my father. With the passage of Bill C-31 (An Act to Amend the Indian Act) in 1985 the Indian Act was amended making it less sexist in orientation. My mother was then 'reinstated' and given status once again. It is reasonable to assume that the state's role in instituting various ethno-status distinctions has served to fracture identity formation. After Bill C-31 I then felt obliged to say that I was Native because my mother was Native. Yet, this was so confusing because I did not want to dismiss my Acadian self. I did not know then the extent to which my identity was partly a matter of self-identification and partly a matter of government edict. As Anthony Cohen maintains, "the state and other powerful social agencies compel us to compromise our individuality in our dealings with them by squeezing us into categories" (1994: 12). It is only now that I feel I embody a closer

notion of hybridity, if such a phenomenon exists. Perhaps I have achieved a real and authentic self that is an intermingling of what it means to be both Native and non-Native, or as described by Cohen, a syncretic self (1994). Ever since 1985 there clearly has been more of a conscious effort in my family to reaffirm our Native identity and this became even more apparent to me upon my return from a stint of volunteer work in Lesotho, Southern Africa.

When I returned from Africa the first time in 1993 many members of my family were rejoicing at an annual powwow held in Listiguj, P.Q. This seemed odd for they had never engaged in such celebrations before. Nonetheless, I celebrated with them and naturally felt empowered by it all. Upon my second return in 1995 I came home to Eel River Bar First Nation, a reserve in northeastern New Brunswick, and found my sister symbolically walking down 'the path' or the 'Red Road', a journey of healing and spiritual growth taking place in many Aboriginal communities. On this path my sister attends sweatlodges and smudges sweetgrass with sage in thanksgiving to the Creator. She fasts occasionally with several other Aboriginal women and joins them at Women and Wellness Conferences. Another homecoming in 1997 saw the excitement surrounding the development of the Aboriginal Heritage Gardens, an economic and cultural development initiative aimed at creating a resource base for Eel River Bar and surrounding communities in Restigouche County, New Brunswick. It was impossible to travel the reserves in NB, indeed in all of Canada, without realizing the huge role played by the rekindling of old traditions and spirituality. I found these transformations fascinating. I wanted to understand how and why these transformations of identity and culture were taking place not only within my own family and community but within myself as well. I guess this marked the beginning of my scholarly journey.

I am greatly indebted to Gene Barrett, who not only furnished me with remarkable guidance and direction but patiently managed to keep me motivated, challenged and focused. Your integrity as a scholar and educator is invaluable.

Introduction and Methodology

Western social science proceeds from the top downwards, from society to the individual, deriving individuals from the social structures to which they belong: class, nationality, state, ethnic group, tribe, kinship group, gender, religion, caste, generation, and so on. We have concentrated on these collective structures and categories and by and large have taken the individual for granted. We have thereby created fictions (Cohen 1994: 6).

Introduction

Using my own subjective and perhaps selective memory, and I emphasize the words *subjective* and *selective*, I am fascinated that Eel River Bar First Nation, a community which used to fill me with fear as a child because of my occasional exposure to some of its rowdiness and drunken dysfunction, has evolved into what it is today: a determined and vibrant community growing in hope and in culture. I cannot quite describe this change nor am I able to map it out, but I can see it and feel it. Ceremonies like smudging, sweetgrass and sweats are not merely outward symbols of no significance; there is something significantly embedded within these symbols and in those practitioners who use them. There is great symbolic expression of the continuity of past and present, one that indescribably touches your consciousness. As Cohen explains, we must view the assertion of community "not as an aberration to be explained, but as a normal, expectable expression of the resilience of culture: of people's sense of self" (1994: 117). This assertion is also expressed in cultural tourism developments, namely, the Aboriginal Heritage Gardens.

While conceptualizing my research topic and exploring the issues and debates surrounding cultural tourism, reoccurring questions kept nagging me: do I accept the rhetoric that Aboriginal cultural tourism in Canada waves and proclaims very forcefully, particularly through the medium of the Canadian Tourism Commission, Aboriginal Tourism Team Canada and provincial tourism associations across Canada? Or do I approach the rhetoric with caution, keeping in mind people's motivations and meanings? Charles Tilly's explorations of counter-revolutions suggested that a clear distinction had to

be drawn between the ideological rhetoric of the movement, and in my case, cultural tourism marketing agents and producers, and the actual motivations of its individual members and stakeholders (Tilly 1963). I have chosen to use the latter question as a guide for I do not want to be accused of imputing common motives and meanings to everyone involved in the Aboriginal Tourism industry. There are a variety of people involved in the industry, each holding their own distinctive flavours of perception.

In Suzan Dionne Balz's critical essay, "The Buying and Selling of Culture and Meaning: Strategies for Autonomy," she states the following: "I have analysed the transnationalization of culture and found it wanting, and I have considered the 'past', and perhaps found an ideal. In all of this, what I have not yet found is an answer to the problem of self-defined socio-cultural identity and expression" (1992: 59). Perhaps the answer lies in approaching culture and identity in the context of a processual framework, a negotiation that entails a synthesis of core and relational paradigms. What is Mi'kmaw self-defined socio-cultural identity and expression? How is this related to endogenous cultural tourism that is sweeping across the country and on many reservations here in the Maritimes?

The first task was to ask how I would go about studying such transformations. The mere thought of trying to comprehend the nature of Mi'kmaw cultural and/or ethnic revivalism in its entirety seemed so immense. I had to find a small window into which I could peek and perhaps see what is taking place. Discovering why cultural transformations are taking place is beyond my reach but a glimpse through the window of cultural tourism could potentially tell me more. This research is not so much concerned with traditional Mi'kmaq society as it may have been prior to colonization, nor does it dwell on responses to that period in history. Rather, it concerns itself with the present situation of some Mi'kmaqs on a medium sized reserve. An underlying question is how do these people conceive of themselves and how is this expressed through a cultural tourism initiative like the Aboriginal Heritage Gardens? It would be far too intrusive to ask people directly how

they feel their culture has changed. Too many responses would be constructed. As Wilson says, "People have their own idioms to discuss change" (1993: 123). It is therefore through Aboriginal tourism, more specifically the idiom of the Aboriginal Heritage Gardens, that I wish to study ethnic identity. The convergence of these two fields could perhaps reveal elements of identity formation and concepts of the self. What will undoubtedly emerge as this study progresses is the variation and multiplicity of meaning the Aboriginal Heritage Gardens holds for members of Eel River Bar First Nation, and what these meanings reveal in terms of emergent ethnicity. By exploring people's conceptualizations and perceptions of cultural tourism products we can learn more about their subjective cultural identity.

Overton's critique of the commodification of culture reveals the truth behind the romanticized images of the 'Real' Newfoundland (1996: 106). The same analysis could easily be applied to the growth of Aboriginal tourism whereby an idealized and romanticized traditional Mi'kmaw culture is being promoted, suppressing the reality of reservation life. But would that approach capture everything that this development means for the people of Eel River Bar? What motivates this thesis is the desire to hear the voices of the 'hosts' or the 'tourees', elements often missing in tourism research as well as in ethnic studies. In a survey of contemporary anglophone research on ethnicity in Canada, Buchignani and Letkemann point to a continuing weakness of Canadian ethnic research that too often homogenizes and mutes ethnic people, speaking for them rather than allowing them to speak for themselves (1994: 204). What is missing is the attempt to 'keep the people in'.

By exploring the community of Eel River Bar and its Aboriginal Heritage Garden, it is my hope that this research will reveal that the current cultural reconstructions taking place relate to a 'cultural involution', a process of development and change that is conceptualized as taking place within a culture and carried out on local terms (McKean 1989: 126; Macdonald 1997: 160). Such revelations are best revealed by hearing the voices of the

hosts/tourees, in this case, members of Eel River Bar First Nation. Attention must be given to First Nation individuals who may undoubtedly come to identify with the images and symbols being produced, especially when some of the imagery and symbolism being promoted contributes to the revitalization of their culture. In a discussion with a Mi'kmaq economic development officer in New Brunswick, the following comment was made in reference to a tourist site in Red Bank that presents and interprets archeological findings: "When I visit that place, I feel like I belong...you know, there's thousands of years of history there" (C. H., personal communication, February 1999). Consider Overton's point pertaining to the reading of advertising:

> The myths created are not simply part of a deception or an illusion, they infuse the particular qualities of things with many important meanings for potential travellers. If needs are not fixed and determined by external nature and unchanging human nature they must be understood as basically social and historical in nature, multiplying and constantly changing with the development of society (1996: 111).

This point can easily be understood in relation to the 'hosts' rather than the traveller. What is being created in the process of Aboriginal cultural tourism development could in fact come to have decisive and particular meaning for potential hosts in First Nation communities. Overton would contend that the rural idyll is a middle-class view of country life but he would also agree that this idyll has also become accepted in part by the people it describes (1996: 117) despite the neo-Marxist position that such symbols are false and invented and thereby inauthentic. To take this a step further, the traditional Mi'kmaq culture that is presented at some of the sites in the Maritimes, whether indigenous to the tribe or not, could potentially come to have meaning for Aboriginal people. The emphasis of this thesis is to investigate what meanings the Aboriginal Heritage Garden does in fact hold for some members of Eel River Bar First Nation, meanings that will be revealed in Chapter Four. This thesis argues that cultural and/or ethnic identity is not static. Given the versatility and malleability of cultural symbols, individuals use these symbols to fit his or her circumstances so what appears to have common form may indeed differ in substance

and meaning. Furthermore, the transformation in culture taking place in Eel River Bar First Nation is intimately linked to changes in social and economic structures; economic development through tourism is an expression of this transformation. Wrapped in this theme of economic development are diverse understandings and commitments and as the data will reveal, the Aboriginal Heritage Gardens may signify a common form but do not necessarily signify common meaning. Some informants identify with the more utilitarian nature of the Gardens while others view the Gardens symbolically as a referent of identity and as an instrument to attain spiritual healing.

Having been influenced by Anthony P. Cohen in my preliminary research, I attempt to do as he has done: I seek to understand and thus capture some sense of my people's experience and of the meanings they attach not only to their community but to themselves as members of Eel River Bar First Nation. I approach Aboriginal tourism as a phenomenon of culture: "as one which is meaningfully constructed by people through their symbolic prowess and resources: (Cohen 1985: 38). What follows is a detailed outline of methods used to investigate ethnicity, culture and tourism in Eel River Bar, New Brunswick.

Methodology

According to Daniel Mato, every research endeavour, including the choice of case study and problem design, as well as research objectives and methodology, is conditioned by institutional contexts and relations of power (1996: 66). It is this critique that has served as the guiding principle in the design and objectives of this thesis. It is Mato's insight that justifies the somewhat eclectic approach and the convergence of several concepts and constructs, particularly the concept of placing my self at the centre of my research. Taking Cohen's lead once again, rather than describing analytically issues relating to tourism and ethnicity from an external vantage point, I attempt to penetrate the

structures, to look outwards from its core - what do they appear to mean to its members? However, meaning is ethnographically problematic; it is not susceptible to objective description, but only to interpretation. In this matter, as Cohen writes, we can only aspire to informed speculation (1985: 98).

Alasuutari explains that qualitative analysis consists of two phases: the *purification of observations* and *unriddling* (Alasuutari 1995: 13) This distinction can only be made analytically; in practice they are always intertwined. The comparable phase to unriddling in empirical social research is the interpretation of findings. In terms of the chosen methodology for this study, every hint provided is supposed to fit in with the picture offered as the solution:

> The more the hints related to the mystery being solved, the more the researcher and the reader may trust in the solidity of the interpretation, in that it is not just one of several possibilities. As you know, the same goes for solving a 'case' in detective stories: if there are only a few leads, we can reconstruct several possible stories of what has happened and how the leads are linked to each other. The more clues that fit in with the explanatory model, the higher is the probability that the solution is the right one (Alasuutari 1995: 18).

My claim is not that my unriddling process will necessarily reveal the 'right solution' since there is no right solution within a postmodern paradigm, but rather that every available observation or piece of data is of its own kind and illuminates the mystery being unravelled from its own angle. In my research, the Mi'kmaq from Eel River Bar and other Aboriginal people whom I met at the Aboriginal Tourism Team Canada Forum in May 1999 are treated as informants and consultants holding different speaker's positions, and thus shed light on the structural whole being studied from different points of view.

According to anthropologist Edward Hedican, fieldwork, the long term familiarity with local people gained through participant observation, provides the basis for anthropology's claim to a separate area of scholastic endeavour (1997: 4). It would be presumptuous to define portions of my research endeavour as participant observation because realistically my familiarity is not based on a conscious effort to gain knowledge of

local people; my form of participant observation is an indirect endeavour made possible by virtue of my ethnic status and relationship to the people interviewed and observed for this thesis. How does one define the form of participant observation that occurs concurrently with the living, though periodically, of one's life in a community whilst indirectly and unconsciously compiling questions regarding identity and cultural change? Some anthropologists and sociologists would attempt to define this as 'participant as observer' which provides insights into issues and problems on a first-hand basis provided by fieldwork. No matter how this is defined, it is evident that the perspectives offered in this research reflect a lifetime of experience and change rather than a conscious and deliberate attempt at utilizing formal methodological concepts employed by anthropologists and other researchers. There are elements of this formality but essentially the research presented in this thesis if informed by three decades of periodic participation in the community of Eel River Bar First Nation, and augmented by four focus groups and several unstructured one-on-one interviews. One-on-one interviews generate extensive amounts of data and ideally, since this study is not only about cultural tourism but ethnic identity and selfhood, my preferred method would have been one-on one interviews with every community member from Eel River Bar. However, there were financial and time constraints to consider. In light of the research questions and propositions in this thesis I chose group interviews since they were the most efficient way to get at what I wanted both in terms of time and the dynamics that discussions foster. It is true that focus groups often sacrifice details about individuals in favour of engaging the participants in active comparisons of their opinions, feelings and experiences. When additional insight was needed, I then conducted unstructured one-on-one interviews or I engaged the person in conversation aimed at acquiring more data. Casual interactions and discussions are also included as part of the data. In addition to fieldwork and interviewing, numerous library sources also provided essential information to understanding issues relating to tourism, ethnicity and culture. Secondary sources and several reports provided by Eel River Bar's Economic Development

Office, Parks Canada, Aboriginal Business Canada (ABC) and Aboriginal Tourism Team Canada (ATTC), all added to the data collection. The core of my data, however, is derived from focus group interviews, which were taped and then transcribed.

Since I am using a tourism initiative to explore identity and meanings the research agenda required a more focused approached in order to gather substantial amounts of carefully targeted data within a relatively short period. It is for this reason that focus groups were chosen as one of the main qualitative methods for this thesis. Focus groups present another face of reality because open-ended questions allow participants to select the manner in which they respond (Krueger 1998). Focus groups also encourage interaction and discussion and provide data otherwise not found in questionnaires or surveys.

According to Krueger focus group research is conducted to gain a more complete understanding of a particular topic, such as motivation, behaviour, feelings, decision-making strategies, or just how certain people think about an issue or topic (1998: 69). Part of the focus group analysis is to depict reality as understood and experienced by others. It is a statement about what was found, a statement that emerges from and is supported by available evidence. I do not claim to present a static, uniform accurate picture, nor do I make claims to presenting an analysis that truly represents the reality of others. No one can depict another person's reality except for the person in question. As Cohen writes in *Self Consciousness* , "the inevitable starting point for my interpretation of another's selfhood is my own self" (1994: 3). I do however attempt to construct the reality of my respondents and participants by carefully listening to them and I am inevitably using my self as a starting point. It would be arrogant to claim that the analysis in Chapter Four is without some inaccuracies and inadequacies. I am limited by own understanding of ethnic and community identity, cultural tourism, as well as by my own lack of full community participation. Great effort on my part as a researcher has been to prevent myself from getting locked into one way of thinking or feeling. This is a challenge since I am familiar with some of the intricacies of the community and the dynamics of the respondents chosen

for the study. I realize that my familiarity is both an asset and a liability. The more I learn about the concepts and meanings of ethnic identity in Eel River Bar First Nation, its economic development aspirations and initiatives and its cultural revitalization efforts, the more I am able to make comparisons, understand interrelationships and derive meaning from participant comments. Unfortunately, this same familiarity can also limit my thinking and lead me to make assumptions that may have once been true but are no longer true. The only way I attempt to circumvent the associated liabilities of my familiarity is to try and listen and interpret honestly without bias. I also try to avoid hearing selectively. Note Krueger's disclosure of selective hearing:

> Humans have a tendency to see or hear selectively only those comments that confirm a particular point of view or a tendency to avoid dealing with information that causes dissonance. Our training, our background and our experiences influence what we notice and what we attend to. Researchers must continually be careful to avoid the trap of selective perception: verification in analysis is a critical safeguard (1998: 11).

For analysis to be verifiable, there must be sufficient data to constitute a trail of evidence. My initial fear was that I would not have sufficient data using only a few focus groups and a series of one-on-one interviews. I think differently now because I know that the data stream not only began with my fieldnotes or recordings, but it began at my birth. When I try to remove myself contextually from this study I see that the data is part of me and I am part of the data.

How do I determine validity in my research? The first thing I did was to pilot test a few questions with a few participants prior to conducting any of the groups in order to ease their minds about the nature of my research. I then consulted with some community members who were either directly involved in the Heritage Garden project or not so involved, and inquired as to the potential make-up of the group participants in order to provide conditions needed for free and open sharing. I ensured that the groups were not comprised of "warring family factions", a real problem on some reserves. Eric Christmas refers to this as a socio-political dichotomy that has led to polarizations in some Aboriginal

communities (1998: 44). The four focus groups were thus comprised of Eel River Bar community members who were not antagonistic towards one another. In early March 1999, with the help of some friends and relatives, the groups were organized and I proceeded to interview and moderate. The following table describes the composition of the groups:

	Women	Men	Youth	Elders
Total	6	4	6	7
Gender	6 women	4 men	2 men/4 women	2 men/ 5 women
Age	32-45	30-40	15-19	55+
Garden Involvement	3 employed	1 employed	2 summer employment	1 employed
Duration of Interview	1.5 hours	1.5 hours	1.5 hours	1 hour

The real challenge however lay in the potential for false findings, deceptiveness, or dissembling for whatever reason. For example, participants will sometimes refrain from complete disclosure because of perceived threats or group pressure; at other times, they will exaggerate in order to impress or convince or share what they think the researcher wants to hear. My own personal challenge as a researcher was how to interpret what was said. Occasionally, participants will change their views during the course of the interview after listening to other points of view. This inconsistency could be considered a deficiency of focus groups but it is only a weakness if we assume that people do not change their opinions in real life (Krueger 1998: 34). In fact, in order to further determine validity, I consistently look at the larger context of the Garden and see it from the perspective of the participants and then and only then did I attempt to interpret the data. And furthermore, following Krueger's advice on focus group analysis, I intend to treat data that measure human experiences with adequate humility.

According to Morgan and Krueger a focus group is a discussion to gather qualitative data. These authors debunk the claim that focus groups are consensus building sessions (1998: 34) and illustrate that this method is often locked into the myth of being conformity building sessions (p. 50). They can produce conformity but that all depends on the type of questions asked and the way the group is moderated. The questions asked in the focus groups were wide-ranging and encouraged people to share different points of view. The first set of questions dealt with questions of personal identity and then moved onto questions relating to community identity. The final set of questions were related directly to the Aboriginal Heritage Garden and were linked to the previous set of questions in subtle ways. All questions were open-ended and sought subjective answers. The questions and answers began in a structured manner but by the middle of each session, once comfort was reached, questions and answers were less structured and allowed for wide-ranging discussion and more personal reflection.

One critical issue which loosely relates to the myth of conformity or consensus building in focus group research is the extent to which the discussions lead or direct certain individuals to lay claim to someone else's opinion or feeling or thoughts. I admit that this may have happened to a minimal extent in my research yet this side effect or outcome was incidental and did not occur very often. When it did, I regarded it as a positive outcome. Several of the participants are walking down a healing path but they may not necessarily be at the same point on that path. If one participant is inspired by another's position on that path, this could potentially inspire and further direct that person on his or her own healing journey. If, to a small degree, my academic inquiry has contributed to the empowerment of one or two of my people then I see the limitation of the research method as a strength rather than a weakness.

As I have progressed in this thesis I have occasionally been questioned on the subjectivity, and thus reliability of my research. A common criticism of focus group research is that it is just subjective opinions. A study that is subjective is one in which

researchers are so close and familiar with the study that their judgement is affected, thereby producing results that cannot be trusted because they are influenced by personal judgement and opinion (Krueger 1998: 65). I counter these criticisms by reminding the readers of this thesis that the basic premise of my study is to communicate multiplicities and subjective meanings formed through cultural tourism. If the goal of qualitative analysis is to understand and communicate, or rather, to develop understanding out of complexity, the issue of whether focus group analysis is appropriate or not seems to take away from the goal of understanding.

Taken together, the data sources described above have been used to give a voice to some Mi'kmaqs in Eel River Bar and restrict the study to a scope appropriate for a Master's thesis. What counts is that getting a grasp of present social and cultural phenomena is more important than theoretical or methodological purity (Alasuutari 1995: 25).

The theoretical framework of the analysis of data and sources throughout this thesis is non-dualistic in nature and is an attempt at exploring both social constructionist and essentialist paradigms; as Wilson states: a synthetic approach is needed in the study of identity and culture (1993: 136). A combination of core and relational views reveal that indigenous people are active agents in the reconstruction of their identity, drawing upon their cultural legacy of past content. Elements of the past are pertinent in the process of constructing an ethnic identity as are images and symbols borrowed from other cultures and other times. The postmodern paradigm, with its emphasis on subjectivity, not objectivity, is one way of describing the cultural process which renders simulation or constructed symbols as "realer than real" and where the value of symbols is constructed through the meaning imbued in the images represented by things (products, object, etc) (Firat 1995: 112). There are themes and concepts that overlap throughout the Chapters of this thesis, particulary in discussions of authenticity, culture, symbols and signs, and identity.

In order to begin my academic inquiry, Chapter One of this thesis examines concepts pertaining to ethnicity, identity and culture and emphasizes notions of the self that

are both core and relational. Chapter Two explores theoretical tourism literature and shows that alternative analyses are emerging as a means to understanding contemporary culture. In both these Chapters, several issues and concepts will emerge, and converge, and all are central to this thesis and its propositions. Chapter Three discusses Aboriginal tourism and the Aboriginal Heritage Gardens, particularly its position as an economic development initiative in the Maritimes and its position as a resource for symbolic and socio-economic purposes. Chapter Four discusses and analyses the focus group data and presents interpretations of the Aboriginal Heritage Gardens and the role it plays in the creation, negotiation and maintenance of culture, community, identity, and the self. Conclusions and further discussion are presented in the final section of this thesis.

It was mentioned earlier in the preface that I feel I am closer to embodying a notion of hybridity. As a 'hybrid' researcher who carries with her cultural baggage derived from both my mother's Native ancestry and my father's Acadian heritage my claim here in this examination of culture, tourism and identity, is that my own impressionistic understandings are used to explore contemporary Mi'kmaq culture and symbolic meanings in one locality. These impressions are married with some theoretical concepts in order to formulate further discussion. It is hoped that throughout this entire endeavour, I do not take the individual for granted. As Cohen emphasizes, "sensitive ethnography demands nothing less than attention to other people's selves, an inquiry that inevitably entails to some extent the use of our own consciousness as a paradigm" (1994: 6).

Chapter One

Transformations in Ethnicity: Theoretical Explorations

> The starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is "knowing thyself" as a product of the historical process to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory (Gramsci 1971: 419 in Wilson 1993: 123).

Introduction

In his apocalyptic assessment of Canada's Native peoples, Edward Herberg concludes his book, *Ethnic Groups in Canada*, by claiming that Canada's Native Peoples are destined for cultural disintegration (Herberg 1989: 308). Though he is primarily referring to urban Natives, he clearly lacks judgement by placing all Native people (and their cultural traits) into one homogeneous entity. He presupposes that Native self-government and settlement of their land claims offer the sole remedies for the revitalization of Native cultural cohesion (p. 309). How does this analysis explain the current cultural resurgence in many communities? In fact, cultural renewal has flown in the face of conditions thought to produce cultural decline. Eriksen argues that ethnic revitalization is an inherent feature of modernization and many modernization theorists who held that ethnic alignments were becoming obsolete, were wrong (1993: 158). As documented by Warry (1998), the problems of poverty and despair that confront many reservation communities have led to cultural revisions and renewals in order to deal with social problems. For that matter, how does the collapsing of cultural cohesion cited by Herberg explain the proliferation of powwows, festivals and tourism initiatives sweeping across Canada and the United States? To delve even more deeply, what meanings are derived from these trends, particularly for the locals engaged in the development of cultural tourism? What do these meanings reveal in terms of cultural and/or ethnic identity content? An underlying intent of this chapter, and of this thesis, is to move away from the concept of Aboriginal cultural identity as some monolithic category and treat it as encompassing multiplicities.

Harold Prins asks the following question in his discussion of the Mi'kmaq as an ethnic group: what does it mean to be a Mi'kmaq Indian (1996: 11)? Admitting the obvious differences between Mikmaqs based on locale, personality and circumstance, Prins offers several generalizations as answers to the question he raised. For example, their ethnic identity is often defined by their band affiliation, or it involves a self-ascription, distinguishing themselves from others (p. 11). There are undoubtedly many elements that contribute to the ethnic whole, and though Prins mentions but a few in a cursory fashion, why does he answer his own question rhetorically? Why do scholars persist on studying 'others' while privileging their own interpretations of those 'others' as 'objective' and 'value-free'? The answer to, "what does it mean to be a Mi'kmaq?" could be better illuminated if the scholar asked an Aboriginal person what it meant to be Mi'kmaq. As Eriksen rightfully claims, "we ought to be critical enough to abandon the concept of ethnicity the moment it becomes a straitjacket rather than a tool for generating new understanding" (1993: 162). Anthony Cohen argues that an unfortunate consequence of anthropological analysis and writing has been to deny to cultural 'others' the self consciousness which we value in ourselves (1994: 5). It is essential to acknowledge that people have selves and "that generalising them into such analytic collectivities such as tribes, castes and ethnic groups may be a crude means of categorisation, the inadequacies of which we have all experienced in similar categorisations of ourselves" (p. 6). Prins is not entirely incorrect in his generalizations of Mi'kmaq ethnicity, but the quality of his insights would be improved by emphasizing the more subjective meanings from the 'ethnic other'. As Smaje reveals in "Not just a Social Construct: Theorising Race and Ethnicity," excessive dualisms exist in the sociological theory of race and ethnicity and it is time to move beyond such dualisms that pay little attention to questions of racial or ethnic meaning (1997: 307).

In this Chapter I will reflect on the changing reality of the concept of ethnicity that is now understood not only as the basis of 'maintaining a frontier' but to be 'ethnic' is only

one aspect of culture and identity. I will begin with a cursory examination of some basic concepts in the study of ethnicity, including the contentious nature of the term itself. I will also explore a variety of themes that move beyond past conceptions of ethnicity. Specifically, the themes to be explored are indicative of a symbolic approach to studying identity rather than a one-sided focus that either conceptualizes identity and culture as primordial givens, or emphasizes the relational components of identity while neglecting the essential. My central argument is that there is no objective basis for ethnic identity classification since 'ethnic boundaries are between whoever people think they are between' (Fardon 1987: 176). As Eriksen writes: "there are groups or individuals who are 'betwixt and between', who are neither X nor Y and yet a bit of both; their actual membership may be open to negotiation" (1993: 156). Ethnicity, then, for the Mi'kmaw is a subjective phenomenon and must be understood locally and contextually rather than systemically. It is vital therefore to understand both the core and relational elements that constitute our identity, including the subjective meanings that comprise our ethnicity. This non-dualistic framework attempts to capture the syncretic position of identity.

Past Conceptions of Ethnicity and the Changing Reality: Constructions and Symbolic Theory

Ethnicity is a term that invites endless arguments and endless debates. More often than not, the term ethnicity is applied to groups of relatively recent immigrants who are perceived to be different. Or it could be felt that ethnicity is something that inheres in every group that is self-identifying. Citing Gordon (1964), Leo Driedger provides a definition of an ethnic group as "a group of individuals with a shared sense of peoplehood (which includes both structural and symbolic dimensions) based on presumed shared sociocultural experience and/or similar physical characteristics" (1989: 136). Most sociologists use the term *ethnic* to refer to a group of people who presumably share a common experience and origin (Li 1990: 4). However, the view of ethnic groups as immigrants and minorities has

often carried with it a sense of numerical and moral inferiority and the question of whether

Natives both in Canada and the United States should be considered an ethnic group has

given rise to controversy (Nagel 1997: 8).

Some Native scholars and commentators have taken offense at the notion that

Indians are a "mere" ethnic group, arguing that they are instead sovereign nations (Nagel

1997: 8). To some extent, the view of ethnic groups as minorities has been replaced with

confident assertions of self-determination whereby ethnicity is not a characteristic of

minorities, but an attribute of any group sharing common cultural characteristics (Levin

1993: 169). In Michael D. Levin's *Ethnicity and Aboriginality* Tanner discusses the Innu

of Labrador and suggests a term that links the concept of aboriginality to ethnicity –

ethnocultural (1993: 200). This link is one way in which ethnonational claims are

strengthened without relegating Natives to the status of immigrant minority populations

with no rights to sovereignty or nationhood. As Levin explains, 'this claim to sovereignty

is based on precedent, treaties with the Crown, and autonomy prior to colonial intrusions

and summarized by the term *aboriginality* which is also a claim for equality' (1993: 170).

This is manifested in the current usage of the term *First Nation* to describe Aboriginal

people and communities. One can argue that this is rhetoric used to advance certain claims,

yet ethnic sentiments do and will affect our sense of self and thus our identity.

Acknowledging these claims, Nagel provides a generic definition of an 'ethnic group as a

community of people who see themselves as descended from common ancestors and whom

others consider part of a distinct community' (1997: 9). This is reiterated by Van den

Berghe who writes, "ethnicity is more primordial than class; blood runs thicker than

money" (1981: 243). Eriksen on the other hand emphasizes that caution must be exercised

when reifying the concept of ethnicity into a single explanation, which has biological or

other shared objective origins since the internal and external boundaries are frequently

ambiguous. Citing Comaroff and Comaroff (1992), Eriksen writes:

Rather, ethnicity describes both a set of relations and a mode of consciousness. As a mode of consciousness however, it is one among many...each of which is produced as particular historical structures impinge themselves on human experience and condition social action (Eriksen 1993: 157).

Eriksen's argument structures and frames the debate among social scientists who disagree appreciably on the best way to conceive of ethnic groups.

A quick survey of studies in ethnicity indicates that a shift has occurred in recent years. Essentially, the reason why sociologists or other scholars study ethnicity is to understand and explore the concepts of assimilation and pluralism – a question of how ethnic identity is either weakened or reinforced (Li 1990: 5). As Li has noted, far too many Canadian studies of ethnicity and race are still obsessively proccupied with theories of assimilation and pluralism. Vered Amit-Talai and Caroline Knowles (1996) also point to this inadequacy and add that other Canadian studies, like Satzewich (1992) for example, have become stuck in an equally "outmoded Marxist groove which restricts their coverage to the significance of labour markets and what is often referred to as 'institutional racism' in which race and ethnicity are grafted onto the more significant category of class" (1996: 12).

Another predominant approach to studying race and ethnicity is by stressing the emergent properties that racial and ethnic categories entertain in specific settings (Smaje 1997: 313; see Nagel 1997). Race as a social construction is provided by Anderson's (1991) aphorism of the 'imagined community' to invoke a sense of ethnos as a constructed collectivity (Smaje 1997: 313). By and large, both Werner Sollors (1989) and Leo Driedger (1989) agree that "studies in ethnicity tend less to set out to explore its construction than to take it for granted as relatively fixed, or at least, a known and self-evident category" (Sollors 1989: xiii). Buchignani and Letkemann emphasize this point by indicating that two assumptions pervade the literature: that ethnic identity is central to people identified as ethnic, and that it is relatively static and uniform with respect to the context of its activation and to people's other identities and statuses (1994: 210). Reaction to these assumptions is thoroughly dealt with in Sollors' *The Invention of Ethnicity*, a text

inspired by some more recent anthropological, sociological and historical thinking which interpret ethnicity "not so much an ancient and deep-seated force surviving from the historical past, but rather the modern and modernizing feature of a contrasting strategy that may be shared far beyond the boundaries within which it is claimed" (1989: xiv). The following set of questions express the challenge to the traditional way of looking at ethnicity:

> Is not the ability of ethnicity to present (or invent) itself as a "natural" and timeless category the problem to be tackled? Are not ethnic groups part of the historical process, tied to the history of modern nationalism? Though they may pretend to be eternal and essential, are they not of rather recent origin and eminently pliable and unstable? Is not modernism an important source of ethnicity? Do not new ethnic groups continually emerge? Even where they exist over long time spans, do not ethnic groups constantly change and redefine themselves? What is the active contribution literature makes, as a production force, to the emergence and maintenance of communities by reverberation and of ethnic distinctions? Are not the formulas of "originality" and "authenticity" in ethnic discourse a palpable legacy of European romanticism? How is the illusion of ethnic "authenticity" stylistically created in a text? Despite all the diatribes, is not the opposition between "pluralism" and "assimilation" a false one? Does not any "ethnic" system rely on an opposition to something "non-ethnic," and is not this very antithesis more important than the interchangeable content (of flags, anthems, and the applicable vernacular) (Sollors 1989: xiv)?

Not only is there a recognition of a general cultural constructedness of the modern world (as exemplified in the set of questions cited above), and what were givens in intellectual pursuits have now become problematic issues, but it is incorrect to assume that people having the same ethnic label would necessarily have a common culture. This point is closely linked to Gilroy (1993) and Bruner's (1996) studies of blackness and African Americans.

In *The Black Atlantic*, Gilroy distinguishes between the essentialist view of blackness and the more constructivist and synchronistic concept of an emergent black Atlantic culture that combines elements from Africa, the Carribbean, American and Britain (1993: 4). Bruner applies this distinction to his research in Ghana. Many African Americans while on tour in Ghana proclaim a black essentialism "focusing on a common origin, on the essential unity among all blacks, and on historical continuity, thereby erasing

hundreds of years of separate experience" (1996: 301). Ghanaians, on the other hand do not share an essential view of blackness, for although they are aware of a similarity in skin colour, they see the African Americans as foreigners and culturally different (p. 302) and thereby maintain different meanings concerning their identity and their culture.

According to Smaje, sociological approaches that study race and ethnicity have drawn upon (usually Marxist) class theory to postulate them as categories of material exclusion, and have paid little attention to racial or ethnic meaning (1997: 307). Smaje describes these two common approaches to ethnic studies as an opposition between instrumentalism and primordialism (p. 309). Smaje argues however that an alternative basis for understanding racial ontology can be found within a more symbolic approach, which relies on racial or ethnic meaning. As explained, "far from regarding the motifs and meanings attached to ethnic sentiment as epiphenomenal to 'real' principles of social structure, such sentiment is drawn precisely from this symbolic realm" (p. 315). Smaje suggests that racial meanings – like all symbols, have emergent properties and by tracing these meanings, existing materialistic approaches can perhaps themselves be encompassed by this kind of symbolic approach.

R. J. Erickson (1995) proposes a similar theoretical framework where the conceptualization of multiplicities within a single self highlights the western 'problem' of authenticity at the same time that a new form of authentic selfhood emerges; race and ethnicity are subjective and symbolic and should be studied by examining meanings within such concepts (p. 137). Both Erickson and Smaje espouse a symbolic theory of race and ethnicity which takes seriously the construction of racial meaning but does not ignore functional or material arguments (Smaje 1997: 308).

Erickson critiques the way social scientists take certain appellations for granted. For instance, the words middle class blacks, feminist intellectuals, and I add, Aboriginal woman, or First Nation man or Mi'kmaw lawyer – "such appellations continue to seem culturally inconsistent because we insist on studying them only at the level of roles and

identities rather than meanings"(1995: 137). We need to ask what it means to a certain

person to be, say for example, a Native woman. If such appellations and concepts are

regarded as monolithic categories, we will not move towards an understanding of what it

means to be authentic (p. 137). Consider this final example which is a personal anecdote.

I was recently asked by an non-Native acquaintance who needed to find rabbit fur for

something she was making: "Do you know where I can find rabbit fur?"

Confused by this, I replied and asked her, "No! Why are you asking me about rabbit fur?"

"Well, I thought you would know about that sort of stuff and where I could get some."

Unbeknownst to her, rabbit fur and the location of rabbit fur are not part of my speciality.

In fact, that was probably the first time I reflected on the words *rabbit fur* outside of Alice

in Wonderland and Easter! My reply to her was calm: "Sorry, I don't know much about

rabbit fur!" I walked away puzzled and realized moments later that the ethnic category she

had presumably placed me in was inconsistent with my subjective feelings of myself and

what it means to me to be both Native and non-Native. Though both Erickson and Smaje's

critiques are directed at social scientists and social theorists, I extend their critique to

individuals outside of the academic arena. To view ethnicity without embracing the

symbolic and subjective can lead to wrong assumptions, wrong conclusions and

undoubtedly, confusion.

Sociological approaches to ethnicity, which are often a contrast between ethnicity

conceived as a property of social structure defining identifiable social groups, and ethnicity

conceived as a fluid process of identity formation, do not account for the more subjective

sense, as I see it, of cultural meaning within the self. It is this critique of essential truths

about race, ethnicity and culture that structure Smaje's argument and that theoretically frame

this study. In "The Importance of Authenticity for Self and Society," Erickson concludes

with an analogy that helps us move away from seeing ourselves as concrete, unified entities

and towards seeing ourselves as a weaving together of assorted relationships:

> As would be true of any weaving, the self, when examined up close, is found to
> consist of many different strands of thread (or what I would term a multiplicity of

self values) – the contents or colours of which may at first seem to clash with one another. Yet, in stepping back, one quickly appreciates how each thread (or self-value) contributes to the overall pattern or coherence of the weave, or to the individual's more global and biographical sense of self. Thus, while a weaving contains many seemingly divergent parts, it nonetheless conveys a sense of wholeness to the observer (1995: 130).

Smaje espouses the symbolic dimensions of identity that do not neglect either core or relational components that make up who we are. In the section that follows, core concepts are explored in order to capture a complete portrayal of our identity. As Taylor and Erickson note, we may find truth within us and in our feelings.

The Self as Felt, the Inner Voice and the 7th Direction: Essential Concepts of Identity

> In treating individuals either explicitly or by default as merely socially or culturally driven, ignoring the authorial or 'self-driven' aspects of behaviour, is to render them at best partially, and perhaps more often, as fictitious ciphers of the anthropologist's theoretical invention (Cohen 1994: 7).

What does it mean to be Mi'kmaq? It has been stressed thus far that the answer to this question is subjective and is best answered by a Mi'kmaq person. As researchers we cannot assume what it means and we cannot take meanings for granted. However, Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self* (1989), the contemporary Mi'kmaq tradition of the seven directions, as well as Erickson's exploration of self-values and an emotions-based sense of self, are all starting points in an analysis of the more core components that makeup our identity.

Taylor's work explores how the modern understanding of the self developed out of earlier pictures of human identity. He successfully defines modern identity by describing its genesis, and traces the developing modern identity both analytically and chronologically drawing from numerous philosophers: "The modern identity arose because changes in the self-understandings connected with a wide range of practices – religious, political,

economic, familial, intellectual, artistic – converged and reinforced each other to produce it"
(1989: 206). The two concepts that Taylor discusses concerning modern identity are: 1)
modern inwardness – the sense of ourselves as beings with inner depths; 2) the notion of
nature as an inner moral source. Taylor traces the views of nature as an inner source to a
family of views in the late eighteenth century. In particular, he explores Rousseau, who
espoused the notion that we are beings with inner depths and that the source of higher love
is the voice of nature within us (1989: 357). According to Taylor,

> Rousseau is at the origin point of a great deal of contemporary culture, of the
> philosophies of self-exploration, as well as of the creeds which make self-
> determining freedom the key to virtue. He is the starting point of a transformation
> in modern culture towards a deep inwardness, and a radical autonomy. The strands
> all lead from him (p. 363).

In *The Ethnic Revival*, Anthony D. Smith also points to the third quarter of the
eighteenth century as the origins of the modern ethnic revival: "This early romanticism
with its characteristic cults of nature, the antique and the medieval, gave a powerful impetus
to the rise of an evolutionary mode of explanation and an historical consciousness" (1981:
88). Rousseau's conviction that, "if our access to nature is through an inner voice, or
impulse, then we can only fully know this nature through articulating what we find within
us" (1989: 374). Taylor refers to this as 'expressivism' and to express something is to
make manifest in a given medium. The question remains: What does the expressivist idea
of articulating an *inner depth*, that is, a domain that reaches farther than we can ever
articulate, have to do with Mi'kmaq identity and its contents? The aspirations of the
philosophers of the Romantic era sought a reunification, a bringing us back in contact with
nature, healing the divisions between reason and sensibility (p. 384). Though the earth
cults and religions of nature have died, remnants of their aspirations are still alive today.
For example, the battle between instrumental reason and this understanding of nature is
located in controversies over ecological politics (p. 384). I see the aspirations of this
reunification manifested in many First Nation individuals' cultural revitalization efforts and

their quest for Native spirituality. As Chapter Four will reveal, for many individuals the Aboriginal Heritage Gardens represent a means to achieving this reunification; identification with the natural environment is being fostered through the Gardens and is deeply connected with spritual dimensions.

What is Native spirituality? Harald Prins briefly explores this question and describes current spiritual revivalism as a cultural blending of ecospiritual beliefs (1996: 206). Some Mi'kmaqs have even rethought the "cultural correctness" of their religious practices, protesting their patron St. Anne is foreign and advise others to redirect their prayers to Klu'skap, "a culture hero of traditional myth who is often compared to Jesus Christ (p. 206). Concurrently, there are many Mi'kmaq who remain deeply committed Christians and there are those who vacillate between the two. Inherent in these trends is the individual dilemma: either resolve hybrid identities into an organic unity or face the criticisms and challenges of Christianity raised by the revivalists or traditionalists. In *Native and Christian: Indigenous Voices on Religious Identity in the United States and Canada*, James Treat explores these conflicts and challenges that occur within individuals and between groups of individuals who cling either to a neotraditional mix of beliefs and practices or Christianity (1996). I raise these points not only because the conflicts described by Treat are mildly taking place within my own family, but they are an indicator of great socio-cultural changes that impact upon individual identity formation and social relations. Furthermore, the issue of Native spirituality has been raised in order to advance another proposition: can it be that the more committed one is to Christianity for personal well being, the less likely one turns to ecospiritualism and all of its symbolic manifestations? And what about the concurrence of the cultural and spiritual renaissance with personal and collective healing? Questions of spirituality are intimately linked with healing processes just as they equally inform us that groups are composed of individuals, self conscious individuals, whose differences from each other have to be resolved and reconciled to a degree which allows the group to be viable and to cohere (Cohen 1994: 11).

Many writers of the Romantic era see human beings as set in a larger natural order, often conceived as a providential order, with which they should be in harmony, "and it is this inner impulse or conviction which tells us of the importance of our own natural fulfillment and solidarity with our fellow creatures in theirs" (Taylor 1989: 70). This is the voice of nature within us. The remarkable aspect of how these ancient aspirations manifest themselves today in relation to Native spirituality and cultural revitalization efforts are the uncanny parallels between the two. Consider the contemporary Mi'kmaq tradition that recognizes seven directions to honour and look to for guidance. The first four – North, South, East and West - all lead to things spiritual as well as physical; the fifth and sixth traditional Mi'kmaq directions are down and up – earth and sky; and the seventh direction is the path that leads inwards, to the essence of our individual beings (Cayo 1997, July 12). Though this is not part of my research question, I ponder the extent to which convergences of Western philosophies and indigenous worldviews took place. And though an understanding of nature as a source still survives, what underlies it is very uncertain and problematic (Taylor 1989: 384), particularly since this raises the age-old debate about the self: is it a social product or is it innate, as proclaimed by the Romanticists and Mi'kmaw traditionalists? The answer to this is entirely subjective but according to symbolic interactionists, the self is most certainly a social product. G. H. Mead's portrayal of the self means to have a self is to have the ability to think about oneself and act socially towards oneself. Also, the self is a communicative process, analogous to a verb and not a noun (Hagedorn 1983: 72). Mead's conceptualizations were based on Charles H. Cooley's the *looking-glass self* which is the process of acquiring a self by adopting other people's attitudes towards them (p. 72). Erickson also endorses these views but with added dimensions.

Though Taylor does not elaborate on the following, he does briefly point to the notion that we not only find the truth within us but in our *feelings*, a crucial concept explored by Erickson in "The Importance of Authenticity for Self and Society." Erickson

specifies how issues of authenticity have become a pervasive part of our culture. Erickson also emphasizes that we must work towards an understanding of self that reflects individuals' subjective sense of their own feelings of authenticity – feelings that inevitably emerge from interactions within the social world (Erickson 1995: 390) However, another important topic explored in Erickson's work is not only the importance of feelings and emotions as a basis of self but that contents and meanings underlying social identity that others attribute to an actor may not be the same as those meanings that the actor attributes to self and that comprise his or her sense of authenticity (1995: 126). A predominance in Erickson's writing is to view the self as containing multiplicities, yet she adds a more core concept of an emotional and cognitive self to a relational view of the self.

Erickson relies on several early interactionists' conceptions of self, namely Goffman and William James, as the basis of her discussion on an emotionally grounded transituational self. Consider the following points Erickson provides:

> While an emotions-based sense of self may at first seem antithetical to the alleged cognitive emphasis of symbolic interactionism, feeling and emotion can be found (at least implicitly) within all early interactionist conceptions of self. For example, William James in referring specifically to the "self of all selves", stated that this "central part of the self is felt" and that one of the three main features of the self are the feelings and emotions that its components arouse (1995: 125).

Not only does Erickson make reference to early interactionists but she cites Ward and Throop (1982) who propose that for Mead:

> The primal core of human individuality is an emotional self, a self built out of our experience of our own actions. The very mechanisms that give rise to emotional experience provide the core experiences out of which the individual arises. Thus, the emotional is the oldest aspect of any self, the foundation on which the complex selves are constructed (Erickson 1995: 125).

Erickson also cites Goffman (1963) who supports the concept of a "felt" identity and highlights the critical role that emotional aspects of self play in giving individuals a sense of their relative authenticity. Felt identity is an individual's subjective sense of his or her own situation and the continuity and character that an individual comes to have as a

result of his or her various social experiences (1995: 126). Erickson clarifies this point by writing, "where social identities are defined as those that others impute to the actor, felt identities denote a particular form of personal identity that the actor claims for self and experiences in terms of self feelings"(p. 126).

Erickson marries the more essential part of the self to a relational one and states that the self is socially constructed and not merely a reflection of social circumstances, the self must be seen as a social force – part of the environment with which we contend (p. 127). Having established the core component of the self, Erickson specifies a conceptualization of self processes as simultaneously shaping, and shaped by the social and interactional orders. This conceptualization of her work relates now to the more relational features of our identity that are both oppositional in nature and imagined.

Who do you say I am? Oppositional Identity and the Problematics of Indian Ethnicity

The theoretical assumptions underscoring this thesis are based on viewing identity as encompassing many dimensions. Identity is informed and contains elements that are both essential and relational. This chapter would not be complete without briefly exploring the more bounded components of our identity, namely the oppositional. This view has framed many studies exploring issues of race, ethnicity and identity and the intent here is not to capture them all but to flag only a few since they do inform us that we are not simply primordial beings.

Cohen reiterates that boundaries are inherently oppositional: almost any matter of perceived difference between the community and the outside world can be rendered symbolically as a resource of its boundary; the symbolic nature of the opposition means that people can think themselves into difference (1985: 117). Fredrik Barth (1969) and others showed that an ethnic group is an ascriptive category whose continuity rests on the maintenance of a frontier, and therefore, depends on the ever renewed codification of

cultural differences between neighboring groups (Bouchet 1995: 79. In the preface I mentioned the state's role in instituting ethno-status distinctions for Native people. What this legislation accomplishes is to define socially what constitutes a subordinate group. For example, state policies like the Indian Act can shape race and ethnic relations. Status Indians are legally defined in this Act and we have certain entitlements and restrictions that do not apply to non-status Indians and Métis (Li 1990: 6). The differences between status and non-status, therefore, are based on legal and bureaucratic considerations and have little to do with people's cultural attributes, and interestingly, these distinctions as defined by law can come to have personal meaning for Natives who do identify with these legal definitions. At the heart of these laws is not only the provision of a legal and therefore formal basis for identifying groups as ethnic or racial, but the mere act of defining sets the parameters for oppositional categories. Peter Kulchyski maintains this point in 'Aboriginal Peoples and Hegemony in Canada': "The state-imposed definition of Indian as a tool of totalization was subverted and redeployed by Aboriginal Peoples as a legal mechanism for maintaining difference". (1995: 64). What does maintaining difference have to do with identity and tourism development? Depending on one's epistemology, the development of tourism could be seen as a process of world construction or ethnic incorporation, concepts used by Larsen in his examination of the Mi'kmaq in Cape Breton (1983). Though Larsen's examination over-emphasizes the oppositional aspect in these concepts, they are worth considering because they entail creating new narratives which are intended to make non-Natives see things differently.

Larsen's study is structured within identity formation theory, which is mainly about how Natives produce and reproduce their own history in opposition to imposed histories. This entails a modification of boundaries and narratives in order to facilitate the construction of identity. This process is conceptualized as *ethnic incorporation* which is the mobilization of ethnic sentiment for joint political action (1983: 37). The one salient example of this ideological innovation occurs through the recodification of welfare. As

Larsen describes, the ideological entrepreneur sees welfare as compensation for stolen land while the dominant society holds that welfare payments are "handouts" (p. 124). I argue however that not every Mi'kmaq holds fast to this view and that there is a stigma attached to receiving welfare. Larsen sites many other examples of this process called ethnic incorporation and inherent in each of them is to communicate a distinctiveness. Larsen's work is one among many that investigate Native identity formation as a strategy for survival. Gerald Sider defines this oppositional formation of identity as the locus of Native struggle that eventually becomes solidification or nation building (1986: 284). Most studies such as Larsen's and Sider's that use identity formation as a theoretical foundation are located in analyses of struggle and resistance yet there is another method of analysis that still maintains an oppositional structure but does not dismiss the notion of symbols and the importance they have as signifiers of identity.

Kobena Mercer maintains the importance of symbols as signifiers of identity, particularly as individuals and groups vie for appropriate and positive self-definitions. As noted by Mercer:

> We inhabit a discursive universe with a finite number of symbolic resources which can nevertheless be appropriate and articulated into a potentially infinite number of representations. Identities and differences are constructed out of a common stock of signs, and it is through the combination and substitution of these shared elements that antagonism becomes representable as such (1992: 427).

Mercer stresses the need for valorization of difference. To deny difference means denying the historical presence of varieties of peoples and thereby reduces the opportunities for counter-hegemonic action. I extend my analysis of Native identity formed through opposition to three other salient examples that relate to Mercer's emphasis of symbols and signs: 1) The festival as a vehicle that opposes 'the other'; 2) The importance of identity markers as ascribed by others; and 3) Racist assertions of we are not the 'the other'.

An illustrative example of the festival as a vehicle that opposes 'the other' is Smith's "Bounding the Borders: Claiming space and making place in rural Scotland." By

exploring a festival in rural Scotland called the Peebles Beltane Festival. Smith

demonstrates that not only does the festival contribute to the social and physical boundaries

of community but when elements of the festival are questioned or scrutinized by outsiders,

who in effect attach different meanings to them, the community reacts in protest against

outside interference (1993: 303). In this example a complainant from Edinburgh wrote to

the festival committee claiming that the presence of golliwogs, people dressed like black

nursery rhyme characters, was racist. People in the community would not allow a local

tradition to be appropriated as part of what they consider an English debate on race and

racism (p. 301). The community protested by displaying numerous golliwogs:

> Those elements of the 1991 festivities which saw the preservation of the golliwog
> as part of the defence of a local tradition can therefore also be seen as part of a quest
> to secure recognition for the Burgh's distinctive contribution to the history and
> geography of Scotland. This quest is manifested both in opposition to the Scottish
> 'other' and in a spirited defence of the autonomy of local affairs (p. 302).

The meanings attached to the incident described by Smith are quite subjective but also point

to a statement about the distinctive identity formed through opposition to the 'other'.

Festivals can be used as boundary-marking rituals and symbolic boundary building

becomes increasingly important as the geo-social boundaries are undermined (Cohen 1985:

50).

Lerch and Bullers (1996) investigate powwows and Indian identity among the

Waccamaw Sioux of North Carolina and the results of their analyses suggest "the salience

of powwows to Indian identity rests not in the authenticity of a powwow regarding local

history and culture but in the relationship of the activity to popular community

participation" (p. 390). Though the powwow as a tourism feature will be examined more

closely in the subsequent chapter, this study reveals the powwow as a Pan-Indian activity

that incorporates a system of symbols for maintaining Indian culture and identity apart from

the larger white social world (p. 391). By conducting a survey investigating identity

markers, powwows being one of them, Lerch and Bullers' findings suggest that the

highest ranking identity markers concern ascribed characteristics, or rather, Indian identity

as defined by others – being known as Indian has importance both personally and

politically to the Waccamaw (p. 392). Secondly, community Indian activities, including

powwows, are more important to Indian identity than regional or administrative

participation, regardless of the traditional or Pan-Indian content of the activity (p. 394).

What Lerch and Bullers' findings suggest in relation to this region, and perhaps to other

regions in Canada, is that local powwows are now part of the way one is Indian:

powwows and all of its manifestations and symbolism express that which is not the

'other'.

This final example of identity formed through opposition is indeed specified and in

comparison to the previous examples, is significantly more blatant. In "The Social

Construction of Whiteness in Shellcracker Haven, Florida." Jane Gibson considers

processes of identity formation in the production of white racism. The following

summarizes Gibson's argument:

> Outsider's denigration and rejection of poor whites contributes to the maintenance
> of a white racist tradition insofar as shared racist discourses attempt to reclaim
> identification with privileged whites. From this perspective, the renewal and formal
> institutionalization of overt racist ideologies by white supremacist organizations can
> be seen collectively as a kind of revitalization movement, one which seeks to revive
> a mythical past in which all whites shared in the privileges of wealth and power
> (1996: 380).

Identification takes place at different levels and in Shellcracker Haven it is through

poor whites' symbolic reclamation with privileged whites and of racist assertions of

monolithic white supremacy (we are not the 'other') (p. 384). Though this particular

example of identification in opposition to an 'other', that is, the black community, seems

far removed from an analysis of Mi'kmaq identity, it is linked to a discourse that is often

expressed in some Native communities and which can be problematic and divisive. For

example, some Mi'kmaq who are on a 'traditional' path reassert their membership in

society by affirming a belief in Native traditionalists' superiority to and in opposition to

non-traditionalists or Christian believers, both Native and non-Native. Another example of this occurs when Mi'kmaqs formulate opposition using language that extolls the virtues of Indian culture vis-à-vis white culture (Larsen 1983: 118). Smith asserts this by referring to the relational qualities of marginality: "oppressors can also be oppressed and the marginal also marginalize, to the extent that it is no longer possible or appropriate to think of 'the' dominant group or culture, or to oppose 'the' core to the periphery" (1993: 304). Nagel also refers to this problematic in the question of individual and collective membership in American Indian communities when Indians themselves denunciate other Indians (1997: 237). A recent heated discussion with a Native man from New Brunswick illustrates this point: "Dorothy, you're not really an Indian cause you didn't grow up on reserve!" The question of who really is an Indian comes up again and again in many different contexts and as Nagel mentions, the query is often made in an atmosphere of skepticism and, sometimes, bitter contention (p. 237).

Conclusion

This Chapter has attempted to illustrate a few examples and some theoretical propositions, that, when taken together, provide a syncretic approach to the study of ethnic identity. It is tempting to buy into a completely relational interactionist view of identity. But to do so would we not be going too far? As Wilson contends, the Barthian paradigm that views community boundaries as unfixed, temporal and renegotiable is no doubt vital to comprehending identity but what about elements of ethnicity that are linked to historical meanings (1993: 135)? What about life experience? Barth privileges the structuring of boundaries over the cultural material by which these boundaries are made real. To view identities solely as the product of external relations is profoundly one-sided (p. 135).

Wilson's observation of the Maya Q'eqchi of Guatemala indicates the following: "changes in identity are not solely constructed through oppositional tactics, but are

constrained and mediated by previous symbols of community"(1993: 121). Wilson touches on the symbolic by showing how the symbolism of the landscape and icons of the community among the Maya Q'eqchi provide continuity to the past under the impact of modernity. According to Wilson, the relational view of identity tends to neglect indigenous agency and the autonomy of cultural constructions developed by the people while the essential view has little framework to cope with modernity (1993: 135; see also Fitchen 1991; Pocius 1991; and Smith 1993). Combining these two approaches that see the legacy of the past and recognition of interactions with others is perhaps a more sophisticated or balanced way of viewing identity. A synthesis of the two perspectives offers a syncretic approach (Wilson 1993: 135).

This can be used as point of reference to describe contemporary Mi'kmaq ethnic identification which is part of a process that is dynamic, engaged and ongoing, comprising identities that are both essential and relational and draw on symbols from the past that are both imagined and indigenous. It is misguided to overlook the way in which identities are chained to images of tradition: "tradition is continually readjusted to the circumstances, but within a monumental matrix carried forward from the past"(Wilson 1993: 135). Ethnicity is therefore linked to historical meanings. Increasingly in Mi'kmaq communities identification with the natural environment or Mother earth – an inner felt voice - is part of the way of comprehending the world and ourselves. This identification is inherently spiritual and is intimately tied to healing processes. For the Maya Q'eqchi who follow the revitalized traditional earth cult, the mountains reach right down inside them, moulding their concept of personhood (p. 128). Is Mother earth creating similar processes? I believe it is for some people. It is no longer realistic to conceptualize identity formation as either this or that or to view the contents of our identity in a similar dichotomous mould.

This chapter has provided a theoretical synthesis of both essential and relational views of identity and resituates the question of identity and subjective meaning in the sphere of contemporary culture particularly since the question of identity converges and is

intimately linked to socio-economic and socio-cultural development. If we truly want to demystify concepts such as ethnicity or identity then we must populate the scenarios we examine. This thesis is about a small development venture in a small place that few people have heard about, but its implications for the ongoing transformations and negotiations of identity and culture are significant, particularly for the locals engaged in the project. As Stebbins notes, serious tourists who engage in serious leisure enhance their self-image and therefore part of their identity is formed through tourism (Stebbins 1997). What about the 'hosts'? Is there a creative process of identification taking place? Does it include everyone or only a few? If we view identification as an individual process and the individual's identity as a basket of selves which come to the surface at different social moments as appropriate, then an understanding of various meanings attached to tourism symbols will tell us more about cultural transformations and innovations.

Chapter Two

"Consuming Symbols and Signs": Postmodernism, Tourism and Culture

Introduction

There is no doubt that tourism engenders a mixed range of changes and consequences that alter the culture of a destination over time. Tourism research is typified by an examination of positive and negative consequences and quite often such consequences are revealed and written from an outsider's perspective. Consider for example Deborah McLaren's *Rethinking Tourism and Ecotravel* (1998). McLaren's work is unquestionably an important contribution to the study of tourism and provides a critical assessment of the industry. It is however theoretically rooted in seeing tourism as an extension of colonial opportunity and authority and according to McLaren the commodification of culture leads to psychological pressures to modernize that is inevitably followed by many forms of cultural rejection (1998: 70). Using Ladakhis and Sherpas as examples, McLaren applies the theory of psychological pressure to confirm her hypothesis that the tourist consumer culture creates a homogenization of culture, or a consumer monoculture (p. 46). What does she mean by 'pressures to modernize'?

Gerald Pocius would disagree with McLaren for he argues that too often academics and cultural nativists want a clear demarcation between tradition and modernity; having up-to-date goods does not mean that people act in ways that characterize modernized cultures (Pocius 1991: 287). McLaren's version is locked into one version of modernity where old and new are somehow contradictory yet as Pocius maintains, we cannot neatly categorize people or communities as either traditional or modern. Juxtapose McLaren's hypothesis with that of Robinson and Twynam's (1996) study of the Sherpa in Nepal or Michael Picard's study of Bali (1996), who claim that tourism is leading to revitalization and cultural reinforcement, though they admit to some cultural changes.

This chapter is not about the changes or effects caused by tourism; rather it is about the dynamics of tourism and cultural tourism. Examining cultural tourism using a dualistic framework does not gauge the depth and complexity of the many concepts and issues

related to its study. Exploring some of these and the change in study and form of theorizing in the sociology of tourism will reveal that straightforward one dimensional paradigms cannot explain the creativity inherent in cultural expression. The endeavour to follow is not merely an exploration of theoretical formulations; its aim is to contextualize several concepts that frame the study of tourism, culture and identity, particularly when culture is increasingly becoming a consumable item. Tourism scholars like McLaren have focused on whether tourism was good or bad for its hosts? But from whose point of view (Chambers 1997)? The 'touree' may be actively engaged in a creative process of identity formation and cultural expression located within the practice of cultural tourism. Homogenizing the host experience, or imputing meaning on his or her behalf is criticized by a postmodern view of tourism. This perspective embraces the diffuse nature of meanings. The question that frames the study of tourism should not be whether it is good or bad but rather how does its incorporation in society reshape processes of cultural invention and self-definition, particularly in a world of increasing flows of symbols and signs and peoples across previous cultural boundaries. What role can the study of tourism play in examining ethnic movements, revivalism and identity? In this Chapter I assess changes in the theorizing of tourism noting tourism's position as a characteristic of postmodern culture. This Chapter also explores questions of inventions, constructions and hyperrealities particularly since they are all bound to the essence of cultural tourism and the commodification processes that involve consuming symbols and signs. Underscoring the questions that cultural tourism raises is the concept of cultural authenticity and whether or not heritage can be bought or sold.

Traditional Impact Paradigm

If cultures are mobile, it poses a major challenge for the traditional understanding of travel within the sociology and anthropology of tourism. The dominant position is that

tourism should be interpreted as a quest for 'authenticity' (MacCannell 1989). In *The Tourist*, MacCannell's category of the modern person - the tourist - was motivated to recover senses of wholeness and structure absent from everyday contemporary life (Selwyn 1994: 729). MacCannell pursued the theme of cognitive fragmentation in *Empty Meeting Grounds* (1992) by arguing once again that the displacement and movement of people globally has given rise to the demand for authentic cultural experiences (1992: 3). MacCannell's theorising in the 1970s was a reaction to previous viewpoints that tourism was a symptom of modern decadence, a quest for the contrived. Neither of these theories captured the variety that existed with the practice of tourism, so Erik Cohen challenged the homogenizing depictions.

In "Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism," Cohen formulates three basic propositions that are found in contemporary sociological and anthropological tourism literature (1988). First, tourism is said to lead to 'commoditization', an assumption raised by Greenwood (1977).[1] The critical issue is that this commodification process allegedly changes the meaning of cultural products and of human relations, making them eventually meaningless (Cohen 1988: 372). Furthermore, since local culture can be 'commoditized' by anyone, without the consent of the participants, it can be expropriated for profit by others (p. 372). Valda Blundell refers to this expropriation process as it relates to Aboriginal people in Canada (1993, 1994, 1996). A contentious issue is the expropriation of Aboriginal cultural forms by non-Aboriginal entrepreneurs such as arts and crafts. Increasingly though, these appropriated items are being reappropriated by Aboriginal people, a process that also causes concern within Aboriginal circles since the reappropriated forms may not be indigenous to the tribe claiming them.

The second proposition is that the commodification process is said to destroy the authenticity of local cultural products and human relations; instead, a surrogate covert 'staged authenticity' emerges (MacCannell 1989). Implicit in this assumption is that contrived cultural products are increasingly 'staged' for tourists so as to look authentic.

Above all, tourists, who are apparently permitted to penetrate beyond the 'front' areas of the visited society into its 'back' are in fact cheated. "Such regions are frequently inauthentic 'false backs'. insidiously staged for tourist consumption" (Cohen 1988: 372).

His third proposition is that 'staged authenticity' is said to thwart the tourist's genuine desire for authentic experiences (MacCannell 1992: 597). By misleading tourists to accept contrived attractions as 'authentic' creates a 'false touristic consciousness' (Cohen 1988: 373) whereby the modern tourist-pilgrim is 'damned to inauthenticity' (p. 373). Does any of this matter in a postmodern world where authenticity has become a phenomenon that is inherently subjective? The whole notion of attraction and authenticity in a MacCannellian sense loses its significance when some people actively pursue the contrived (Cohen 1995) and where the contrived, the invented and the constructed become the 'authentic postmodern'. According to John Urry, tourism in the postmodern age has become a main pattern of consumption (1994).[2]

Postmodern Theorizing: Polarities Revisited

Postmodern social theory reacts against grand theories, like romanticism and modernism (Gergen 1991) that conceptualize societies and people as totalities. The essence of postmodernism is its compromising nature which supports "both - and" rather than "either - or" statements (Denzin 1991: 27). As Natan Uriely explains, "this aspect of postmodern theory reflects the notion of the postmodern logic as non-dualistic and anti-hierarchical; this system is less conclusive and more pluralized than modernist systems of knowledge" (1997: 982). The modernist assumptions which have been accepted by many tourism scholars, are examined critically by Urry (1990) and Cohen (1988 and 1995) and more recently by authors such as Frank Salamone (1997), James Overton (1996) and Eric Gable and Richard Handler (1996); all embrace aspects of the postmodern paradigm.

Many of the changes occurring in the culture of tourism have been explained in terms of postmodernism. post-Fordism. flexible accumulation and consumerism. Tourism and tourists are labels that are less than two centuries old but the activity of traveling for pleasure is millennia old. Tourism was only labelled such when railways and steamships of the nineteenth century made it a mass experience. Prior to this, tourists were called explorers, adventurers, crusaders and pilgrims (Van den Berghe 1994: 6). Tourism today, it is argued, fits in with trends in economic development towards service-based, consumer oriented industries associated with the production of symbolic or cultural capital rather than material goods. As Craik reiterates, "culture in this process is multi-faceted: culture is simultaneously a resource, a product, an experience and an outcome" (1997b: 113). For Urry, postmodernism involves the dissolving of the boundaries between different cultural forms, thus creating a "cultural paradigm" (1990: 97). Overton also expresses these changes in tourism as characteristic of postmodern culture. The new tourist is one who engages in a post-tourism which is a tourism characteristic of a nostalgic postmodern culture where the lure of the lost is irresistible (1996: 36). Erik Cohen comments on postmodern tourists: "in order to enjoy the experience they are prepared to accept, although not wholly seriously, an even totally fantastic 'contrived' attraction as real" (1995: 22). Ian McKay also explains that the postmodern tourists no longer expects authenticity: true postmoderns accept the fragmented, spectacular and contrived (1994: 281).

The critiques raised by Cohen in the previous section are threefold. First, the concept of authenticity in tourism studies has been uncritically introduced into sociological analysis (Cohen 1988: 374). Second, "the question whether the 'tourees' observed by the tourist at all possess such a concept, and if so, which traits of their own culture they consider to be 'authentic' is rarely if ever raised" (p. 374). Third, and, most importantly for my purpose, MacCannell's concept of authenticity did not raise the possibility that the attraction or cultural form could be conceived and understood in different ways by the producers themselves. As Anthony Cohen describes, "symbols do more than merely stand

for something else - they allow those who employ them to supply part of their meaning"
(1985: 14). Erik Cohen suggests that 'authenticity is a socially constructed concept and its
'social connotation is not given but negotiable (1988: 374). Erik Cohen's typology
explains that different types of tourists have different conceptions of authenticity (p. 377).
Pierre Van den Berghe, another tourism scholar, maintains that MacCannell's
overgeneralizations do not consider differing motivations (1994). Reflective of
postmodern analyses, Ritzer and Liska (1997) argue that tourism often involves a search
for the inauthentic, a search for those perfect simulations[3] and Van den Berghe emphasizes
that tourists seek the exotic "other" (1994). Inherent in these conceptions is that the post-
tourist can move across all types of activities (Feifer 1985).

The sociological discourse of postmodern tourism consists mainly of two
theoretical frameworks - the "simulational" and the "other". The "other" is reflected in the
contemporary trend of cultural and heritage tourism and the "simulation" is focused around
the analysis of *hyperreal* experiences found in simulated theme parks or contrived and
invented attractions. This discussion is meant to illustrate that the distinction between these
two frameworks follows the same polarity noted in modernist theories (Uriely 1997): the
"simulational" follows the quest for the contrived, while the "other" follows MacCannell's
argument regarding the quest for authenticity. The difference however lies in the fact that
postmodern tourism scholars such as Urry (1990) include both dimensions in their
complete portrayal of tourism.

Inventions, Constructions and Hyperrealities

A key critique that contests MacCannell's 'authenticity' concept is Cohen's
'emergent authenticity' (1988), a concept that parallels 'emergent ethnicity' mentioned in
Chapter One. Since authenticity is not a primordial given, but negotiable, one has to allow
for the possibility of its gradual emergence in the eyes of the beholder. In other words, "a

cultural product, or a trait thereof, which is at one point generally judged as contrived or inauthentic may, in the course of time, become generally recognized as authentic, even by experts" (1988: 379). Thus, for example, a tourist-oriented festival (or craft product) may in due time become accepted as an 'authentic local custom' (p. 379). The concept of 'emergent authenticity' refers to one manifestation of the wider phenomenon of 'invention of tradition', put forth by Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983). Invention of tradition includes both "'traditions' actually invented, constructed and formally instituted and those emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and dateable period" (1983: 1). Rather than national cultures being traditional, natural and outside history, they are, as Hobsbawn notes, strikingly modern creations. Drawing on both Sollors (1989) and Hobsbawn and Ranger, Overton quotes the following in the exploration of cultures as invented where this is "not meant to evoke a conspiratorial interpretation of a manipulative inventor who single-handedly makes ethnics out of unsuspecting subjects, but to suggest widely shared, though intensely debated, collective fictions that are continually reinvented" (1996: 17).

Overton continues by emphasising that "we cannot take cultures for granted as natural, eternal, relatively fixed and self-evident social facts. Where do these collective fictions come from? What is the process by which the 'fixed encyclopedia of supposed cultural essentials' was arrived at?" (p. 17). Overton also contends that a particular version of Newfoundland was 'invented' for tourists, as does McKay with reference to Nova Scotia in his work *Quest of the Folk*, but Overton goes further and suggests that it was not invented just for tourists; the same images and symbols highlighted for tourists came to be seen as the essential symbols of Newfoundland (p. 17). Pocius contests this point by arguing that in Calvert, Newfoundland, the essence of culture is not necessarily in things owned and used, whether they be images and symbols of Newfoundland or other items, but in the spaces and places in which we find these things (1991). As he asks in *A Place to Belong*, are the newly objectified symbols of Newfoundland culture really reflective of indigenous concerns? Or is knowing where to place your cod trap or harvest your wood -

knowing where to place *yourself* the fundamental framework for so much of everyday life? (1991: 24). Pocius' arguments are valuable but Overton's contentions resemble Anthony Cohen's in that these items can come to have meaning for those who impute meaning (1985). Pocius, Overton, McKay and Cohen offer insightful and necessary formulations yet the use of the terms *invention* and *construction* are not without problems, particularly when applied to Aboriginal cultural forms expressed and practiced in the tourism industry.

Daniel Mato draws a distinction between the terms *invention* and *construction* because quite often both terms are used synonymously, particularly when applied to culture and tradition (1996). The distinction is characterized in the following way: symbolic construction may be largely unconscious and is an ongoing activity in all human societies while invention emphasizes creativity and implies a degree of conscious reflection about culture (Linnekin 1992: 252). As Mato explains:

> The work of producing symbolic representations is permanent and may include, at least in theory, cases ranging from fully unconscious making/construction to fully consciously intentioned constructions, the latter of which may be named inventions (1996: 63).

A further element to add to this is the postmodern idea that what may be an invention can become real, a process described earlier as *hyperreality*.

In "Consumer Culture or Culture Consumed", Firat not only argues that culture is increasingly becoming a consumable marketable item but he challenges the narrative of modernity and calls for the recognition of the symbolic and cultural over the material and the economic as the engines of society (1995: 109). According to Firat, the modernist narrative was just that - a narrative. It was a story that was culturally and symbolically woven into the "reality" of modern society:

> The re(production) of modern reality in the image of the modern imaginary—the modernist narrative that captured the imaginations—has been called *hyperreality* by some postmodernist thinkers such as Baudrillard and Eco. *Hyperreality* is the becoming real of what is (was) hype or simulation. It is the cultural process that renders simulations or hype "realer than real" (Firat 1995: 110).

Recognition of this hyperreality can help us become aware that cultural identities are often historically constructed. This is revealed in thematized wharf areas in Halifax Nova Scotia for example. I raise the point of hyperreality not necessarily to show the cultural constructedness of our world but to frame the following thought: constructions, inventions and hyperrealisms are not concepts that deligitimize culture; they are part of culture. The consumer culture that has marketized everything has paradoxically transformed culture itself into a consumable item. All around the world today, especially in western societies, culture is no longer so much what people belong to, as increasingly something that they consume (Firat and Dholakia 1998: 109).

Cultural Tourism and the Consumption of Symbols and Signs

At one time, it was presumed there was a boundary between tourism and culture. Rojek and Urry describe the dismantling of these boundaries and show us that "tourism and culture now overlap and that there is no clear frontier between the two" (1997: 3). Tourism informs culture, just as much as culture informs tourism. To place boundaries around these concepts would be arbitrary. This is because there is now a 'culturalisation of society' (Craik 1997b), a de-differentiation between all sorts of social and cultural spheres which were previously distinct (Rojek and Urry 1997: 3). This is often described through a postmodern cultural paradigm which involves the breaking down of conventional modernist distinctions, such as high/low culture, home/abroad, etc., that had kept different social practices within different social/spatial locations (p. 3). Besides economic commodities moving about the globe, cultural artifacts and images are doing so as well. Gergen elaborates on this: "as Westerners incorporate Zen meditation, aikido, Toyota, Kurosawa, and Sushi into their life-styles and as Japanese buy Springsteen records, hamburgers, and Times Square, the cultures incorporate fragments of each other's

identities" (Gergen 1991: 255). Firat takes this further and describes the current situation as a "globalization of fragmentation":

> All images, products, lifestyles that create excitement, sensation, attraction and interest can and do find their markets. The consumers, regardless of their nationalities and countries, are willing to experience and sample the different styles and cultural artifacts, if at different times and for different purposes. Globalization, therefore, does not seem to be an event in which one form or style dominates and eliminates all others. Rather, it is the diffusion of all different forms and styles all around the world (Firat 1995: 115).[4]

The postmodern consumer has increasingly become a consumer of experiences, seeking not only things (objects, materials items) but also meanings and excitement in the moments experienced (p. 113). The consumer has transformed the market and has made culture a consumable item. Critics and many observers of the globalization phenomenon fear that this trend is endangering many cultures or that cultures are being overtaken by others. What is it that makes people think that identity is lost when the commercial market is involved? I agree with Firat in that it is not possible to think of a static cultural identity, given the internal and external changes it undergoes in the passage of time, changing generations, technology and so on.

These changes in the market and society, or as Rojek and Urry put it, this culturalisation of society, is most obviously seen in the growth of so-called 'cultural tourism' (Rojek and Urry 1997: 4). What is the culture of tourism? What is cultural tourism? Beginning with these questions can be problematic because various definitions and conceptions of cultural tourism have been offered. As Van den Berghe states, "There are as many qualifiers of tourism as there are authors in the field" (1994: 7). For the purposes of this discussion I shall draw from definitions offered by Craik (1997a), Blundell (1996) and Van den Berghe's (1994).

According to Craik, cultural tourism is an umbrella term both to identify "specially organised culture-based tourism experiences and to provide unity and add depth to a diverse range of culturally-related aspects of tourism more generally" (1997a: 118). The

former concept can be divided into cultural tourism as experiential tourism based on being involved in and stimulated by the performing arts, visual arts and festivals; and heritage tourism which includes visiting preferred landscapes, historic sites, buildings or monuments and seeking an encounter with nature or feeling part of the history of a place (p. 118). As a definition, Craik provides the following to describe cultural tourism: "Cultural tourism consists of customized excursions into other cultures and places to learn about their people, lifestyle, heritage and arts in an informed way that genuinely represents those cultures and their historical contexts" (1997a: 6). Blundell defines cultural tourism as "the consumption of cultural experiences (and objects) by individuals who are away from their normal place of habitation" (1996: 29). Similarly, ethnic tourism is travel motivated by the search for and sometimes intimate contact with people whose ethnic and/or cultural background is different from the tourists (Weiler and Hall 1992: 84). Van den Berghe (1994) as well as Nelson Graburn (1976) explain that the prime tourees are the Fourth World peoples, the marginal people who live on the fringes of their respective "national societies":

> Fourth World peoples who were pushed back into regions of refuge - the "native reserves" of the colonized - are now being "rediscovered" as a tourist resource. Their prior isolation from the mainstream of their respective dominant societies has transformed them into objects of curiosity and nostalgia for the affluent in search of the exotic (Van den Berghe 1994: 10).

According to Robert Stebbins, these forms of tourism differ from mass tourism (casual leisure) in that they involve more of a commitment to cultural contact on the part of the tourist (1997: 450). What are the implications of these definitions?

What these definitions imply is the consumption of cultural experiences. This view is held by state officials who argue that such experiences can be commodified for tourists. From Urry's perspective, commerce and culture today are intertwined, to the point that our global economy is in fact a cultural economy (1990: 88). This can also be understood by examining Robert Holton's analysis of economic sociology which emphasizes a shift away from use-value and exchange value, to notions of symbolic, or sign-value (1992: 205).

Value is not only determined in production but in consumption through sign-value whereby value is constructed through meanings imbued in the images represented (Firat 1995: 112). In an attempt to understand the post-industrial society many authors cite French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu who explained that the consumption of cultural products is an important sphere in which individuals accumulate cultural capital which can be exchanged by means of various strategies into economic capital and social status (Bourdieu 1977; Alasuutari 1995: 34). The accumulation of symbolic capital leads to recognition, prestige and so on. Holton's argument however is not only that cultural meaning impacts on the economy, but also that the economy itself is a cultural institution:

> The symbolism of exchange and consumption involves not only those who are a direct party to transactions, i.e. actual consumers, but also all those others for whom the transactions and goods involved have cultural meaning (1992: 205).

The transactions and goods referred to above are not isolated objects. They are forms with substance. Inherent in the consumption of symbols is the notion that meanings exist for those who choose to impute meaning.

Symbols and Signs and Meanings

In "Culture by the Pound: An Anthropological Perspective on Tourism as Cultural Commodification" Davydd Greenwood examines critically the nature of the commodification process by arguing that local culture, be it aboriginal arts, dance, sculpture, ceremonies, is altered and often destroyed by its treatment as a tourist attraction. As he states, "it is made meaningless to the people who once believed in it" and once meaning disappears culture disappears (1989: 173). Despite his use of Geertz's view of culture as an integrated system of meanings by means of which the nature of reality is established and maintained (1973), Greenwood's linear view of the commodification process does not truly apply the dynamic nature of culture implied in Geertz's conceptions.

Does Greenwood examine meaning through the eyes of the locals involved? Can meaning be loss or does it simply undergo change? Greenwood has evidently structured his work within the traditional impact paradigm that sees tourism as either good or bad for the touree, yet his claim that cultural forms can be made meaningless is challenged by culture's capacity to creatively change existing rules and thus create new meanings (Larsen 1983). As expressed by Anthony Cohen, there is often confusion over social form and substance - common forms do not necessarily generate common meanings (1985: 20).

The concept of meaning often refers to the symbolism that is associated with specific objects or activities. It is through those objects and activities that a group expresses and realizes its outlook and attitude to life. The study of meanings and symbols is taken up in cultural studies and as Alasuutari notes, there is a challenge to face when studying meaning and symbols: what is the meaning of the concept of meaning (1995: 26)? Obviously, the 'meaning' of something is what it 'means' but as Alasuutari rightfully claims, it is difficult to move beyond this circular reasoning (p. 26). If we take the theoretical position offered in cultural studies and view meaning as not just a quality of certain specific things, there is the capacity to see that the world does not present itself to us 'as is' but through the relationship we have to this world (p. 27). We thereby have the ability to impute meaning. Furthermore, some items or symbols in our world have function, while others are more structural. I raise this point only to show that there are indeed some symbols in our lives that are, as presented by Levi-Strauss, "good to think" and not necessarily "good to eat" (Levi-Strauss 1963 in Alasuutari 1995: 28). With our ability to "think" we also have the ability and capacity to impute meaning into and onto these symbols.

In *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, Anthony Cohen explores how communities are symbolically constructed through symbols, which do more than stand for something else - they allow those who use them to supply their meaning (1985: 14). The community, as a boundary expressing symbol, is held in common by members of a

community but its meaning may not be shared by its members (p. 15). Applying Cohen's

conceptualizations to cultural tourism products, and all of the associated symbols attached

to them, be they crafts, rituals, dances, food, etc., I argue that individuals can use these

symbols to 'fit' his or her circumstances. Symbols are versatile and malleable and may

appear to have a common form but their substance differs for whoever chooses "to think"

them.

With this ability to define our own meanings, which by their very nature, can

change, how is it plausible to claim that meaning disappears through commodification?

Perhaps Greenwood's approach should be an examination of how the object or form is

changed in meaning through the commodification process, not whether it has disappeared

or not. Cohen deconstructs the myth proposed by Greenwood when he writes:

> The myth of inevitable conformity suggests that modernization and development
> will inevitably strip culture away from people leaving them empty and filled with
> some imported superstructure. This argument assumes that people are passive in
> relation to culture: they receive it, transmit it, express it but do not create it (1985:
> 36).

Dominant structural discourse among social scientists has emerged to consider symbolism

(expression of meaning) and the creativity of cultural identity. Yet there is still a

preoccupation in social science over what is authentic culture. I address this in the next

section.

Authenticity: "This, That, and Something Else Too"

> The concept of cultural authenticity is part of a much broader polemic about the
> meaning of history, long important in the Western world...we vacillate between
> allocating political rights on the basis of authentic racial and ethnic claims, and
> trying to convert all members of the population to political equals (Greenwood
> 1989: 183).

In what sense can we say that a culture is 'authentic'? Who, for example, defines

the terms of authenticity? (Salamone 1997: 318). There is an inexhaustible array of

critiques directed towards MacCannell's theoretical proposition and what most of these critiques question is: how useful is it to invoke authenticity as an overarching term for such diversity of motivation, experience, and focus? Overton sums his own critique quite adequately:

> MacCannell's discussion of tourism is limited by the assumption that the way in which modernity appears to some people, in some places, in some periods is the way it appears to all people in all places and at all times. MacCannell provides what is clearly a class-specific and therefore rather narrow interpretation of both modernity and tourism. His ethnography allows him to see the world through the eyes of largely middle-class Americans in the 1970s (Overton 1996: 8).

In another discussion of authenticity at the San Angel Inns in the U.S., Salamone examines revisionist literature on the culture concept and establishes that both versions of the San Angel Inns are found to be authentic, each in its own way (1997: 305). Referring to the original Inn in Mexico City, "although its message is different from that of its parent establishment, it is complementary rather than contradictory. It serves to remind everyone, as all tourist art does, that a culture is never either this or that but rather this, that, and something else too" (p. 319). What is evident from Salamone's research is that it is part of the dimension of postmodern tourism, which departs from the tendency of the earlier theories of modern tourism to homogenize the tourist experience as a general type. Included in the conceptualizations of postmodern tourism is the admission that the voice of the 'touree' is rarely heard. Postmodern tourism is characterized by the multiplicity of tourist (and 'touree') motivations, experiences and environments. In this respect, the general hypothesis of this thesis is that there are variations on authentic culture, each in its own context. What will have one meaning for one person may have different meanings for another.

Culture and Heritage as Inalienable Possessions

As stated earlier, cultural tourism consists of excursions into other cultures and places to learn about their people, lifestyles, heritage and arts. In terms of enterprise, heritage is not seen as incompatible but compatible and in fact quite commercially profitable. The Aboriginal Heritage Gardens seek to use Mi'kmaq heritage as a commodity and this inevitably leads to the following considerations: Can heritage be conceptualised as a commodity? Can heritage be sold? A similar consideration is addressed in Macdonald's analysis of a heritage centre called *Aros: The Skye Story.*

Aros: The Skye Story is a heritage centre on the Isle of Skye in the Scottish Hebrides. Macdonald examines this centre to see how far it can be seen to involve a commodification of culture and history (1997: 155) and explores questions about local identity and the performance of culture for tourism. Macdonald's analysis looks at more than just the site; she looks at the makers and their relationship to the locality for they are engaged in questions of identity, locality and authenticity (p. 156). This centre is by no means uncontroversial or uncontested for it provokes an alternative depiction from that told by the clan centres that deal mainly with history surrounding the clan system (p. 161). Its heritage format claims to tell the *Skye Story* and the setting up of such a centre is viewed by revivalists as a way of strengthening and not diluting Gaelic language and culture. The concept of 'cultural tourism' is employed to indicate tourism 'for the people' of Skye. So *Aros* partly develops out of Gaelic enthusiasm and the desire to tell a different story of the Highlands, but it is a story which is at the same time commercially profitable (Rojek and Urry 1997: 13). Heritage and enterprise are seen as compatible and for the makers of *Aros* Gaelic culture is a resource, not so much as something to be transformed and used, but in the sense of being "Gaels' own repository of inner reserves on which they can draw" (Macdonald 1997: 160). It is viewed as a resource that is active and transformative and therefore not something that can be really sold. This is related to the inalienable nature of

heritage, a notion which Macdonald applies, after Weiner (1992), to discuss the idea of the inalienable.

In commodity-exchange, ownership is transmitted from seller to buyer whereas inalienable possessions involve what Weiner calls 'the paradox of keeping-while-giving' (Weiner 1992: 6). In his book *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving*, Weiner says:

> Even while they enter into systems of exchange and social relations, they are kept and imbued with the intrinsic and ineffable identities of their owners...In one sense, an inalienable possession acts as a stabilizing force against change because its presence authenticates cosmological origins, kinship and political histories (1992: 9).

As Macdonald states, "Outsiders may come to look, to learn and to admire, and they may take away souvenirs, knowledge and images, but this does not lead to a diminishment in what is 'kept' by the people" (1997: 174). The nature of the symbolic commodity such as heritage is that it can be 'kept' rather than carted away like other commodities. This is not to say that these symbolic commodities do not change through the relationship from seller to buyer. By their very nature, heritage and culture are malleable and have the capacity to change. Heritage as an inalienable possession can provide an alternative analytical possibility when examining tourism and cultural inventions that secure a sense of self and identity, particularly since heritage is closely link to symbols of the past. The past is often used as a resource, recalled symbolically as a cognitive map that helps shape our sense of selves and our sense of community.

Symbolizing the Past

As noted earlier, there are growing numbers of Mi'kmaqs, including members of my own family, who have declared interest in 'traditional' or 'spiritual' ways by participating in the sweat lodge ceremony or placing faith in Indian healing and medicine men. Many of these people are called traditionalists. They all form part of the revitalization

movement. According to Harald Prins, the movement is a remnant of the 1960s counterculture movement and is often used to describe the rise of lobbying forces such as unions and the National Indian Brotherhood which is now the Assembly of First Nations (1996: 199). More than thirty years have passed since the counterculture movement. What is the nature of the revival today in 1999? Is it a part of the pan-Indian movement and intertribal activism as claimed by Prins, or is it influenced by other elements such as the desire to heal spiritual wounds? Why is it flourishing? These are questions for another thesis but I present them in order to explore how this cultural renaissance uses elements and symbols from the past to invoke an organic connection to culture and history, symbols that Aboriginal tourism uses as well.

As Prins explains, since the mid-1970s many Mi'kmaqs have found inspiration in a cultural mélange of ecospiritual beliefs and ritual (1996: 206). In Eel River Bar for example, when Margaret Labillois was nominated and then elected chief in 1970, she set in motion a movement to revive some traditional practices. She and several others called the movement *Arpitjemeg* meaning "rebirth" in Mi'kmaq (Hughes 1997, February 8). This neotraditional mixture includes rituals and practices borrowed and adopted from other tribes. Some have been traced directly to Western tribal cultures while others are indigenous practices that have been revived. My intent is not to examine these in detail but to show that their recent introduction in Mi'kmaq circles are used as a resource based on past-references.

Consider sweetgrass burning. According to Prins' findings, this is not an indigenous practice, yet it has come to be defined as Mi'kmaq and is made meaningful to those who practice it. For those of us who have taken part in this purification ceremony, there is an organic indigenous feel to this borrowed symbolism. The power of these rituals and practices lies not only in our ability to impute meaning into them, but in their position as symbols of the 'past', which are mythically infused with timelessness. According to Anthony Cohen, "the manner in which the past is invoked is indicative of the kinds of

circumstances which makes a past-reference salient" (1985: 99). Our own selective constructions of the past resonates with contemporary influences. As mentioned, the renaissance is linked to spiritual healing so invoking a past that is salient to this provides a cognitive map to orientate ourselves in interaction and to our own sense of self-worth and identity. Cohen refers to this selective construction of the past as resembling *myth* which derives its association with a cultural past. It is an expression of the way people map past, present, and future. If we take the postmodernist position on this, we live in a world where knowledge is not 'one but many', therefore, history and truth are not 'out there' but are assimilated into ourselves and resurrected into an ever-changing present (Urry 1990: 110). For those Mi'kmaq who have danced to the drumbeat or taken part in a 'sweat', these symbols of the past are indeed mythically infused with timelessness and though their forms have been borrowed, their substance is impervious to scrutiny.

Conclusion

Culture can no longer be regarded as homogeneous and monolithic (Salamone 1997: 318). As Urry and Rojek state, "Cultures get remade as a result of the flows of people, objects and images across national borders, whether these involve colonialism, work-based migration, individual travel or mass tourism" (1997: 11), thus resulting in fragmented, hybrid and impure cultures that are continuously re-inventing themselves. If this is the case, then an analysis focusing on the destruction or dilution of culture is redundant. MacCannell's theorizing in the 1970s paved the way for many others scholars to either acclaim the possible revitalization of culture that results from tourism, as Picard maintains for Bali (1996) or to reject it entirely, holding tourism up to severe criticism. In Valene Smith's *Hosts and Guests*, Greenwood maintains that commodification renders culture meaningless (1989); Dennison Nash sees tourism as a form of imperialism (1989); McLaren sees it as an extension of colonization (1998); and Craik sees it as a destructive

cultural force (1997a). Granted, I was nearly convinced that indeed tourism was the evil force depicted by the scholars cited above but a pivotal moment changed my perceptions. When asked by an Aboriginal consultant what I thought of his video promoting tourism in the National Capital Region I exclaimed: "It's propaganda!" If there were two words I could retract from my past articulations, it would be those. I had failed to notice that some individuals do hold their own meanings and perceptions that differ from mine. The tourism product created by that Cree man had meaning to him; he had imputed his own meaning into his product and my facile negative judgments fractured our relations. We differed on our individual perceptions of what is an authentic product. This chapter has attempted to revisit the authenticity debate and to explore the possibilities that authenticity is a term that carries with it many different meanings. Further analysis will reveal that what is regarded as authentic to one person may not to another just as there are various possible readings of the same heritage. It is for this reason that I embrace analyses within a postmodern paradigm because the processes of ethnic change unleashed by tourism are too varied and complex to be easily summarized in positive or negative frameworks. As Van den Berghe states: "tourism is neither as good or as bad as many people suppose, but much more complex and interesting than simple, categorical judgments can capture"(1994: 17).

Citing John Harp, who has analysed federal tourism policy in Canada, Blundell explains that tourism texts have repeatedly represented regions and communities in less developed areas of Canada "within a rhetoric of 'heritage' whereby some idyllic past is presented as the authentic life and as something the urban dweller has lost" (1996: 29). These authentic cultures are assumed to persist among 'traditional' indigenous peoples. In the end, travel thus becomes a way for tourists from urbanized, industrialized areas to reclaims this (lost) ethnicity (p. 29). These ideas have been challenged by some scholars who worry that tourist attractions promoted as the 'loci of authentic' experiences will provoke nostalgia rather than stimulating critical thought, by romanticizing the past and hiding from visitors current social inequities and their real historical sources. Also, critics

are concerned that Aboriginal, ethnic or rural people will be recruited to 'act' as traditional people for others, thus conforming to romantic stereotypes of their cultures. Furthermore, critics are concerned that cultural forms commoditized for tourist markets will replace those that express peoples' own lived experiences' (p. 30). Blundell does not elaborate, nor do other tourism scholars debating authenticity, on the nature of how First Peoples come to use such tourism attractions, whether inadvertently or not, as a means to revitalizing their culture. Or for that matter, the extent to which tourism cultural forms are valued and made meaningful to the touree. Tourism scholars do well to criticize the tourism industry and all of its feared repercussions but many fall short when it comes to addressing the not-so-easy task of identifying the extent to which 'hosts' actually change or come to identify with the cultural forms being presented.

The mobilities of symbols and signs as well as the dynamic force of culture are all integral elements in the ethnic revival taking place in Aboriginal communities in the Maritimes. What about Aboriginal tourism? Is it a straightforward narrative? Or is it part of the construct of a new statement? Is it part of this creative revival? If so, what does it tell us about ethnic relations? Can it inform individuals about themselves?

There is undoubtedly a challenge to be faced when attempting to converge a theoretical discourse of tourism with studies of identity. What follows in the next chapter is an attempt to include more details about Aboriginal tourism in the Maritimes. On the surface, these developments assume the position of being a reaction to the market that produces culture as a consumable commodity. Below the surface they can be used to culturally inform individuals and communities as well as be the stimulus that gives rise to divisions and debates. It is all part of the creative process of identity formation. Tord Larsen notes that in the exhibition of handicrafts Mi'kmaqs say who they are; this forms part of their opposition ideology (1983: 122). I argue that cultural products, whether they be handicrafts or a tourism site, not only inform and communicate a cultural distinctiveness

at the boundary but they inform individuals about their own selves. They inform me about

my own self.

Notes

[1] This commodification process is often explained through an analysis of capitalism. According to both Lefebvre (1991) and Overton (1996), who draw heavily on a neo-Marxist perspective, capitalism requires the production of new forms of consumption. It produces new needs and discovers and creates new *use-values* to meet those needs. Capitalism transforms and constantly revolutionizes itself and this is evident in the growth of tourism (Overton 1996: 5). MacCannell also explains the commodification of culture as a process in which phenomena such as ethnicity or authentic identity cease simply to 'be' -- to have *use-value* -- but come to have *exchange value* (1992: 169).

[2] Kenneth Gergen however cautions us when using the term *postmodern* : "*Postmodern* is in broad currency within literary, architectural, artistic, politic, and philosophical circles, and has recently been carried over into pop culture - its use is multiplicitous and highly variable (Gergen 1991: xi). Despite the weakness with the term there are still some related ideas and images surrounding its usage.

[3] See Ritzer 1996 on the McDonaldization of Society.

[4] See Firat and Dholokia's (1998) *Consuming People* for a more complete examination of consumption patterns and the globalization of consumption.

Chapter Three

Aboriginal Tourism and the Aboriginal Heritage Gardens as

Economic and Symbolic Resources

Introduction

In the *Report of the Task Force on Aboriginal Issues* (1999) the province of New Brunswick's Task Force offered the following recommendation in terms of promoting cultural awareness and social development:

> We believe the provincial government has a role to play in helping all New Brunswickers become more aware of the diverse cultures that make up our province. For decades now, New Brunswickers have been proudly promoting the bilingual nature of our province and the fact that two different cultures have flourished within the same borders. As Premier Thériault stated when he was sworn-in as the 29th premier of New Brunswick, "we...must educate ourselves and be open to the vast cultural and social diversity that defines our entire country." (p. 18).

In their current domestic tourism advertising blast on television, the New Brunswick department of Economic Development and Tourism is using culture as its main sell this season. In conjunction with a catchy jingle and images of heritage, the narrator announces that, "culture is alive and cooking in New Brunswick...come feel the cultural connection...come ride the wave of adventure...and live our culture at King's Landing or Village Historique Acadien." There is evidently a missing link in this "cultural connection" despite the rhetorical recommendation cited above and it is the absence of Mi'kmaq culture in tourism, as well as a strong market demand, that has prompted Eel River Bar and several other reserves in the Maritimes to jump onto the wave and start Aboriginal tourism ventures.

Aboriginal tourism is taking off in other parts of Canada and it is just a matter of time when the same will occur in the Maritime provinces. The creators of the Aboriginal Heritage Gardens, an estimated $8-million project, would hope to have their site included in future advertising campaigns since the Garden is first and foremost, according to the Economic Development Officer in Eel River Bar, a community development corporation (CDC) that must sustain itself as well as turn over a profit. Not only is there the expectation that the Gardens will boost the reserve's economy, but it will do as much for

Restigouche county in north eastern New Brunswick as the Village Historique Acadien has done for the Acadian Peninsula (Macfarlane 1998, February 5). The nature of this development and others similar to it could be a response to the following question: What's left if the something-for-nothing philosophy of the welfare state is dying - either because it does not work, or because taxpayers will no longer pay it? This question can be answered in different ways by different people for there is no unity of purpose in issues relating to development; some are motivated purely by profit and utilitarian goals while others see development as a communitarian answer to solving grave socio-economic problems. Along this continuum of perceptions there are also those that embrace a little bit of both forms when it comes to economic development. The Aboriginal Heritage Gardens is indeed a community economic development initiative but why is this version of development taking such a hold in many Aboriginal communities like Eel River Bar? Thus far, this thesis has sought to steer away from exploring the more operational and economic issues pertaining to tourism development. However, the following chapter attempts to address some of them in order to contextualize and situate the Gardens symbolically within the community or as Graham Day maintains, "transformations in cultures have important interconnections with changes in social and economic structures (1998: 91). Furthermore, this chapter will briefly examine the study of Aboriginal tourism and its position as a resource for academic inquiry. By virtue of their existence, cultural tourism initiatives are there to be acclaimed or challenged and are therefore economically, symbolically and academically negotiable items. The narrative to follow is merely a glance at a plethora of possible contestable issues.

Economic Development in Marginal Communities

The term *development* can be interpreted in many different ways, however as Hedican notes, "our perception of development is largely rooted in Western notions of

political economy, and it is this ethnocentric orientation of conventional economic approaches that has led to many disastrous failures in the area of international development" (Hedican 1997: 131). Aside from this notion of development, in which changes in per capita income are a main indicator of economic growth, development for many people has an added dimension: it means to achieve a greater independence from outside-controlled goods and services (p. 132), to reduce inequality, and provide social and cultural well-being. Increasingly, Aboriginal people in Canada are finding entrepreneurship to be a route to empowering themselves as individuals, as families and as communities and there are a variety of government programs available to Aboriginal entrepreneurs and communities who wish to start-up a business. For example, Aboriginal Business Canada (ABC), an Industry Canada program, provides business services and support to Canadian Aboriginal peoples particularly in terms of financing business ventures (Industry Canada 1998); and the Joint Economic Development Initiative (JEDI), a tripartite advisory body, committed to capacity building in First Nations. As Katherine Beaty Chiste (1996) explains in *Aboriginal Small Business and Entrepreneurship in Canada* , these trends form part of the entrepreneurial revolution of the 1980s and 1990s which saw a reawakening of interest in small business (1996: 5). In light of the community economic development initiatives and small businesses springing up on many reserves in the Atlantic provinces, it is safe to assert that some development objectives are taking social and cultural factors into account. Take Conne River, Newfoundland for example: together, the reserve's 750 people are building a dozen community-owned enterprises, some still small and some approaching medium size. They share jobs not quite equally but with an even hand, stressing qualifications and performance. Profits from these community enterprises ease dependence on Ottawa and kick-start new enterprises (Cayo 1997, July 12). Referring to Goldschmidt (1981) Hedican emphasizes that a comprehensive approach built on cultural values and motivations should be considered to harness existing sentiments for development (Hedican 1997: 132). In "Working with the Grain? Towards Sustainable Rural and Development"

Graham Day elaborates on this theme, emphasizing that sustainable economic development can be achieved if both individuals and corporations "run with the grain" of the social and cultural relationships which surround them (1998: 97). As Day notes, the trick is to identify the direction of social and cultural forces and find ways of working with rather than against them (p. 97). But, there is a problem with this holistic and endogenous approach espoused by both Day and Hedican: a diversity of existing sentiments for development may be found in the same culture. Discussions with some economic development officers and other Mi'kmaqs in New Brunswick indicate that different perceptions exist. What these different perceptions reveal is that there is no unity of purpose regarding development and this is a challenge facing many communities. Though disunity is not something to be celebrated, it does emphasize the inadequacy of using past theoretical assumptions that sought to answer questions of Aboriginal underdevelopment and dependency. Can past theoretical explanations account for the varied perceptions and approaches to development or that economic development and the entrepreneurial spirit is the focus on many reserves?

A classic question used to explore the economic situation, or the underdevelopment on many reserves is: Why are Natives in such a position of dependency? (Hedican 1997: 135). The standard response to the dependency question is that Aboriginal cultures in the early colonial period of Canada's development were essentially in an 'archaic' form and that in many Aboriginal communities today there has not been much change from a basic traditional structure. The assumption here is that underdevelopment is the result of some peculiarity in Natives' economic and social structure that prevents or retards progress towards a rational capitalist system (p. 135). There is evidently a preoccupation with the notion of 'progress' in such an assumption. Some scholars have attempted to broaden this assumption by taking into consideration wider realities in which a poor country or society finds itself, particularly the important historical reality of the interaction between powerful and less powerful people (Galbraith 1965), an historical reality that is also an important

factor towards understanding issues relating to underdevelopment. Other theoretical explanations aimed at understanding underdevelopment range from Jorgensen's (1978 in Hedican 1997: 137) metropolis-satellite concept in which capitalist development is seen to involve expropriation and exploitation, to an 'internal colonial' model (Wein 1986), whereby Aboriginal people suffer in disproportionate terms because the reserve in Canada is an exploited internal colony controlled by external economic and political forces which create substantial barriers to development (Frideres 1998).[1] Limitations abound in such theories; inherent in all these explanations is an exaggerated emphasis on failure of government to improve conditions of Aboriginal people and they do not consider individual or communal agency.

There is no denial that dependency is a problem on some reserves and that this state is as much structural as it is social. The Indian Act, which regulates just about every aspect of Native people's lives, is a structural encumbrance but there appear to be creative measures here and there which allow for Aboriginal economic autonomy despite the formidable structures that surround Aboriginal communities. Furthermore, I have presented these theoretical propositions in order to show that they do not provide adequate explanations that account for the current economic successes on some reserves or the diversity of economic development approaches or current economic inequities that exist as a result of collusionary forces or pure greed. I reiterate the point that some theoretical formulations fail to provide accurate predictions or explanations, particularly in their explanations of the complex world of socio-economics and development. The flexible specialization strategy, which stresses small-scale, decentralized development, is perhaps the best explanation for the growth taking place on many reserves. Contrary to Gene Barrett's argument however, the private form of the FS strategy exemplified in private enterprise can also be viable in some marginal communities where there is ethnic cohesion (1993). Day's emphasis on development that features elements of embeddedness and institutional thickness (traditionally understood as *community*) is another way to situate

some of the economic development initiatives springing up in several communities. A case in point is Boutouche First Nation, where unemployment is negligible (Province of New Brunswick 1999: 8) and the sources of employment are not only derived from cooperative forms of development. Nonetheless, my emphasis is that there are developments taking place in many Aboriginal communities and such developments are not homogeneous in nature; theoretical explanations only scratch the surface when addressing differentiations.

A notable example that points to a diversity of sentiments in development is the simultaneous collision and convergence in the relationship between political leaders on reserves and traditionalists. They are often at odds. Traditionalists are prone to label band councils as "creatures of the imperialists and elected councillors as patsies for a system that undermines the old ways when everyone had a say on every issue" (Cayo 1997, July 5). This difference comes out occasionally in my interviews but the denigration is not based on chief and council's political identity and role in the community; rather, the concerns are about whether the planners and political players will respect 'tradition' in their development initiatives. Many political leaders are more concerned with deficit control and economic issues whilst traditionalists' focus is geared toward spiritual healing. Yet, there is a convergence within this collision: healing is not just a matter of encouraging people to adopt traditional values; there needs to be enough resources to support and run the programs that foster healing. Eel Ground for instance has made a business out of the healing process by providing and delivering services to many other reserves in the form of a group home for natives and a drug rehabilitation centre (Cayo 1997, July 5). The service sector is one means to develop the local economy along the lines of what the people themselves see as the social side of development (Hedican 1997: 146) indicating developmentally an interconnection between economic and social changes and inevitably cultural changes (Day 1998). In Eel Ground, the little enterprises, public works and service sector add up to about 100 full-time jobs and nearly as many seasonal jobs for a workforce of about 200 in the community (Cayo 1997, July 5). Similarly in Eel River Bar,

approximately 80 percent of a workforce of 160-170 are either self-employed or employed in the service sector, forestry, fisheries, training programs, seasonal work projects or student employment initiatives (T. Dedam, personal communication, August 11, 1999).

It could be argued that on the surface the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and Aboriginal Business Canada are propagating an 'enterprise culture' through their various Aboriginal programs. These efforts are criticized by scholars such as Day (1998) because the entrepreneurial drive, a legacy of the 'enterprise culture' of the 1980s, does not take into account an understanding of the cultures involved. The emphasis of the 'enterprise culture' is to transform values and attitudes rather than embrace elements that already exist in certain communities. I argue however that ACOA, through their Aboriginal Economic Development Officers, who are Native and live on reserve, reflect ACOA's attempts at economic development that is seen as an expression of "comprehending culture as rooted in the realities of people's experience over time" (Day 1998: 94). ACOA may encourage the entrepreneurial and enterprising spirit within communities as well as off-reserve, making them an enabling apparatus that fosters small business and self-help but is their endeavour necessarily in opposition to current cultural and social structures? I believe their initiatives are simultaneously shaping and are shaped by current conditions, most notably the growth of a desire to change structural encumbrances and to tackle grave socio-economic problems that are still serious on some reserves. Similarly, though in a rural context, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through their program *Canadian Rural Partnerships Pilot Projects*, encourage and fund several initiatives, including tourism projects (S. Bigras, personal communication, May 15, 1999). It is plausible to align this program with ACOA and ABC's propagation agenda but it would be impetuous to denigrate their support and encouragement of an enterprise culture since their initiatives are not transforming values and attitudes directly: there are Aboriginal people who are transforming as well as being transformed in all these attempts. Government rhetoric in terms of enterprise may seem at odds with 'supposed' cultural conditions but I argue this is not the case. Technological

changes, access to formal educational and training programs and community healing trends are all conducive to 'enterprise'. There is indeed a connection between 'culture' and the rate and direction of social and economic development (Day 1998: 91). In the Maritimes, some view economic development on reserves as a modern day phenomenon of helping your community. This view is expressed by Caroline Innis of Tobique, New Brunswick:

> In traditional society, the more you gave the more respected you were. In white society, the more wealth you amass, the more highly regarded. In our society, before it got contaminated, the more service you provided to your community, the more you gave of yourself, the higher your prestige. But you didn't get rich. It will never go back the way it was; we're just too assimilated. But parts of it have come back (Cayo 1997, July 12).

It is evident that it is no longer feasible for Aboriginal communities to rely on a single industry for their livelihood, whether that be in forestry or transfer payments from Ottawa. Other opportunities for further economic development and increased employment must also be considered. There are very few employment options off the reserve that are close to home; either you move away to major urban areas to secure employment or you stay on-reserve where employment options are limited. The inability to find work close to home off the reserve is typical yet reserves prop up local towns by spending money using their services. Woodstock reserve, considered medium-sized with a population of 300, spends $2-million a year in their neighbouring community (Cayo 1997, July 5). This is a similar situation in Eel River Bar where most residents spend their money in the neighbouring communities of Dalhousie and Campbellton. This is slowly changing now that Eel River Bar's economic development strategy is striving to bring this loss revenue back into the community, not only through the Aboriginal Heritage Gardens, but also through several other ventures outlined in their master development plan entitled *Destination 21st Century: Towards Sustainable Development* (1999). Parts of this strategy has involved hiring professional planners and consultants, who are accountable to the community rather than to external administrators. According to Hedican, this step will serve to curtail a dependency relationships and stimulate a clearer commitment to long-term

economic development rather than short-term ephemeral programs designed to simply increase employment levels (Hedican 1997: 148). Some of the options in *Destination 21st Century* are wise since the Aboriginal tourism market demand is a current trend that may not last forever. It is currently a niche market with great economic potential but its future is unpredictable since consumer trends change as culture changes. Dr. Claudia Notzke of the University of Lethbridge warns that Native groups should consider tourism as only one aspect of their overall economic strategy; it is seasonal and is not always a stable market: "tourism is a volatile industry that can easily get out of hand and assume a life of its own. You really need to know what you're getting into, particularly with Aboriginal tourism where so much focus is on culture and the environment" (Buhasz 1997, September 1997: F1). Eel River Bar's *Destination 21st Century* outlines the following development initiatives that encompass both community development corporations and joint ventures off-reserve that seek to create employment and diversify their economic base:

1) Aboriginal Heritage Garden

2) Heron Island and Flieger's Beach
    In the Summer of 1997, Eel River Bar and the New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources and Energy signed a five-year agreement to jointly manage Heron Island ("Heron Island," 1997, August 15). This agreement includes co-management of clam resources.

3) Osprey Park
    This is a future highway commercial development initiative, which includes the negotiations with Ultramar for a Truck Stop and the development of a card-lock diesel dispensing system as well as gasoline, a restaurant, convenience store, truck wash and other facilities.

4) Post Office

5) Toronto Dominion Bank or First Nation's Bank

6) Charlo Fish Hatchery
    Eel River Bar has taken steps to negotiate its survival over the next five years; it is being divested by the federal government to a non-profit organization.

7) KanGoRoo Playgrounds
    This playground equipment manufacturer has signed a joint venture with Eel River Bar. It is currently being restructured and expanded, including a new building at Eel River Bar.

                                                                    (1999: 2)

The above examples do not encompass all of the development activities since private entrepreneurship does not fall under the umbrella of the band's strategy for development. What is evident is that Eel River Bar and many other communities and individuals are seeking solutions to development problems through flexible specialization in its various forms. The Heritage Gardens are but one example which owes its conception to powerful market demands from Europe and the Canadian government's desire to develop distinctive Aboriginal cultural tourism and ecotourism products in response to these demands.

Aboriginal Tourism as an Economic Resource

Despite concerns revolving around the authenticity debate, the tourism industry has embraced the idea that tourists are seeking authentic experiences of other cultures. The search for authenticity of a destination is essentially a phenomenon of the 'baby boomer', says Harry French, director of the Canadian Tourism Research Institute (MacLean 1998, December 10: F2). The growing sector of authenticity seekers, as evidenced by strong demands from Europe, particularly Germany, and long-haul travellers from the U.S.A who find it cheaper to travel to Canada than their own country on account of our slumping Canadian dollar (Thorne 1998, August 4: C2), bodes well for aboriginal tourism and eco-tourism. The Aboriginal tourism sector, in 1997, was projected to be worth $1.6 billion to Canada's travel and trade industry, employing 21,000 Natives in 6,400 Native communities across Canada (Harper 1997, October 18: E5). Visits by Germans to Canada is growing and will grow by another 3 percent in 2000 (MacLean 1998, December 10: F2). Seemingly, the demand by Germans is based on the theory that many Germans grew up reading Karl May, a 19th century author who wrote romantic fables about Chief Wanitou who lived in a teepee and had many adventures (Cummings 1997, October 18: E11). The cliche of the mythical Indian is one that challenges Aboriginal tourism today because it does

not provide a complete picture of contemporary Native life. Despite this, it has not prevented the development of the Aboriginal tourism product. In his presentation at the Aboriginal Tourism and Trade Canada (ATTC) Forum held in Halifax in May 1999, Dr. Peter Williams from Simon Fraser University outlined the market forces driving this demand: experience/discovery, environmentalism, autonomy and immersion; these forces are driving niche markets from Europe, Asia and the U.S.A. (May 14, 1999). Canadian officials consider tourism to be a major growth area in the global economy and therefore their aim is to promote Canada's multicultural heritage and its Native Peoples in order to cash in on the flow of foreign revenues, particularly from the U.S. and Europe. As such, the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC), through its Aboriginal Program, intensely promotes Canada's "unique cultural heritage including its rich Native heritage" in order to capitalize in the tourism market (Blundell 1996: 30).

The program has focused most of its energy and $1.4-million annual budget around a theme called "Live the Legacy", which promotes Aboriginal cultural attractions in a directory entitled *Live the Legacy: A Guide to the Aboriginal Experience in Canada*; this directory of over 133 "exportable" native attractions has been distributed to about 45,000 travel agents, tours operators and wholesalers in Europe (Buhasz 1997, September: F1). In addition, there are many regional Aboriginal tourism associations springing forward as a component of the developing Aboriginal tourism industry, including one in the Maritimes called the Eastern Door Tourism Association to be established in September 1999 (A. Nibby-Woods, personal communication, April 29, 1999). Strings of tour companies are now busy coordinating visits to tourism sites. In an attempt to bring together the bewildering array of government, industry and professional bodies involved with Native enterprises, Aboriginal Tourism Team Canada (ATTC) was formed in January 1998 to act as a standing committee of representatives from private and government organizations with a mandate to develop and market Aboriginal tourism. Core funding for ATTC comes from ABC, while ATTC projects are paid by the Indian and Northern Affairs (DIAND). ATTC's

mandate includes a national inventory of Aboriginal tourism businesses, forging a national strategy for developing Aboriginal tourism products and coming up with an accreditation system based on cultural content, a system that has sparked debates in many corners of the industry.

As an observer and volunteer for the 1999 ATTC Forum held in Halifax, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to get involved in some of these debates at an informal level. My observation concluded that underscoring discussions about the authenticity of a cultural product and the subsequent accreditation program was the problem of interpretation. As Cohen explains, interpretation implies a substantial degree of subjectivity (1985: 17). The Forum was attended by a myriad of people, both Native and non-Native; all are involved in one capacity or another in the Aboriginal tourism industry. As expected, such social interaction brought with it the possibility of ambiguity and imprecision. Nonetheless, there still existed a common ground on which to stand despite the subjectivity of the interpretation:

> Different people oriented to the same phenomenon are likely to differ from each other in certain respects in their interpretations of it. They may not be aware of this difference, especially if the phenomenon is a common feature of their lives. Their disagreement is not necessarily, then, an impediment to their successful interaction. Indeed, often the contrary is the case. People can find common currency in behaviour whilst sill tailoring it subjectively [and interpretively] to their own needs (Cohen 1985: 17).

The common currency in this case was the more utilitarian goal of the Aboriginal tourism industry, not the subjective meanings and interpretations surrounding the authenticity debate. It is this common utilitarian goal, the projected monetary value of the industry, as well as strong market forces, that are driving Mi'kmaq communities in the Maritimes to create and develop cultural tourism initiatives that celebrate Mi'kmaq culture.

Aboriginal Tourism in the Maritimes

According to a report put out by the Canadian Tourism Research Institute, by the year 2016, 34 per cent of family households in Canada will be mortgage and kid-free, and such households stand to inherit $1 trillion from the previous generation ("Heading out to the wild side," 1997, July 30: 57). It is this group of people that is intent on taking "learning vacations". The growth in demand for "learning vacations" which include eco-tourism and cultural tourism, is paralled with the growth of the sites themselves. The intent in this section is not to compile an inventory of these tourism initiatives but simply to feature a few as an illustration that market trends and incentives have reached the Maritimes. What is unique about some of these tourism initiatives is that they are aimed at drawing domestic tourists as well as international ones.

In her research, Valda Blundell compiled an inventory of attractions across Canada where First Peoples' cultures are in some way (re)presented to tourists and she broke these attractions down into four categories: 1) fixed sites; 2) commercial arts and crafts outlets; 3) events; and 4) tours and live-in experiences (1996). Most of the initiatives in the Maritimes fall into categories 1, 2, and 3. The most recent tourism site to open is on the Chapel Island reserve in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. It is a fixed site called *Wjimawnemitenejc* or "Encounter With Us". It is a day excursion to Chapel Island First Nation where visitors can tour a Mi'kmaq encampment ("Chapel Island," 1999, June: 19). This site features a myriad of exhibits and demonstrations, including dancing and storytelling. Chapel Island has been both the traditional home of the Grand Chief of the Mi'kmaq Nation as well as the seat of the Mi'kmaw Grand Council, the representative political and religious body of the Mi'kmaw Nation (p. 19). It is for this reason that this particular tourism initiative is anticipated to be a draw to tourists. Also in Cape Breton is the Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Site which features a Native interpretive program along the Mi'kmaq

interpretive trail, developed in co-operation with the local band. There are Mi'kmaq interpreters on the trail, talking with visitors to the fortress (Langille 1996, June 21: 4).

Several other fixed sites that have been created in New Brunswick include "The Mi'kmaq Experience" in Bouctouche, which is currently being marketed in Europe, and *Metepenagiag - tjitjagamitj eimootltjig* - "Where Spirits Live". This particular fixed site on the Red Bank reserve, designated a heritage site by Canadian Heritage (Parks Canada), is the home of two archaeological digs, the Oxbow and the Augustine Mound. *Metepenagiag* is the result of a joint project involving many levels of government and is highly valued as an heritage resource. Parks Canada's involvement with *Metepenagiag* and the Mi'kmaq interpretive program at the Fortress of Louisbourg is part of its efforts to establish closer ties with Aboriginal peoples across Canada. The recent creation of its Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat will encourage consultation with Aboriginal peoples on: "Parks Canada's interpretation and public education programs to celebrate Aboriginal heritage at national parks and national historic sites across Canada and identify economic opportunities associated with national parks and national historic sites for the benefit of Aboriginal communities and Parks Canada" (Parks Canada 1999: 1).

Fort Listuguj in Listuguj P.Q. does not have the heritage site designation as applied by Parks Canada but it calls itself a heritage site. This fort is located on reserve, just across the river from New Brunswick. It is modelled after one in 1760 where Mi'kmaw and Acadians holed up during the war between British and French troops. The apparent constructedness of this site does not prevent 250 tourists a day from visiting the fort. The fort employs nearly 42 employees from on and off-reserve (Branswell 1998, August 12: C16). Another tourism venture that draws many tourists to Listuguj and contributes to their economy is their annual powwow.

The powwow as a cultural form spread to eastern Canada in 1960s and is valued not only symbolically but also as a source of revenue since powwows draw many tourists and visitors. The term itself is a Cree word meaning gathering; the equivalent in Mi'kmaq

is *mawiomi* . The powwow however is a celebration that originally emerged on the American plains where many tribes were resettled by the U.S. government at the end of the 19th century (Blundell 1989: 51). Finding its way here, it currently consists of two dance categories: traditional style and fancy style (p. 51). The powwow is now very popular in the Maritimes and many Native people follow a powwow circuit which is often referred to as 'following the powwow trail'. Virtually, every First Nation community in the Maritimes hosts a powwow, drawing Native as well as non-Native visitors. Eel River Bar First Nation hosted its first annual powwow in August 1998 and according to several sources in the community, it was a resounding success. The powwow is often described by Natives as a way of valuing their identity and distinct cultural heritage. Also, a powwow is regarded as a source of healing. Despite its innovative and changing nature, and its role as an esteem-generating activity for individuals, viewers are often predisposed to interpret it as a primitive tribal rite; it is frequently inscribed, most often by the press, 'as a surviving art of the past, rather than the creative and dynamic production that it is" (p. 51).

According to Blundell, the powwow is marked by symbols derived from Euro-Canadian society and indigenous society; it is a "juxtaposition of artistic forms that is constantly reconstructed and reevaluated" (1989: 56). She goes further by emphasising that part of the history of the powwow has been the reappropriation by Native artists/performers of this stereotypic Hollywood Native and the transformation of this Native into a "vibrant and individualized one who, when attended to, can signify new, and truer meanings about contemporary Natives" (p. 56). Blundell scrutinizes the appropriation of the image of the native person by representatives of the dominant culture particularly in tourism promotional material. What has changed significantly in the last decade is that Natives themselves are now the makers and creators of the images. Perhaps they have reappropriated the forms and images to some extent but how does this explain Blundell's hypothesis that what tourists often experience are contrived and orchestrated forms of authenticity, that in fact, reproduce a fallacious world? If the reappropriated

images and cultural product produced by Natives can become with time widely accepted as 'authentic', so it can, although changed through commodification, acquire new meaning for its producers. According to Erik Cohen, "new meanings may be added to old ones, which persevere into the new situation" (1988: 382). As the case of powwows exemplify, tourist-oriented products frequently acquire new meanings for the locals, as they become a diacritical mark of their ethnic or cultural identity (p. 383). Symbolically effective, the very ambiguity of symbols makes them a resource that mark boundaries of identity as well as community (Cohen 1985: 55). When my nieces proudly adorn themselves with their powwow regalia and dance, there is no doubt in my mind that what is happening is a profound symbolic construction whereby meanings are being formed by both myself as well as my nieces. It is at moments like that when I am convinced that symbolic constructions are powerful elements in the formation of our identities and sense of selves. Not only are powwows tourist events and gatherings for Mi'kmaqs where boundaries are reinforced, maintained and negotiated, but they have simultaneously become diacritical markers of people's sense of community (Lerch and Bullers 1996; Cohen 1985) and sense of self and form part of a vehicle for local economic development (Aronoff 1993).

The Aboriginal Heritage Garden

In 1995 Eel River Bar Chief Everett Martin signed a memorandum of understanding detailing the co-operation with the National Zoological Park of the Smithsonian Institution for the development and implementation of the Gardens. A similar agreement exists with Ottawa's Canadian Museum of Nature (Macfarlane 1998, February 5; Eel River Bar First Nation 1996: 6). The project includes human resource sponsorship which solicits professional and informed human resources from organizations like the Smithsonian or the Canadian Museum of Nature, as well as drawing on cultural, anthropological and botanical expertise from several institutions in the Maritimes.[2] Further to this, the project includes

negotiations with the Campbellton New Brunswick Community College for staff training. Another sub-project associated with the Garden initiative known as the Douglas Fir Project, entails reusing some wood products in the construction of some of the buildings on site. There is also an in-house consultant, Gilles Soucy, who acts as mentor and co-ordinator. The details outlined above illustrate not only that the project is professionally sponsored both administratively and interpretively, but that the emphasis of all the negotiations and partnerships across many public and private sectors is to indicate that the project, from the perspective of the band, is a stable professionally presented attraction that will appeal to mainstream tour operators as well as mainstream society. Industry experts stress that there is a tremendous emphasis on timeliness and reliability, especially in the European market where there are tough legal guarantees to ensure that a tourism product lives up to its advertisement (Buhasz 1997, September 27: F1). The above developments and partnerships however are not without their challenges. A notable challenge occurred early in 1994 when the band did not have access to land in order to develop its idea.

In 1994, Eel River Bar First Nation had no land other than the 220 acres of swampy terrain accorded it in 1808 (Heckbert 1996, April 23). After numerous negotiations, the band managed to acquire an extra 110 acres of land across from a provincial campground through a bargaining chip: the Eel River Bar Water Agreement. In the early 1960s, the provincial government and municipality of Dalhousie asked the band's "permission" to build a dam to provide water for the town of Dalhousie and its pulp and paper mill. In an interview with the Telegraph Journal, Margaret Labillois, an elder from Eel River Bar, refers to the dam as a serious mistake since it destroyed a resource base for Eel River Bar; her reference to this mistake speculates as to the motives of the chief in the early 60s: "He said it [the dam] was good but I knew it was never going to be the same again. The dam went through and people realized they'd been sold down the river. In seven years there were no more clams" (Hughes 1997, February 8). The agreement between Eel River Bar and the government, municipality and industry consisted of $10,000

a year from 1970 to 1990 so when the agreement came up for renewal they traded some of the money they surely would have been offered for the 110 acres on which the Garden now sits (Heckbert 1996, April 23). Having accessed the land in October 1994, the band now has a 20-year lease and an option to buy. It is on this land that Eel River Bar hopes to draw an estimated 40,000 - 50,000 visitors, land that will feature plants used by the Mi'kmaw for medicinal, spiritual, and other purposes.

The focus of the Garden revolves around plants and interpretation of the way in which they were manipulated by Mi'kmaq to aid them in their ways of life. According to a report compiled by Eel River Bar's Economic Development office, "close to $2 million will be spent to provide clear and credible messages to the visitors about the contributions that have been made to society by Aboriginal people in terms of medicines, foods, spirituality, and material culture as they relate to the use of native plants" (Eel River Bar First Nation 1996: 2). According to its *Master Development Plan*, during the peak season this project is expected to employ a minimum of 35 people in positions from administrators, animators and interpreters, security and grounds keepers. During the off-season it is expected to employ 5 or 6 people in administrative and managerial positions (Eel River Bar First Nation 1999: 16). Its interpretive program will be framed within several trails and on-site demonstrations. The driving force behind the creation of the Aboriginal Heritage Gardens and its interpretive program is the opportunity it provides in educating Native as well as non-Native people about Mi'kmaq ancestral heritage. In a sense, it's a project 'for the people by the people' as Macdonald (1997) would describe it. The director of Economic Development and Tourism in Eel River Bar First Nation states that the Garden is an opportunity to share intimate knowledge about Mi'kmaq ancestral heritage (Eel River Bar First Nation 1996: 2) which inevitably translates into the commodification of that heritage. As outlined by MacDonald in Chapter Two, the idea of heritage as being inalienable resists the tendency to see local people as merely the passive recipients of an external world which impinges upon them (1997). If heritage is contrarily viewed as an *alienable* possession that

can be bought and sold, how does this explain the revitalization engendered in the development of cultural tourism? Or the tribal consciousness that is expressed in the research data of this thesis?

There are currents that ran through Chapters One and Two that inevitably flow into this Chapter, particularly in this section on the Heritage Gardens. Take for example the question of authenticity, or tradition, or culture; all are contested in both studies of ethnic identity and tourism and the task of exploring this terrain can prove to be a daunting. For purposes of this section, I will examine briefly the notion of authenticity as it relates to ethnic identity and the underlying inventedness of tradition. In order to situate this discussion of the more 'imagined' aspects of identity, I must present the overall objectives of the Aboriginal Heritage Garden as outlined in *The Aboriginal Heritage Garden Interpretive Concept Study and Business Plan.*:

I. To re-build the spirit of the Eel River Bar community through rediscovery of their cultural identity and heritage.

II. To re-build the economy of the Eel River Bar community through the creation of meaningful jobs and sources of revenue generation.

III. To showcase the rich ancestral heritage of the Mi'qmaq culture and contribute to its preservation.

IV. To highlight the contributions that Aboriginal people have made to society in terms of medicines, foods, spirituality, and material culture.

V. To draw attention to the new role and increasingly positive image of native peoples in Canadian society

VI. To create a repository of aboriginal knowledge and contribute to the growing, world-wide body of information about medicinal uses of plants.

VII. To create an icon for First Nations in Atlantic Canada and to lead the way for other First Nations who want to undertake similar projects.

VIII. To demonstrate that in developing the Aboriginal Heritage Garden, the Eel River Band is applying principles of land rehabilitation and sustainable development.

(The Tourism Company Team: 3)[3]

The usage of the following terms in these objectives are worth highlighting: *rediscovery, re-build, preservation, new, create, heritage* and *icon,* for they point directly to a perfect analogous study conducted by Cameron and Gatewood (1994). Cameron and Gatewood's paper, which explores cultural tourism in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, is firmly connected to the terms that I have indicated. In fact, the parallels and similarities between Eel River Bar and Bethlehem are remarkable. Both communities have expended considerable time and financial resources to recreate their history and ethnic heritage; both provide a heritage through tourism that is constructed but appears organically connected with the local people; and both have the potential of altering local residents' own impressions of their own community and of themselves. A deliberately crafted marketing of the image which can be seen as a plausible fantasy and/or tenets of the past, is embraced by local residents as real and meaningful (Cameron and Gatewood 1994: 29). The effect of both texts is to communicate traditions that are timeless and that the past pervades the present, illustrating a point made by Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983) that traditions and heritage that appear to have antiquity are often recent and deliberately constructed. The kind of invented tradition which Hobsbawn and Ranger believe exists in part to legitimize the present with reference to the past. Both Bethlehem and Eel River Bar can be read as a reservoir of "authentic local sentiment and a mythical set of ritual practices which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity"(Smith 1993: 295). Cameron and Gatewood refer to this construction or invention in Bethlehem as projecting a *gemeinschaft* image, that is, projecting an image of real community (1994: 24). Bethlehem situates the major tourist event in the city's historic district, and Eel River Bar situates the Garden in nature, a few kilometers from the reservation. The question remains, what does invention and the gemeinschaft image have to do with identity and authenticity? Cameron and Gatewood provide an answer to this question in the following summary:

As for the locals who are involved in the design of new programs and the tourism text, they appear to work under the assumption that they are merely unveiling pre-existing motifs already present in the community; their construction is a plausible reality and one they, and others would like to believe...the subjective image of gemeinschaft – fact or fiction, warranted or not – can be as powerful to people as any objective reality. Authenticity, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder (1994: 30).

As for the Mi'kmaq of Eel Bar, the Aboriginal Heritage Garden is a way of re-establishing a former connection with the natural world and re-discovering their ancient knowledge of plants. This process will, with time, come to have greater significance in terms of the contents of ethnic identity. Nagel (1997) pursues this point by stating that according to Hobsbawn (1993), invented (and, she argues, revised or revitalized) traditions appear to serve three related purposes:

(1) to establish or symbolize social cohesion or group membership; (2) to establish or legitimize institutions, status, or authority relations; and (3) to socialize or inculcate beliefs, values or behaviors. The invention of tradition is very much the construction of community – the ways groups create shared meanings, define membership, and pull themselves together into cohesive social units...Given the community-building agenda, Hobsbawn's argument can be applied not only to "invented" traditions but to the reconstruction, revision, or revitalization of historical cultural practices (Nagel 1997: 46).

Borrowed and blended, invented and constructed, or genuinely indigenous to the Mi'kmaq, modern-day manifestations of Native culture and spirituality have had powerful influences on many lives. Adopting structural forms means reconstituting them with meaning which then inform our selves and thus our identity. Alternatively, to inform in this context can also mean to inform others of who you are. According to Tord Larsen, when a Mi'kmaq celebrates St. Anne's Day at Chapel Island, he or she is not necessarily saying "Who am I?"; what they are saying is "Who we are!" (1983: 111). The oppositional character of Larsen's study is another element in our complex formation of identity. Yet, despite the popularity of the Garden project as a celebration and tribute to the contributions

made by Aboriginal people to society and its position as a marker of identity, the project and others similar to it do not remain uncontested.

Contentions and Differentiations

In any discussion concerning Aboriginal tourism the first area of contention is the question of what is an authentic experience or product. The issue of what is authentic or not is a pertinent question for this thesis since the many Aboriginal tourism products being established in the Maritimes are subject to the scrutiny of major funders in terms of the authenticity of their product. The authenticity vs. contrived debate has already been examined in Chapter Two but I raise the issue of this debate once again because it is linked directly to an area that is increasingly causing friction and division in the industry: the accreditation process. Why an Aboriginal Tourism Accreditation Program?

The authenticity debate centres around the accreditation program that is in the process of being instituted by Aboriginal Tourism Team Canada (ATTC). Aboriginal Business Canada (ABC) for instance measures authenticity using the following four criteria: 1) participation of Aboriginal people; 2) traditional Aboriginal techniques or methods; 3) local community involvement; 4) portrayal of local customs and culture (Aboriginal Business Canada, n.d.). There is a danger with establishing strict criteria that is not flexible just as it is to have standards that are too fluid and unstructured. When people in the tourism industry, whether they be stakeholders, producers, or observers like myself, are asked, "What is authentic?" the answers range from authoritative knowledge on what is authentic to not knowing how to respond. The varied answers therefore show that we each have our own meanings and interpretations that are derived from our own idiosyncratic positions in this world. The idea of authenticity has to be determined by those that see the item, the product or the service being delivered from their own perspective. Institutions like ABC and ATTC could very well be shapers of cultural forms but do they have the

power to impute meanings onto these forms? Of course they do not. If they did have this power they would have deity status.

This accreditation has come under attack by many people in the industry, particulary by Aboriginals attempting to get a product on the market. The Garden co-ordinators and mentors do not challenge the fact that some overall standards need to be put in place that offer some generic rules and guidelines, but the contentious issue is the lack of research on the part of the state authorities (ATTC, CTC, ABC, etc.) when they determine what is authentic or not. This will undoubtedly continue to cause differentiations at many levels. In terms of this state involvement, it may succeed in managing cultural tourism within a state apparatus but it will not be able to manage meaning embedded within the product.

Not only does the state and the market define official priorities of tourism programs but the fate of some initiatives have been complicated by reserve politics and rivalries. Some observers say that projects initiated by individuals or a particular chief and his councillors, can face neglect and even abuse when a rival chief and his own group of supporters are elected (Buhasz 1997, September 27: F1). Furthermore, competition for financial resources and industry recognition abound not only internally but across communities as well. Inevitably, tourism development is aimed at making money and inherent in this economic liberal structure is the potential for competition and lack of unity in purpose.

Another area of contention is the ideological consequences of practices that inscribe as "authentic" only those so-called "traditional" or "heritage" forms thought to survive from the past (Blundell 1996: 31). This is criticized because it does not provide a contemporary view of Native life. Many critics, including Blundell, identify problematic aspects of tourism while failing to recognize that First Peoples themselves are increasingly looking to tourism as a means of economic development as well as a way of presenting their heritage to tourists in ways that avoid the stereotypic practices that they contest. And if they do use re-appropriated images of the mythical Indian, whose right is it to criticize their value,

legitimacy or authenticity? By dismissing the form we may be inevitably dismissing the person to whom that form has value and meaning.

The rhetoric of one culture, another contentious issue involving Aboriginal tourism, was attacked in an eloquent presentation at the ATTC Forum by Jim Logan, First Nations Curatorial Resident at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. In his plea, he asked all present, which included both public and private stakeholders in the industry, not to take advantage of the market demands by selling pan-Indian products and images that truly do not represent the unique and diverse Native tribes that exist in Canada:

> Try to be as authentic as possible. If you are Mi'kmaw don't be caught walking around in front of tourists at the pier with a Plains Indian headdress to pretend you are traditional. Wear something Mi'kmaw. I assure you it will impress the tourists just as much plus you will be living up to your ancestry and at the same time telling our children. I don't have to dress like a Plains Indian to be Mi'kmaw. The same can be said about craft. I am tired of walking through Indian crafts fairs only to see the same product on each table, some so poorly made that it actually cheapens all of the work at the fair. Produce a product that is indigenous to your culture. Research the design, colour scheme, history of what you make and make it a point to produce quality work. Take the time to research and you will be surprised at the amount of new products you can introduce to the common market and with this research you will have legitimate information of the product that you can pass on to you customers that in turn educates them to your First Nation...tourist trade and craft people are by many means educators of the general public whether they want to be or not. Present authenticity, truth and quality then your reflection in your product will be respectful and honourable. Remember our children, your children are watching (May 15, 1999).

Many of the contentious issues and debates embedded in Jim Logan's presentation are unlikely going to be resolved because there are many Aboriginal people who do attach meanings to symbols that are not indigenously their own. On appearance, pan-Indian symbolism may appear the same but does it not mask the differentiation within itself by using a common set of symbols? To limit the nature or capacity of certain symbols to form part of one person markers of identity and culture is to persist in speaking of culture in a structurally deterministic way. Not everyone shares the same criticisms espoused by Logan, particularly those who have invested part of their selves in some of these tourism products.

A final area of contention and perhaps one of the most divisive I have observed thus far is the whole question of whether spiritual items can be bought and sold. This debate is inherent in the commodification of culture but it implicates the Heritage Garden directly since its main feature and market strength is the wide array of pharmacopoeia traditionally used by the Mi'kmaw. It is no coincidence that the product being offered by the Heritage Garden is concurrent with an increased interest in herbology and homeopathic medicines by both scientists and lay people. Not only is there an environmental challenge in the growth of the use of herbs and natural medical plants but the demand for these products is both socio-economic and spiritual. It was noted earlier that divisions exists between Mi'kmaq traditionalists and politicians and it is on this very issue of whether one can sel! traditional medicine or not that their main differences occur. Selling sweetgrass is considered taboo by many traditionalists but it is happening and inevitable divisions arise as a result. In fact, there are even divisions within the traditionalist camp on this very issue. For those Aboriginals involved in the commodification of culture, particularly the selling and marketing of traditional/spiritual items, there is an agreement on the common forms (e.g. sweetgrass for smudging purposes) but they differ on meaning. As Stromberg argues in his study of religion: "members render them [symbols] intelligible to themselves through their personal experience of their faith...people may share commitments without sharing beliefs; it follows that they may constitute a community without that community being based in consensus" (Stromberg 1986: 13 cited in Cohen 1994: 18).

Conclusion

McKay's *Quest of the Folk* debunks Folk romanticism (1994: 298). The same could be attempted with the myth of the "Noble Savage" or with "Mi'kmaq traditionalism" or for that matter, with the current cultural representations being featured at several tourism sights across the Maritimes. This is not my intention, for doing so would be ethically

troubling for two reasons: 1) I can be criticized for deconstructing representations of collectivities advanced by Native social actors, using either the word invention or construction; and 2) there are many Mi'kmaq people who do identify with these myths, whether contrived or not. It must be emphasised that traditions, ideologies, and beliefs, whether based on pre-existing realities or not, constitute meaning and value for several of the participants featured in my research. I believe this point parallels quite closely to what McKay illustrates: language is multireferential; there is no one-to-one relationship between the linguistic form and the object to which it intends to refer (1994: 300). Symbols, whether in the form of a craft, a myth or a language, have, by their mere existence and articulation, the power to become embedded with meaning imputed by the person who thinks of feels them. Meaning is not a stamp that is used for labelling certain objects; "reality is composed of interpretations of meanings and rules of interpretations on the basis of which people orientate themselves in their everyday life" (Alasuutari 1995: 27). McKay's analysis in indispensable and illustrates the need to go beyond the Folk (or the Indian!) as stable identities whose meanings are straightforward, yet, does he truly go beyond by exploring subjective meanings? The challenge of using the Heritage Garden in a figurative sense as an idiom to explore questions of authenticity, ethnicity and culture is that it is a negotiable item on many different fronts. Whether it is used to explore development theory or the question of authenticity in tourism or even used as a resource for a social science inquiry, the nature of its existence and others like it is that it is subject to subjectivities. That is the beauty of its existence: it allows for an inventory of perceptions, each mediated by the idiosyncratic experience of the individual or field of inquiry.

Notes

[1] For a critique of the internal colonial model see Wotherspoon and Satzewich 1993.

[2] The Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine's summer 1999 newsletter features the signing of a cooperation agreement between the College and the Eel River Bar Heritage

Gardens. This agreement envisages sharing knowledge and collaborating on various research initiatives aimed at providing healing opportunities. The College, in cooperation with the Gardens, will begin cataloguing all the medicinal plants located on the site and will soon publish this material in a report. What this illustrates is that the Garden is not just a tourism site aimed at attracting tourists; it has become a repository for much more. There is the expectation the Garden will eventually be a cornerstone for a centre of excellence for healing (T. Dedam, personal communication, August 13, 1999).

[3] The document used for the preliminary stage of this research was a draft of the Interpretive Study. The current *Interpretive Study and Business Plan* (July 1999) was recently made available by the Garden Coordinator and credit for its completion was made possible by funding under the Canada/New Brunswick Regional Economic Development Agreement (REDA). The Agreement is administered for the federal government by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and for the provincial government by the Regional Development Corporation (RDC).

Chapter Four

"We are only just beginning the journey":
Subjective Perceptions and Meanings of the Aboriginal Heritage Gardens

Academic Approaches to Tourism: The Missing Self

> Our elders used to say, change is good, because it's like the four seasons, you know you prepare yourself for summer by cultivating and in the fall you harvest your crops and prepare for the winter. Change is constant and for some reason we kind of missed making a change, there was a gap of years when Eel River Bar First Nation has a disease, it was like cancer. All of a sudden it took someone or something else coming in and showing a different perspective and showing a whole different picture of what your community can be. The Chief and Council were receptive to looking at these changes that would better their community and that was a strength in itself. As soon as that medicine came in it started strengthening the people and started killing off some of that disease. I call it a cancer because we were so sick and there was no advancement. Since we have new people coming in with new ideas the Chief and Council are receptive to these ideas. This new perspective gives the community new perspective and it creates pride, pride that was lost for so long so it's coming back (Po., March 8, 1999).

As noted in Chapters Two and Three, research on Aboriginal tourism concentrates on ethnic relations between tourists and Natives and according to the literature, tourism may have positive and/or negative outcomes for the host society. This research raises questions about the nature of its inquiry, the legitimacy of its findings and inevitably positions my research as a unique instrument in the exploration of tourism, ethnicity and culture. For example, a central feature of Blundell's research was to explore representational conventions that construct tourism initiatives and thus the meanings that they convey to tourists (1996: 32). There is no evidence in her work of what the hosts think or feel nor is there any indication that the tourist initiative may have meaning for Aboriginal people. Concepts of the self and identity are not even alluded to in her analyses and we left thinking that Aboriginal people are passive recipients of an external world rather that active agents engaged in creating and recreating their own self conceptions. She does however provide general insight into the area of Aboriginal tourism in Canada and has alerted researchers to the many critiques of the industry.

Erik Cohen presents eight of the most important conceptual and theoretical approaches to the study of tourism which include commercialized hospitality, democratized travel, modern leisure activity, a modern variety of the traditional pilgrimage, an expression

of basic cultural themes, an acculturative process, a type of ethnic relations, and a form of neo-colonialism (1984). Within this conceptual and theoretical categorisation offered by Cohen lies a growing body of literature on ethnic/cultural tourism that emphasizes the social and environmental impact of tourism on indigenous peoples, whether positive or negative. Yet, little research reflects upon the impact of tourism development on ethnic and/or cultural identity from the perspective of the Native person. What category does my research fall into? Is it an expression of cultural themes? Is it about ethnic relations? Or does it stand on its own? My research is not about attitudes and perceptions of tourists ("them") but rather attitudes and perceptions of Mi'kmaq people by Mi'kmaq people ("us"). More specifically, it is about a few people in one particular Mi'kmaq community and does not claim to speak for other Mi'kmaq communities in the Maritimes. As stipulated earlier in the introductory chapter, my inquiry is not of a grandiose nature but is rather a micro examination at a phenomena that could potentially be taking place in other communities. Another unique aspect of my inquiry is that I have placed my self at its centre, a feature rarely found in studies of ethnic identity, culture and tourism. What follows are a few more examples of Aboriginal tourism used as resources for social science inquiry.

In a study conducted in New Mexico, Carol Chiago Lujan provided insightful information on Taos Pueblo attitudes towards tourism and its implications for their lives. Her work is unique in that it is one of the first studies on tourism based on the perspectives of Taos Pueblo residents and not the perspective of the tourists (1993: 107). However, Lujan's research accentuates the endurance of Taos Pueblo people and culture despite the impact of tourism by claiming that the Taos Pueblo have "adhered tenaciously to their way of life" (p. 103). Is it realistic to view culture as static rather than dynamic? If Lujan's study examines the ways in which the Indians have been able to adjust to the steady flow of tourism, how can this form of ethnic relations not alter cultural thoughts, actions, and symbols? Is it viable to describe an indigenous tribe such as the Taos Pueblo as one that has not been affected by interaction? Harald Prins is guilty of the same when he uses the

words "cultural survival" when describing contemporary Mi'kmaq despite his repeated

mention that Mi'kmaqs have often changed indigenous traditions or blended them with new

or foreign elements. If this transitory product is a cultural composite, an "amalgam" then is

it appropriate to refer to Mi'kmaq culture as having *survived* ? Harold McGee identifies this

in his critique of Prins' research: Prins' definition of culture often focuses on *content* (trait

inventories) rather than culture as a *process* (rules for action) (McGee 1996: 332). Besides

adhering to an essentialist or primordial paradigm, Lujan's research is evidently operating

through separations of phenomena into distinct and proper categories of positive vs.

negative impacts of tourism on the Taos Pueblo. These binary categories often described

as modernist ways of thinking (Firat 1995: 106) do not account for more postmodern

approaches which consider subjective meanings within these categories. As Malcolm Crick

(1989) suggests, due to the complex and culturally diffuse nature of tourism there is a need

for more imaginative approaches to its study. It is this point that I believe my research

compliments the shortcomings cited in Lujan and offers a more imaginative approach to an

area of study that is extremely diffuse and difficult to judge.

Duggan's (1997) analysis of an Eastern Cherokee Craft cooperative is another

example of research on ethnic/cultural tourism. This work is similar to Lujan's in that it is

directed to the ability of one Native group to benefit from tourism without sacrificing their

own sense of cultural integrity. Yet, Duggan's research differs since she highlights the

Cherokee's ability to take advantage of outside mediation while maintaining traditional

modes of production and decision-making (1997: 31). A further point illustrated by

Duggan is the notion of what is or isn't authentic culture. According to her analysis, an

authentic culture is not one that has been untouched or unchanged, but one that retains the

ability to determine the appropriateness of its adaptations (p. 31). Citing Neely (1991),

Duggan suggests that "crafts are an integral part of a chain of signals that marks the ethnic

and social boundaries between Cherokees and non-Cherokees (p. 48). Though Duggan

illustrates that positive economic and social benefits can result when tourism is culturally

informed and indigenously controlled, what is lacking is the voice of the Cherokees themselves. We are left without any indication of the Cherokees' concepts of self or their self-identification as Cherokees. Due to this lack of voice through the non-inclusion of illustrative quotations, we are left without the meaning of the tourism experience from the Cherokee point of view and what these meanings could potentially reveal in terms of core and relational elements of ethnic identity. Both Lujan and Duggan fall short with regards to exploring notions of self and identity.

In light of the shortcomings cited above in the study of Aboriginal tourism, care was taken when conceiving and formulating the questions I was to ask in the focus groups interviews. The composition of the questions for the interviews were divided into three sections: 1) individual identity; 2) community identity; and 3) the Aboriginal Heritage Garden. The attempt here was to clearly and logically connect the questions. The hope was that the questions would come full circle, since the questions regarding the Garden would probe further the concept of individual identity and thus the self, taking us back to the first few questions on individual selves. The information derived from these questions will be reassembled differently from the original version of the questioning sequence. Furthermore, this analysis will reflect an interpretive summary organized by themes rather than questions. The reason for this is to prevent redundancy because often the same themes appear in several questions.

The following analysis combines a series of methods: transcript based analysis, tape-based analysis, note-based analysis and memory-based analysis. I also draw on a series of informal conversations. As mentioned, the presentation of the analysis follows an interpretative summary style that captures illustrative quotes within each thematic category. In my attempt to interpret, that is, to 'make sense' of what I observed and listened to "the sense we make is 'ours' and may or may not coincide with that intended by those whose behaviour it was" (Cohen 1985: 17). What this analysis is in fact is merely an attempt to capture an interpretation of others' interpretations. And the ultimate goal that follows is to

enlighten and capture themes and meanings that are often not captured in other works that examine Aboriginal cultural tourism.

Initial Impressions

There are many items that can never be captured in transcripts. For instance, the sense of the group interview, the mood of the discussion, body language and the tone and emphasis with which the participants express themselves, are all examples. The following general impressions are based on field notes taken after the group interviews and during the hours spent listening and transcribing them. I believe these reflections are essential to contextualizing the data that surfaced.

My first reflection was based on how the groups differed. After making general comparisons across groups I was able to contrast one set of data with another and thereby conclude how very different each group discussion developed. Initially, I was perplexed by the differences between groups; the elders and the youth did not disclose as much as the men and women did. I initially did not know how to interpret this and I entertained the notion that this was a weakness in the data. However, as Krueger explains, "silence does not imply a lack of opinion...sometimes what isn't said can be important" (1998: 20). The youth for instance were more inhibited and as a moderator I had to probe them more frequently for information. Similarly, the elders did not disclose fully yet they had strong views and opinions that did not directly reveal self-conceptions of identity. For instance, in their reflections on the past they expressed an incredible disillusionment with the younger generation. They consider the youth lazy and too reliant on the Band Council and compared the resourcefulness of their own youth as a characteristic they wish the current younger generation to aspire to. In terms of the Aboriginal Heritage Garden, several of the youth and elders seemed to be out of touch with the initiative; they know of its existence and that it can potentially help the community economically but their emotional commitment

to it was not expressed. Only two youth expressed some attachment to the initiative. Both of these groups and their apparent "lack of" candour in terms of meanings does not imply that meanings do not exist within them. The Garden as a symbol gives us the capacity to make meaning (Cohen 1985: 16); the fact that meanings are not expressed or articulated does not mean they do not exist. Minimal disclosure may say more about the groups' relationship to me than it does about the meanings they hold with regards to certain symbols. My association with these individuals is not well established and may explain the absence of complete disclosure.

This lack of attachment to the Garden can also be explained from a symbolic interactionist's perspective which would link a lack of attachment as a lack of meaningful activity. Citing Blumer, Prus explains that "the meaning of such a thing is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows" (1994: 11). This does not mean that meaning does not exist - it simply needs a tug by the other in interaction in order to emerge and be articulated.

The men and women on the other hand expressed themselves with very little reservation. I believe this had more to do with their familiarity with me, since many would be considered my peers. Both these groups were able to express a strong interrelationship between their selves and the community and their identification with symbols were often articulated clearly and with emotion. Essentially, their ability for self-reflectivity was greater. I will not elaborate further on their disclosures; I will let their voices speak for themselves.

Boost Our Base: Utilitarianism and Economic Development

One of the key differences between the groups was the emphasis placed on the utilitarian value of the Heritage Gardens versus the more symbolic nature. The elders and the youth emphasized the utilitarian value more often while both the women and the men

pointed to the more symbolic dimension. This is not to say that the men and women never

mentioned the utilitarian value; in fact, everyone agreed that the project will benefit the

community's economy but the elders and the youth mentioned it more often. Typical

comments by the participants included:

> The people in the community enjoy hearing about it because they think of work. When I heard about the Garden I thought "good, finally we have an economic development base. It's nice to have an economic development base, to have some sort of base. Dalhousie has its paper company and other communities have their base. I was glad to find out that finally we have something because at first I thought our own economic base was gone and that was the clam beds, but then I found out, hey we can do this (Po., March 8, 1999).

> More money; This helps make our community better, we can put better things in our community. We can build more stuff and our community can develop (D., March 9, 1999).

> It doesn't just help the Band, like the tourists come in and they have to buy gas and other things from the community. While spending money when they're there it goes back into the community (C., March 9, 1999).

> I would like to see some people opening up some businesses like hotels, or Bed and Breakfasts or craft shops. I hope that people see the opportunity. A small craft shop will attract tourists. When the tourists just come from the Garden they will need some services. I hope that the community is receptive to providing services (Po., March 8, 1999).

> This is a start to an economic foundation. This is a component to an economic foundation which will bring about self-government. Economic self-sufficiency is necessary and we need essential building blocks to control that destiny. The economy and education are truly important and tourism can help in this way. Tourism, to a small degree, is an integral component to the education of our people. It will be part of that building block needed for our future destiny (C., March 8, 1999).

As previously mentioned the elders were more concerned with the utilitarian

nature of the Garden project. Attempts on my part as a moderator seemed futile when

trying to draw more personal anecdotes or deeper reflections. Krueger reminds focus

groups researchers to be aware of what is not often said and with this in mind I believe

that the elders who revealed very little did in fact reveal much more than I had first

suspected. When I asked about the Garden and their feelings the following dialogue ensued:

We don't know much about it (Ma., March 8, 1999).

It's going to bring in jobs, more jobs (All, March 8, 1999).

That's about all though (Ma., March 8, 1999).

It will bring more tourists around here...it's good to bring in moretourist around here and this is going to help the community (S., March 8, 1999).

It's going to bring in more work (V., March 8, 1999).

We're not sure when it will be ready....we might not be around when it opens (Ma., March 8, 1999).

The only concern is our weather. Summer is so short and that might prevent people from coming. That would be the only thing that would dampen it. Sometimes we only get one good month from the whole summer (M., March 8, 1999).

One good thing is that we might get some tourists from the States. That would bring in good money with the exchange rate and everything (I., March 8, 1999).

The weather won't bother the tourists too much....the tourists at the trailer park hung in there all summer...it didn't really bother them too much (S., March 8, 1999).

Yah, they get a good crowd at the trailer park here and in town. It's always full (I., March 8, 1999).

When I asked the elders about their concerns regarding the arrival of tourists, hoping that this would be the stimulus that would prompt further insight, the following discussion unfolded:

I don't mind if they come here (Ma., March 8, 1999).

I don't mind them. That's ok, as long as they aren't trouble makers. We have our own (M., March 8, 1999)!

We're proud that it's being built here on this reserve whereas it could have been built God knows where and we were chosen to have it here (S., March 8, 1999).

It'll be nice to meet new people (I., March 8, 1999).

I heard that we should be getting tourists from all over the world (M., March 8, 1999).

There will be some bad ones and some good ones (W., March 8, 1999).

That's right (S., March 8, 1999).

It's gonna help not just our reserve but the whole area like Charlo, Dalhousie. There's nothing left around here (M., March 8, 1999).

In comparison to the other groups and individuals interviewed, it is evident that the

elders truly revealed very little except for agreeing that the Garden is a good project that will

help the community and that the economic rewards will help the surrounding communities

as well. The question remains, why didn't they disclose as much? I firmly believe that the

most evident reason is that the nature of the interview did not allow for full disclosure.

There was an apparent lack of freedom despite my efforts to make the interview relaxed and

informal. As a researcher I also had to reflect critically on the social context. Kirby and

Mckenna in *Methods from the Margins* note that "critical reflection involves an

examination of the social reality within which people exist and out of which they are

functioning...context is the fabric or structure in which the research, or the research

participants' experiences, has occurred" (1989: 129). Understanding the data provided by

the elders of Eel River Bar requires understanding contextual patterns and how they are

sustained and controlled. I do not claim to understand them nor will I attempt to reveal

them but I do know however that the distinction between the data from the elders and some

of the other groups is a reflection of different life experiences and to a certain extent,

generational differences. Furthermore, I am aware that at least one of the elders grew up in

a home where her father forbade her mother and siblings from speaking Mi'kmaq. If this

woman was conditioned not to speak her language then how can she feel free to speak to a

student researcher about her inner thoughts and feelings? It is this social context that helps

me understand what *is* revealed by what is *not* revealed.

Another explanation for this emphasis on the utilitarian nature of the Garden relates

to the fact that the powerful symbolic dimension of the Garden is not yet established in

some as it is in others. Time and exposure will perhaps contribute to this more symbolic

dimension. Furthermore, as proposed in Chapter One, I contemplate whether this symbolic attachment will occur when one is a committed Christian. I am aware that some of the elders are faithful Roman Catholics and may not feel a need to identify with a project like the Heritage Gardens. This is only a hypothetical exploration but interesting nonetheless.

The Desire to Learn, the Desire to Teach: Medicines, Language and Culture

In 1994 I was asked by a reknowned Mi'kmaw man from Nova Scotia which reserve I came from and as I began to explain my origins he asked why I did not speak my mother tongue. As I proceeded to explain he dismissed me, spoke to his wife and daughter in Mi'kmaq and then they all began to laugh. I did not know how to react since I was uncertain whether they were laughing at my inability to speak the language or something else. Nonetheless, that laughter triggered a slight inadequacy within me because of my linguistic inabilities. The following dialogue between the youth vaguely reminded me of that uncertain moment in 1994; it is a dialogue that emphasizes the desire to learn Mi'kmaq since there are currently very few people in Eel River Bar who speak the language except for a few elders:

> We're the least Native reserve I find though like all around Restigouche they're all into culture and stuff, they still speak Mi'kmaq. I don't know a word of Mi'kmaq; I know a couple of words; Nobody taught us that so I don't know (K., March 9, 1999).

> We know that language is available but it's at night time and it's only once a week though (D., March 9, 1999).

> Sometimes we don't have time (B., March 9, 1999).

> I think if they taught us a long time ago then maybe we'd be able to speak it (K., March 9, 1999).

> I took it from grade 1 to 4 (L., March 9, 1999).

> We've been taught a little bit here and there but we could never have a conversation with someone from Restigouche; atleast the little ones are getting more Mi'kmaq than we did (C., March 9, 1999).

> It would be really cool to learn Mi'kmaq like maybe if we could take it at school as a course (J., March 9. 1999).

This desire to learn Mi'kmaq reflects not only a desire to acquire and thus share symbols with a minority, but it reflects a desire to acquire culture. for culture exists within a language. The learning of Mi'kmaq is vital to the revitalization of culture but this does not mean that the current shared symbols limit the individuals' self-identification as Native. For example, the reserve as a community is a marker of identity just as a band card is another.

The youth who spoke above emphasized a strong desire to learn the language but they also expressed a strong desire to learn about traditions and culture. These areas, according to the youth, can be learned through a venue like the Heritage Garden. Some of these desires were expressed in the following comments:

> It will be good for the reserve to learn more about our people, our culture and our ancestors (L., March 9, 1999).

> I think it's a really good idea to show our community and other people outside of our community how we live and how our ancestors lived...how they used plants as different medicines (C., March 9, 1999).

> I think that it's going to actually work out. It would be interesting to learn about our ancestors and it will definitely benefit our community (K., March 9, 1999).

Though seasonally employed for now, several of the people working on this project are actively involved in training programs designed to equip them with the skills required to work at the Heritage Garden. These people already involved with the Garden project revealed either the acquisition of new knowledge as it relates to the use of medicinal plants or the desire to learn more. Also, they strongly emphasized the desire to teach people, both Native and non-Native, about their traditional culture, particularly the use of traditional

medicines. Medicines in this case refer to those used for both spiritual and medicinal purposes.

> The only thing I think about is my medicines and that's the only connection I have with the Aboriginal Heritage Garden and it's my medicines. Atleast the information will be there that I'll need to know to be able to go and pick up my own medicines (R., March 6, 1999).

> The knowledge and learning about the medicines because I am already practicing herbal medicines and I just want to learn more because I know there's a lot more I can use in the house (P., March 8, 1999).

> I feel good about it because I want to know about traditional medicines. I want to know their uses. I already know some but how do you prepare it? When is the best time for picking? People today are going into herbal remedies and it was evident 10 years ago that this trend was coming and why not use it. We had the best pharmaceuticals you could ever find in the world. A lot of today's medicines were from aboriginal people right across the country, south of the border and north of the border. I want to learn what's good for me so of course I was tickled when I heard about the concept of the Garden. I thought to myself "good, finally we'll be taught the right way" (Po., March 8, 1999).

> The knowledge that's going to come from it. People love learning, especially the youth. I never really thought of the money aspect of it. I wasn't thinking about that. I was thinking of the people coming and learning and that's all I thought about it, the learning aspect of it all. What was traditional? Today we are at a loss as to what was traditional. Nothing is kept in the records as to what is traditional so we are kind of still at a loss; we are going by hearsay or adopting what somebody else did and instituting it. I would like to learn more about tradition (Po., March 8, 1999).

> This Garden represents to me an opportunity for many things. For me personally I have always wanted to know who I am as a person, where do I come from, what is my language, what have my people contributed to society and to make sense of my life. I grew up not knowing who I was. I grew up knowing that the French people came from France and the English came from England, and the Germans came from Germany and that North American started with the coming of the Europeans. I grew up not knowing or recognizing anything that our people did, even recognition that our people were even here before the arrival of Europeans. Through this project and my individual learning and growing experience has been that our people have contributed some much to society. I find that when I walk about and when I talk to people there is such an uninformed community of Native people out there asking, "Who are we? Where do we come from? What have our people done? Why am I on welfare? Why don't have motivation to get up and go to work? Why aren't there jobs in our community? Why are we always crying to the government to help us and they don't want to? Through the Garden I see an opportunity in Eel River Bar and the Mi'kmaw nation and Native people from all around including myself, to come to a place to feel special, and to feel welcomed, and honoured and thankful that I know now that I am not just a bad product of society, something that can be put on the shelf (T., March 8, 1999).

The preliminary planning of the Garden project involved a lot of research. The planners and designers sought local as well as outside expertise in terms of identifying the medicinal plants located on site. The location of these plants are indigenous to the area yet the indigenous knowledge of the use of these plants was limited and needed further identification. Because the indigenous knowledge associated with the use of these plants did not originate entirely from the community, there was a vague contrived nature to this preliminary research. However, what once appeared contrived now seems organic. So convincing is this knowledge to both myself and some of the participants, it is legitimized as something to be taught. This knowledge is not wholly contrived for it is based on a past that acts as a symbolic resource and therefore can come to feel organic. As expressed in the following voices, what is being taught is indeed real to those who are teaching it:

> These developments make me feel proud, proud of my heritage, proud that our story is as important as others. It makes me feel not only proud to a degree but justified that yes we did have a real impact. We were the original inhabitants. We have to convey our contributions. Also, it is good to know this knowledge that has been captured, for example at Red Bank, the tools that have been found can now be shared with the rest of the world. It's wonderful that our Mi'kmaq culture is getting out there. We are a force and we should be proud of our contribution. What is there and what my people will learn is truly important (C., March 8. 1999).

> I have a very special feeling about working on a project like the Garden. I'm very excited; I'm so excited. I am proud but I'm proud in a humble way. I'm proud that yes I am able to contribute and participate in a project like this but I am humble in a sense that the message is not out there yet and until the message reaches so many people the job is not done in a sense. We are only just beginning the journey (T., March 8, 1999).

> These developments heighten the degree to how important the language is to us. Language is the foundation of who we are as a people. So much has been developed around other cultures, like the English and French, and it is all well documented. The Loyalists and Acadians are revered and respected in the tourism industry. So now, we finally have a claim to fame. We can now teach people who we are and what we were. There should be a centre of excellence of Mi'kmaw culture. What I mean is that we need to teach our children in order to bring about change (C., March 8, 1999).

There is an apparent paradox in the data: if there is such a strong desire to learn, whereby the term *learning* implies not knowing something, why is there an equally strong

desire to teach something that has not yet been learned? The answer lies in the symbolic

nature of the past, traditions and community. Learning about culture entails acquiring more

symbols; it does not mean that the basket was entirely empty to begin with. There exists a

common body of symbols which the participants want to share (teach) and learning simply

means acquiring more of these symbols, to be used both by the community and the self,

and ideally with the public who visit the Garden. This acquisition which inevitably

translates into transmitting a message is linked to what Larsen (1983), Sider (1986) and

Mercer (1992) all maintain in their respective studies of identity: marginalized peoples must

reach into their own histories, rather than those imposed upon them, and use these symbols

to represent positive aspects of Native identity. Larsen describes this as adding new

meanings to old facts in order to construct a statement which is intended to make whites see

things differently (1983: 39). The communication is often about cultural distinctiveness, a

message that is needed to claim Indian nationhood (p. 116).

Self-Conceptions, Stereotypes, and Contrastive Sense of Selves

> The intimate relationship between community and identity has been described as
> 'cultural totemism' or 'ethnognomony'. These terms suggest that community, and
> its refraction through self, marks what is not, as well as what is, emphasizing traits
> and characteristics, 'at once emblematic of the group's solidarity and of the group's
> contrasting identity and relation to the groups within its ambit of comparison. Such
> contrastive marking is exactly what makes the notion of 'boundary' so central to an
> understanding of community. Looking outwards across the boundary, people
> construct what they see in terms of their own stereotypes, this outward view
> forming a 'self-reflexive' portion of their culture (Schwarts 1975 in Cohen 1985:
> 109).

A comment in the previous section struck me, particularly since the participant self-

reflected that he did not want to be considered a *bad product of society*. It is this comment

that introduces the following section, which cites various other comments that express the

more self-reflexive portion of the self and inevitably of the community. This section

highlights some essential self-conceptions which might otherwise be seen to contradict the relational attributes of identity. As I argued in Chapter One my interpretation is that the self is a composite, informed from within and without.

A word that was voiced time and again was *stereotypes*. I chose not to probe this word whenever it came up during the interviews for fear of alienating the informants since its use at that time was supposed to have uniform meaning for those engaged in the discussion. I simply listened, transcribed what I heard and made a mental note of this word for it revealed important information about identity, opposition and boundary. Note the following examples where this word and other related categories arose:

> I am sure it will be a great attraction for everyone. Then maybe people will see what we're all about instead of judging us before they meet us (K., March 9, 1999).

> It's not just the money to be made off of tourism but people finally coming and learning so that there is not so much racism or ignorance (Po., March 8, 1999).

> The Garden may be the first real opportunity for Mi'kmaw and other First Nations' people to realize that something positive can be said about them (T., May 19, 1999).

> The Gardens can truly prove to outside communities that we can get rid of those negative stereotypes that have been created about us Indians across Canada you know and that we can be self-sufficient and that we don't need outside help, we can do it amongst ourselves you know and we don't need a lot of people doing for us. So one of the things that I was sceptical about at first was is this going to be just another money grabbing project but the people that work in the Gardens themselves, they are the ones that are going to make it work (Na., March 6, 1999).

> About the stereotyping, I don't want to have reinforced what is already preconceived about who we are as Mi'kmaq people; I'm worried about the negative stereotyping (A., March 6, 1999).

> The continual use of drugs and alcohol around the Garden will hinder the project. I am fearful of that. The people who will be working there will be representing who we are and when people come and visit here, if somebody is using and brings it to work it is going to affect us out there and it is going to continue that negative stereotyping of who we are as Mi'kmaq people. That I'm afraid of (Na., March 6, 1999).

> We are trying to get rid of negative stereotypes and if people at the Garden continue to use drugs and alcohol if won't look good (P., March 6, 1999).

> As well, it would be nice to have some say in the interpretation that is going to be given. Is it true? Is it proper? Will it give the proper picture? Is it stereotypical? Is

it the market you are only concerned with? What is important is that the interpretation is consistent in that there are foundations of where we came from. I don't mean that we are all the same. We are different but there are some consistent patterns. We Mi'kmaw have had to borrow culturally because we have been most affected. Remember, we had contact with explorers and colonizers much longer than the tribes in BC. (C., March 8, 1999).

Informal dialogue with some of the above participants clarified what was implied in the use of the term *negative stereotypes*. Their concern relates to negative images of the Indian, in particular that of the Indian as a substance abuser. Daniel Francis, in *The Imaginary Indian*, argues that the images of Native people were manufactured by White Canadians and many of these images were indeed derogatory and others were not (1992: 6). Francis helps us understand where the Imaginary Indian came from and how it continues to shape the myths non-Natives tell themselves about being Canadian. What is not explored in his text is how these same images shape the myths Natives tell themselves about being Native. A re-appropriation of positive images, and negative ones, points to the relational qualities of identity. Images are pervasive and the projection of these images upon Natives can thus come to affect Natives self-conceptions of themselves. Negative images, whether created by non-Natives or imagined in the minds of Natives through self-reflexivity, are what concern some of the participants and their articulation of this concern expresses a desire to change the images from their perspective, even if they are re-appropriated. In terms of negative images and their implication on identity, there was no evidence of marginalized identities in the focus groups but I maintain that fractured or marginal identities cannot be discovered in one focus group interview. This can only be revealed during repeated and consistent interactions. Marginal and fractured identities do exist but in this study they were absent from the focus groups.

After scrutinizing the above quotations I was reminded of Cohen's discussion of opposition and boundary which explained that people often see their own culture from the supposed vantage point at which they imagine others to view it (1985: 116). Furthermore, this juxtapositioning occurs not only between Native and non-Native communities and

individuals but occurs between other reserves in the region and between individuals in the same communities. It is evident that there is a markedly developed sense of difference between Eel River Bar and other non-Native communities, but what remains elusive and is often never heard unless one lives on reserve or is closely associated with Mi'kmaw individuals is the ethos of community that is informed by the contrast between one reserve and another. In the following conversation note the developed sense of difference between Eel River Bar and Big Cove in New Brunswick:

> Eel River Bar has really changed in the last few years. So much good is happening over there (P., June 9, 1991).
>
> Oh ya, they've come a long way but still lots needs to be done (D., June 9, 1999).
>
> It's nothing like Big Cove. It's so much bigger. There's so much corruption. I would rather not have my daughter growing up there and becoming a Big Cover [laughter] (P., June 9, 1999)!
>
> What? You would rather have her grow up to be a Bar Clam [laughter] (D., June 9, 1999)?

I will not venture to explain my own subjective meaning of the terms *Big Cover* or *Bar Clam* for fear of the 'wrath' of any Big Cover or Bar Clam who may read this thesis. Suffice to say that these differences between communities are not expressed neutrally but rather as denigration in abusive and satirical terms. As Cohen explains, "the finer the differences between people, the stronger is the commitment people have to them" (1985: 110) and this is expressed at the individual level within communities as well. When I am at home visiting and I fail to comprehend or 'get' many of the elusive nuances and jokes that arise between members of the community someone is bound to say, "Dot, for a smart girl you sure are stupid" or "Go back to your books!". Such comments could potentially damage me but they do not. This is perhaps because I understand that some people must measure themselves against others and I also know that depending on the context of the situation, some people recognize themselves as more alike than different. Larsen refers to a similar process of differentiation when he discusses the disavowal of Indianness based on

competition: "if you compete for the same piece of cake one may end up denying the other

his or her Indianness" (1983: 127). I add that one can be denied her Indian identity on

many fronts: language, place of residence, education, and band card. There are different

social processes within the community and between communities and that "the boundaries

marking similarity and difference are not necessarily graduated but may be drawn with

regard to distinct referents" (Cohen 1985: 116).

Another element within this theme is the fact that several respondents revealed more

essential parts of themselves. On the surface there appears to be a constructivist nature to

some of their comments but their tone and emphasis revealed to me that what they were

sharing was deeply embedded within:

> I want the Garden to say that I, a Mi'kmaq man am knowledgeable and have something to teach; that I am kind, loving and caring and that I am an unconditional giver of things. I also want it to show that I have an understanding of the fragility of plants, my surroundings, the complicated earth, creation and my purpose on this planet. That I am intimate with nature and spirituality and I expect to be treated as a human being with respect, equal to all men and women (T., May 19, 1999).

> I have more of a sense of identity as a Mi'kmaq woman today than I did when I was younger (Na., March 6, 1999).

> Today I have a clearer vision of myself ; I know who I am through the teachings that I've heard and through my own recovery. I am becoming the person that I was born to be and that really matters (A., March 6, 1999).

> I had an identity crisis growing up, a big one. In the community I was a White man and living away from the community I was nothing but a squaw. So at a young age I really didn't understand what being Native was about. Now at present day I know what it is; it is something that's in you, something that you accept and learn to live with and learn from it, learn about it, learn from the past (Po., March 8, 1999).

By making manifest and thus expressing their self-conceptions, they have helped define

who they are to both me and themselves. Taylor explains that according to Rousseau,

nature is likened to a voice within; this voice speaks to everyone but very few hear it (1991:

358). Is it not possible that the above speakers hear it now? If the concept of personhood

for the Maya Q'eqchi in Wilson's (1993) study is moulded by the mountains' spirit and

thus speak to the soul of the Maya, is it not possible that the speakers' concept of their own personhood, their self, is informed by the natural environment, that is, Mother Earth?

History, Nature and Clams: Symbolic Resources

> It is the very imprecision of these references to the past - timelessness masquerading as history - which makes them so apt a device for symbolism and, in particular, for expressing symbolically the continuity of past and present, and for re-asserting the cultural integrity of the community in the face of its apparent subversion by the forces of change (Cohen 1985: 103).

In order to introduce the discussion about the many tourists who will potentially visit the Garden and Eel River Bar, I had asked several participants to reflect on the past and share their previous encounters with tourists. I was naively expecting negative comments but on the contrary; the respondents had nothing negative to say about tourists. In fact, they all expressed a willingness to welcome visitors to the region. During these reflections I could not help but notice the use of the word *clams* . This word was the stimulus that sparked further reminiscing and it became apparent that *clams*, as a symbolic resource, was important to several of the respondents. The reason for this is because in the early 1960s a dam was built on the Eel River, thus changing the nature of the clam bed forever. The construction of this dam also changed the ecosystem for eels, another resource that provided a livelihood for several people. Formerly clams and eels were plentiful but today they are rare and when available the safety of their consumption is questioned because of emissions and toxic waste from nearby industry. Prior to these changes to the clam bed, clams were not only an important economic resource for many people in Eel River Bar but the clam bed itself served as a place (or space) for social interaction within the community and between communities. It was an arena of labour but it also provided a fundamental referent of identity. Informal dialogue in Eel River Bar points to the hope that the Garden will serve a similar function both in terms of interaction and providing an economic base. Therefore, it is plausible to see the Garden as a symbolic

resource that will become, as soon as it is fully operational, a repository in which resides

the idea of community and of self (Cohen 1985: 103). In addition to clams, some of the

respondents also placed an emphasis on nature and references to the past. I present the

following quotes to illuminate these symbolic resources which are contrasted with the

utilitarian view raised earlier in the opening section:

> I was glad to find out that finally we have something because at first I thought our own economic base was gone and that was the clam beds, but I found out, hey we can do this (Po., March 8, 1999).

> When I was younger there were tourists, there were tourist who came from all over the place. They came to buy clams. When we were digging clams many people came. My mother had a business selling clams (R., March 6, 1999).

> ...a lot of things happened on the clam bed you know. We got to learn about different events in the community; for example if someone was having a baby we heard about this on the clam bed; if somebody was ill in the family it was talked about in the clam bed, people were focused on praying for that person; who got the most clams; how long the dig was, how long the tide was. (Po., March 8, 1999).

> In a sense it's like going back in time. What they want us to do is to be like it used to be. On one trail somebody will be making canoes, on another somebody will be making crafts, and on another they'll be making a wigwam so it's almost like going back in time. It makes me proud. It gives me a lot of pride (No., March 6, 1999).

> The Garden would bring a great deal of pride in our community. In order to go ahead, we must go back in time and learn about the medicines. I've had the opportunity to speak to my elders in other communities. I'm very proud of my accomplishments (No., March 6, 1999).

> Sharing with the tourists a way of life that was, sharing with them I guess our spirituality and share openly with everybody. And this doesn't bother me, since some of these people will take something with them, they may find a teaching within it for themselves that they never knew and it kind of helps them along on their path wherever they are going (A., March 6, 1999).

> My husband is involved in it [the Garden] and again we never farmed. He now loves planting. He never planted before. We're more interested in flowers and plants. We're more interested in nature than ever before and the Garden has started this. I think the Garden is beautiful and I am excited about it because of what it is going to bring to the community. It's really exciting (P., March 6, 1999).

In terms of what Native symbol they identified with, they revealed the following:

> Nature, the forest (Na., March 6, 1999).

> It's not just one thing; it's everything (A., March 6, 1999).

There's another thing, when I go into the lodge, every time I go into the lodge, I realize that this world can survive without me, but I can't survive without the water, the air, the plant life, everything, the Creator. I am nothing (Na., March 6, 1999).

I've great respect for everything; the plant life, the trees, the winged one, the four legged. We're in touch with everything, the whole circle (No., March 6, 1999).

We are all related to the plant life and to the animals, the birds, etc. (No., March 6, 1999).

Spirituality comes to my mind and everything that I've learned from my mother and her ancestors and it's a way of life (R., March 6, 1999).

Not only is the past, or rather symbols of the past, used as a resource in the above statements, but the natural environment is also invoked to make meaningful our contemporary lives and the unforeseen changes that come with our future. Very little of what is expressed in the selected quotations is based on historiographical validity, yet the legitimacy of the words is based on its association with the cultural past and the cultural present. As mentioned in previous Chapters, what is often contrived, invented or partially based on actual elements of the past, may come to have meaning and thus feel authentic to those who choose to think these symbolic conceptions. Perhaps what is being evoked is myth, often described as a way in which people cognitively map past, present and future (Cohen 1985: 99; Cameron and Gatewood 1994). Considering the amount of personal investment voiced in the selected comments, rendering these symbols of the past, or those of nature, as invalid, we are in effect rendering those people who expressed their meanings as invalid. In order to discover who we are and interpret who we are, we often use our past experience, whether mythical or not, to help shape our identity. Our recollections may be selective and may even involve interpretive reconstructions, but they allow those of us who use them to supply part of their meaning. They are given life by being made meaningful.

Healing and Spirituality: Reasserting the Self and the 7ᵗʰ Direction

> The only source of failure is a person's own failure to follow the teachings (unknown).

I believe that this particular section on healing and spirituality deserves more attention and respect than what I am about to give to it. Healing and spiritual awareness are part of a revitalization process that is gaining momentum both in this region and many others. Admittedly, cultural revitalization warrants a thesis of its own. At a micro level though, the following analysis points to the relationship between healing, cultural revitalization and the Garden project. Healing and spirituality are phenomena that cannot be separated into individual fields. In the case of the following comments, the two are intimately connected and intertwined; one does not exist without the other. The comments in this section, all different but compatible thoughts on healing, are systematic of the relationship between personal transformation and participation in larger revitalization movements. Alcoholism and/or drug abuse is often referred to as an illness or disease and according to Charmaz, chronic illness could potentially undermine notions of self and personal identity (1994). Though he refers to the elderly, Cohen would explain this as "the subversion of self: (1994: 105). The healing journey for these stigmatised identities entails asserting self against its subversion. Everyone embarks on this journey differently and at different stages and in Eel River Bar, it is a journey that has begun for several of its members. The statements about healing journeys comment on the relationship between individual and group behaviour or between individual and cultural identity but in addition to this, they tell us that the Garden could be seen as a symbol used for the reassertion of selfhood, a selfhood that had been previously undermined:

> One of the reasons why I wanted to change was because I started to work at the Aboriginal Heritage Garden and we had to work during the weekends and I knew that there was going to be a lot of spirituality involved and if I wanted to stay working at the Garden I knew that I had to change my life so I decided to go down

to the treatment centre where I found out who I was and who I am as a Micmac woman and to be proud of who I am and this will also help me in the Gardens. I am on the Red Road today. I am getting in touch with spirituality I suppose, a spirituality that I guess was here before drugs and alcohol came upon us or our ancestors and its a good road (No., March 6, 1999).

Growing up was hard; it was tough. My face looked lost, my eyes had a lost look, the feeling of not belonging anywhere was tough. Growing up in an alcoholic environment was tough. There are a lot of changes from then to now. Now alcohol is not a part of my life. I managed to change that aspect. I didn't keep the circle going, I changed the circle because that was something I didn't want in my future cause there was so much hate with regards to that. Today I have grown tremendously from all the pain in the past, this has made me a stronger person, more adaptable to change, more open to change. The portrait today is better than it was in the past (Po., March 8, 1999).

I'm just like everyone else. You get sick and tired of living a certain way and you know that it's not working- you don't feel good, there's something wrong and you start to live another way. We started asking for help from the Creator and he heard us and he heard me (A., March 6, 1999).

I hope that the Garden has matured to what we hope it will be at that time and so I also hope that it is a very good tourist attraction and I also hope that Eel River Bar has become 90% drug and alcohol free. It's not wrong to wish for those things because with those things gone we would have a strong and healthy community. And I think if we have a stronger and healthier community then any other endeavour we take on is going to be the same way, it will reflect the community, healthy and strong (Po., March 8, 1999).

I hope that what turns out is, well maybe the Garden is just the beginning of it, when you walk upon the Garden, we should be clean as much as possible before I step onto those grounds. If anybody wants to be involved in any way with the Garden should be drug and alcohol free. That has to be part of the journey that you commit yourself to get clean before...the Garden can be a starting point of the journey (A., March 6, 1999).

I am really proud of the community and it has made a lot of good changes. A lot of people came together and saw all the benefits that can happen as we go about change. I think that the change is better because there are a lot of good things happening and a lot of people who have the bad problems are learning more healthier lifestyle and that is the most positive thing I could think of and wish for and I prayed so hard for it and now it is coming and it's happening (Po., March 8, 1999).

For those people immersed in the revitalization movement and who are on a path towards spiritual healing, their journey involves taking the path that leads inwards toward the 7th direction and the Garden is a means to this end. Some people do not take this journey because they do not feel a need to; their well being is not tied into the revivalist

movement. Others deny that they need to take this journey. There are also those who vacillate between all these different paths. These personal issues are very fluid and are difficult to gauge, particularly with reference to the elders and the youth. The challenge for Eel River Bar and its cultural revitalization efforts lay in its ability to create environments where people can participate in traditions or learn traditional practices. For some, it is hoped that the Garden will provide this:

> I had prayed to God for someone, some place to share my inner spirit, and He brought this here to start my path. I have great confidence for this Garden and I will be there (A., March 6, 1999)!

> They [people working in the Garden] are the ones that have experienced a change in their lifestyle. A change in their lifestyle has blossomed as a result of this Garden. It's unreal! The people who are training in botany, language, and the way of life, are just coming alive; they are just like sponges. And the nice thing about this is that it kind of motivates other people to want to get interested in what they were born to do so that's what I like about the project itself (Na., March 6, 1999).

> When I first started at the Gardens I was this shy person and I could never speak in public I was always afraid to speak. What I can do now is get in front of people and actually make a speech and that's because of the Heritage Gardens, I just blossomed into who I was meant to be (No., March 6, 1999).

> That's true, she can really talk in public. She just blossomed (Na., March 6, 1999).

> Those people working at the Gardens, this is their home. It's not about making a buck anymore. Their hearts are in it (Na., March 6, 1999).

> Well, I hope that we do attract as many people as we hope and I hope that the community grows as the Garden grows and matures as the Garden matures. When I say growing I mean trying to make change for some individuals; maturing doesn't only go with the plants and trees, it goes along with the people too (Po., March 8, 1999).

> Ever since I started working there, it has enhanced my spirituality, because it has allowed me to walk upon Mother Earth and regain my respect even more from what it was before and to actually look at with open and learning eyes that I had never seen before and like with what I've learned in that area I would like to pass on to people that walk through the Garden..because a lot of people are searching for a spirituality, they're looking for a hope, some sort of comfort in their life that will have meaning...that's what I get from the Garden as a Native woman, a spiritual comfort for myself, a spiritual enhancement (A., March 6, 1999).

> The reason why I don't think that hope exists is because places like the Garden don't exist yet or places of significant knowledge. I guess if you have never seen a tv or a tv program you never have any desire to see it. And if you have no desire to get up in the morning, if you've never been motivated to do that, if nobody has ever given you the understanding, the knowledge, the traditional teachings that should

have been there for us then we will always be on the shelf. I see the Garden as taking us off that shelf, individually as we walk through not somebody holding our hand saying, "Here look at this message, you need to learn something here." It will be a very wide awakening for people walking through there to see that there are so many things available to them and there are so many things that our people have done that we need to continue to contribute, and continue to learn, and continue to grow and continue to provide to society the many things that have made society what it is today because our people have contributed a lot. Without that understanding and personal knowledge the growing will never come, the seeds will never be planted (T., March 8, 1999).

Planting seeds of hope and change are essential to preventing the subversion of self. This process is well underway for some people and forms part of traditional healing practices. Healing the subverted self through spiritual experiences is revealed in the comments selected and is indicative of greater trends happening in other communities. Individual healing is about overcoming personal problems that are debilitating to community life. These include behaviours such as alcohol abuse but also negative emotions. As Warry outlines, personal healing journeys are lifelong stuggles to grapple with the intergenerational effects of various forms of abuse, neglect, and I add, subverted and marginalized identities; "these journeys are the core of what we can think of as 'individual' healing (1998: 208). Yet, these individual healing journeys are not occurring in isolation from the community; the two are connected. These individual journeys are radiating outwards to the community and the presence of the Gardens in not an instrument undermining this process; rather, it is an instrument that is conducive to both individual and communal healing and speaks of the greater trend of community and cultural revitalization.

I Am My Community, My Community is Me

To be Norwegian is only to be different from Swedes or Danes. To be a Norwegian Saami is to have a range of interests which, in discriminating you from 'white' Norwegians paints a much fuller portrait. To be a Saami in the Nuortabealli *s'iida* is to say almost everything of social significance about yourself, for it encompasses your kinship, your friendship, your domicile, your modes of life, love and death; it is the whole person. The suggestion is, then, that people assert community, whether in the form of ethnicity or of locality, when they recognize in

it the most adequate medium for the expression of their whole selves (Cohen 1985: 107).

> You got to know where you're from...let's say you go far away, you have to explain where you're from and that. *I guess my community is who I am* (J., March 9, 1999, my emphasis).

A predominant theme that was expressed in all the groups was a great community solidarity and an immense pride in Eel River Bar. After careful analysis of the data, another twist on this theme arose which pointed to, as Cohen explains, the transformation of "I' into "We" (Cohen 1994: 24). My questioning often emphasized a reflection on the self, yet the participants, would use "I" and "We" interchangeably revealing that this transformation does not necessarily entail the contradiction of self, but rather, the placing of certain limits on it. The two aspect of the self are aligned; communalism and individualism coexist in this case. It is remarkable to hear the connection between the individual self and the community and it is so compelling a force that its articulation allows others to form a committed attachment to the group. Preceding the following comment I had asked the respondent this question: If you want the Garden to say something about you and who you are as a person, what would it be?

> As a person, that everyone has worth, every individual has something to offer. There is still this notion in our communities that we all have something ...Sharing is important and I feel happy when I share a tool to help someone. I would like it to say that my beliefs system is valid. Me as an individual I have value. My heritage has value. The fact that there is a history there and if it can be shared through our eyes and vocalized through our voices then it has the potential to be viable. As an individual, I do have respect, regardless of what you see in the media, I respect Mother Earth. Don't generalize our people. I am a hard worker and I would want this to show. My family unit is important to me and I want this to be reflected. I want it to project a bit of my value system. I did touch on respect for Mother earth but also respect for each other. I want it to show that we respect each other, or that I respect others (C., March 8, 1999).

After careful analysis and scrutiny I hear the voice of the individual expressed through personal and possessive pronouns such as "we" and "our". The above respondent is able to link the "I" to "We" without difficulty and without any apparent contradiction.

This reveals elements of an essential community solidarity articulated through the self. The next respondent manoeuvres in the same way but his articulation is deeply embedded with empathy for his people who are not at the same stage of personal growth as himself:

> I see in myself the image of so many people. When I look at somebody in my community I see a reflection of what could have been me. I see myself there. If I see someone stumbling on the street drunk, I see myself there. If I see someone going to pick up their welfare cheque I see myself there. I put myself in there shoes and I say to myself, I don't want to be here. I want to be in the Garden, I want to know, I want to learn, I want to grow. I want to have the spirit of mind that I am not just a welfare bum and that that's not all life has carved out for me and that it's up to me to carve out my own destination. The root is there (T., May 15, 1999).

An added dimension to this theme is the fact that within the focus groups and between them there were elements of contradiction. As an analyst I had prematurely assumed that this was a problem in the data and wondered, how can a group cohere when their members perceive differences in them? An attempt to answer this is best explained by Cohen who writes:

> Groups have to struggle against their own contradictions, which lie precisely in the fact that they are composed of individuals, self conscious individuals, whose difference from each other have to be resolved and reconciled to a degree which allows the groups to be viable and to cohere. Moreover, as a collective entity it has also to suffer and reconcile the competing claims made on it by its collective associates (1994: 11).

The main contradiction reflected in the data concerned the apparent inability to reconcile interpretations of the community. During the interview I had asked what non-economic benefits the Garden would bring to the community and A. replied, "It will bring the community together" which implied a division in the community yet this statement was later reconciled by another respondent who responded with: "There's a lot of pride in this culture, I feel a lot of togetherness" (P., March 6, 1999). Note these comments by Na., which imply a weakness in the community yet is contradicted and then reconciled by later a statement:

...there's a handful of people being trained for the Gardens who are becoming not only culturally sensitive but culturally aware of who we are as First Nations People. but there's still more than a handful of people in this community who don't have much of a cultural identity and so if some visitor's are up there and then come down here and start asking questions, and they'll all be saying, "I don't know, I don't know," I'm afraid of what that will do but then again only good can come out of the Gardens (March 6, 1999).

I believe a lot in this community. We're a strong community (Na., March 6, 1999).

The following is another example that reveals a weakness of the community but is then

reconciled later by other comments:

I am not saying that all the community is reserved, just some units are reserved because of things that occurred over the years. I don't know what they are but I know that for me I became more reserved about who I let into the house because of drugs and alcohol and sexual abuse. So those components really make you hesitant about who you will let into your house and who you're going to build a trust relationship with especially not knowing some people in the community whom you greet but you don't know their background and where they're coming from. You don't know all the damage they have done or all the damage somebody may have done to them so that's why today you're a little bit more reserved. I just hope that all of the young ones today are just as reserved as some of the other community members today (Po., March 8, 1999).

We work together. Sometimes we don't get along but we work together (P., March 6, 1999).

The strengths of the community are coming up, they were always there but they are growing now. They were covered up once before but it's coming alive once again (A., March 6, 1999).

In the past we shared resources like cod and so on but now it's fundraisers. When someone is in the hospital we fundraise in order to help. Whenever someone needs help we fundraise. If any our kids have to go away for a sporting event or cultural event, our community all comes together to donate to the cause. Today we give differently. For those who don't have the means volunteer their time. We are just as giving today but in a different way (Na., March 6, 1999).

Contradictions are indeed reconciled and the community and its collective associates

are able to remain viable and unified. Perhaps the strength of the community exists despite

the contradictions because when its members "talk" of their community "they refer to an

entity, a reality, invested with all the sentiment attached to kinship, friendship,

neighbouring, rivalry, familiarity, jealousy, as they inform the social processes of everyday

life. At this level, community is more than an oratorical abstraction: it hinges crucially on consciousness" (Cohen 1985: 13). Cohen explains further that the triumph of community is achieved because it is able to contain the difference between form and content; forms (ways of behaving) may be the same but the content (meanings) may vary considerably between its members (p. 20). Despite the differences, what is expressed at the boundary is an apparent coherence and solidarity. I conclude this section with a powerful comment that encapsulates not only the blending of "I" into "We" but is forgiving of any contradictions that may arise:

> The world is focused on these people in the garden and I can't stress how important I think it is that they remain drug and alcohol free and how important that there's a recovery process in our community... it's a process well on its way. Every time I step foot outside of my community I represent my community, I am not Na.; *I am Eel River Bar*. They represent my community, we all represent our community. We don't represent our own individual selves when we're out there. You carry a certain amount of weight but it's not a problem anymore. The Garden will be a success because of the personal commitment people are investing (Na., March 6, 1999).

Mistrust and Making Secular the Sacred

Many participants brought up some points that deserve to be mentioned because it supports my earlier claim that in any community, there are differences of opinion and of meaning. On the surface and with little scrutiny, the message being conveyed with regards to peoples' perceptions of the Garden would indicate that there is consensus in the community. There are however differences that convey a multiplicity of perceptions and meanings.

The first concern expressed by the some participants relates to a mistrust of Chief and Council and others in authority involved in the development of the Garden. The root of this mistrust relates to what Larsen defines as factionalism and favouritism (1983). Factions are brought into play at election time and they exist because when it comes time to distribute resources, Chief and Council are bombarded by demands which may inevitably

lead to favouritism (p. 79). I believe this mistrust heard in the voices below is the legacy

left by claims of favouritism and factionalism when the resources were scarce and

competition ran high. The following comments indicate some mistrust:

> As long as it's going the way they say it is going then that's okay. I do find that the higher ups like Chief and Council and the two coordinators working on the Garden are getting more in touch with you guys who are working on the Gardens. They are more in touch in the last year than they were in the previous two years. They are asking now instead of directing. They are not directing them as much anymore and they are bringing the people into it more and it's now the people working on the Garden giving the speeches, not the directors. And I feel better about that as a member of this community. That's why I had hesitations before (Na., March 6, 1999).

> We don't know the true future plans yet. We just go by what we're introduced to. We don't know what they [project organizers] are thinking of doing. We're not really told what's going on (No., March 6, 1999).

> Yah, but who gets this money [profits from Garden]? The money right from the Garden goes to the Band! I don't get money from the Band (K., March 9, 1999).

> I'm o.kay with the Heritage Garden project as long as the people in authority allow the ground people to be part of the process and assist in giving direction. If done in a respectful manner incorporating our belief system of the medicine wheel a successful project will unfold (Na., March 6, 1999).

> Full consultation with the residents of a particular community. You really have to paint the picture to the community because if not there will be a lot of surprises. Consultation is important. And what about safety? We really need to know how safe if it will be. Right now it is relatively safe for my children to go to the store without any risk. Will it be so when tourists visit? How do we control or restrict the movement into the community? We can make certain that the tourist is informed at the Garden that if they go into the community they be sensitive (C., March 8, 1999).

Another concern voiced by several participants was the issue of selling spiritual

items and of resource depletion:

> First of all, when they go and sell some of the traditional stuff when they shouldn't be selling it as in the medicines and the sweet grass, that's what I would think will hinder. For myself, that will hinder things (R., March 6, 1999).

> I'm worried about selling our spirituality, these are things we had focus groups before, selling our lodges, our medicines, our sweet grass, our sage... sweetgrass is very limited today it's being depleted. I don't want to see them depleted; we use them in the lodge, it's part of our medicines, of who we are (A., March 6, 1999).

Plus you show them these people out there to pick this stuff and show them uses
and who is to say that they won't turn around and do all that (R., March 6, 1999).

I did hear that they are looking to cultivate sweetgrass...I don't mind that so much
but as long as I don't have to use cultivated sweetgrass in the lodge (Na., March 6,
1999).

Through my years I have shown people where to pick sweetgrass and stuff like that
and in turn when I went back to pick some sweetgrass there was none left. I don't
want to show anybody else because I find that was very disrespectful. And this is
other Native people and they disrespect that. Take what you need and that's it (R.,
March 6, 1999).

As soon as you tell someone where there's sweetgrass, they tell somebody else and
they tell somebody else and then before you know it's all gone. We're very limited
as it is (A., March 6, 1999).

The comments and concerns expressed above gets at the issue of commodification.

Apparently, the people speaking here are concerned that the commodification of their

culture will render it meaningless and some view the commodification of "spiritual" items

as sacrilege. This perception varies significantly from person to person in different

communities. A friend recently returned from a powwow and to her surprise someone was

selling sweetgrass at that particular event. I venture the following interpretation as to why

some of the participants I interviewed expressed opposition to "selling" their spiritual items:

they perceive the commodification process as a threat because they have only recently

begun using these symbolic resources and wish to "hold onto" them. This is not the case

with everyone, since some Mi'kmaq traditionalists are liberal with these resources and

voice no opposition to the commodification of their culture. There are varied interpretations

on this issue and may indicate different levels of meanings embedded in the symbols

depending on the length of time such symbols have become markers of identity. As

stipulated earlier, there are different meanings within similar forms and people do not

necessarily share many elements of their own culture, or at least they understand them

differently. The concern expressed by some people in Eel River Bar relates to the fear of

making secular the sacred, a fear that is not felt by everyone in other communities.

Intermingled with this fear is the fear of resource depletion. Without sweetgrass there

would be no ritualized ceremony: the two concerns are intertwined and though some people do not link the two, there are others who do.

Conclusion

According to Krueger, the guiding principle of analysis is to provide enlightenment, to lift the level of understanding to a new plateau (1998: 13). It is hoped that as an analyst I have raised the level of understanding and awareness about the research problem to a level that is comprehendible and respectful and that through my analysis I have provided the answers to these questions:

1) What was previously known and then confirmed or challenged by this study?
2) What was suspected and then confirmed or challenged by this study?
3) What was new that wasn't previously suspected?

(Krueger 1998: 14)

In light of the many comments that I have provided in this analysis I believe that what was previously known, namely that there is a revitalization of Mi'kmaw culture taking place in our midst, and that within this process the oppositional nature of identity reveals itself. In a Barthian sense, identity is malleable and both our group identity and certain aspects of our individual identity is modulated to and modulated by that of the other. However, what was suspected and then confirmed by the data provided is that there is indeed more to our identity than the oppositional characteristics articulated at the boundary: there are core elements that reveal themselves, particulary through emotion and in relationship to our natural environment. What was new that was not previously suspected was the direct link between individual and community healing and the Garden project. The healing taking place begins with the individual and radiates outwards towards the community and the Garden, as a symbol, has helped some people in terms of providing an impetus to the healing process.

As noted earlier, there are certain elements within focus groups that cannot be captured in transcripts. One of those elements is feelings. Feelings are difficult to capture because they are so embedded within a person that their expression changes as they are articulated. Throughout all the interviews and conversations leading up to this analysis, there were a few comments that remained with me and have admittedly altered my perceptions on cultural tourism and conceptions of my self both as a researcher and as a Mi'kmaq woman. The following comment not only remained with me throughout my analysis, but every time I read this comment I am reminded of the emotional emphasis with which the participant expressed himself. In fact, he nearly began to cry:

> I think that my pride will grow and evolve over time as the Garden grows. Yes, I'm proud and I'm glad. The first Native visitor that comes through the Garden and walks out with a smile on their face I'll probably cry. I'll have a feeling that yes, we accomplished something, yes we've done our job and yes we delivered the message that we wanted to deliver (T., May 15, 1999).

Erickson may indeed be correct in her assertions that we do find truth in our feelings (1995).

The Garden project, which is considered a significant interpretive tourism initiative, has provided an avenue for developers, workers and community members to think (and feel) about issues of authenticity, the community, but more importantly, the self. It is hoped that throughout this analysis I have not neglected my own experience and consciousness when investigating members from my own community. Living with the data in this analysis has not only altered the relational components of my self, but has awakened the more core elements within me. Contrary to Gergen's fatalistic exploration of the self in the postmodern condition, my previous beliefs about my self are *not* placed in jeopardy, nor are the patterns of action they sustain. According to Gergen:

> the postmodern condition is generally marked by a plurality of voices vying for the right to reality - to be accepted as legitimate expressions of the true and the good. As the voices expand in power and presence, all that seemed proper, right-minded and well understood is subverted (1991: 7).

There are several questions Gergen does not answer: What happens after the confusion, the conflicts, the subversion? What emerges? What about syncretism or hybridity? My answer is: I am everything that makes me whole.

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion and Conclusion

The primary research question of this thesis was to determine what meanings are attached to the Aboriginal Heritage Gardens and whether these meanings or perceptions reveal more about emergent identity and elements of the self than commonly assumed by social scientists who study the impact of heritage tourism. In order to do this, I attempted to capture an interpretation of others' interpretations using focus groups. I also tried to identify and analyse these meanings, paying particular attention to individual selves. My central argument was that one of the inherent weaknesses in the study of ethnic identity is the fact that very few works deeply investigate either what it personally means to belong to an ethnic group or the presentation and negotiation of such identities in interactional situations. Larsen attempted this in his study of the Mi'kmaw in Nova Scotia but failed to consider the core elements of our identities. Many observations, particularly if they are based on survey-derived indicators of acculturation, take little notice of culturally based meanings that individuals assign to, for example, family relations, and how such meanings are tied to what people actually do (Buchignani and Letkemann 1994: 213). Studies which focus on the commodification of culture further assume that ethnic identities become atrophied as a consequence of such contact. What came out strongly in my interviewing sessions is the variety and multiple meanings attached to the Gardens. Most notably was the utilitarian perceptions versus the symbolic dimension. I argue further that these meanings are not static: they will change, particularly when people interact further with the tourism symbols. As Peter Hamilton notes in the editor's foreword of Anthony Cohen's seminal work, "the issue to be faced in the study of community is not whether its structural limits have withstood the onslaught of social change, but whether its members are able to infuse culture with vitality and to construct a symbolic community which provides meaning and identity" (1985: 9). The utilitarian view of the Garden versus the more symbolic attachment are not necessarily opposites and do not suggest a lack of community cohesion.

The nature of the Garden project as a negotiable symbol allows those who "think it" to infuse meaning, an infusion that occurs at different times, in different contexts for different people. As Cohen explains, the self is nurtured, rather than determined by interaction with the other; it is a composite that is plastic and variable, the constituents of which vary in public and private modes (1994: 2). I argue that this same self can be nurtured by interaction and engagement with symbols and the meanings that arise flux and change depending on context, time and place. Core elements of our identity do exist and can reveal themselves. In the case of some of the participants interviewed, their core is revealed in relationship to our natural environment. What was new and not previously suspected was the interconnections between spiritual healing and the Garden project. Development and economic growth are often examined in isolation from other socio-cultural dimensions. My study has featured some introspective details that emphasize, as Graham Day illustrates, transformations in cultures and their interconnection with changes in social and economic structures (1998: 91).

Tourism studies focus primarily on the tourist and rarely focus entirely on the 'touree'. This bias is apparent whether we are considering the development of tourist facilities, the marketing of sites or the pursuit of a theory of tourism (MacCannell 1989: Urry 1990). 'Other' voices are seldom considered and what is heard in their place are more privileged voices that represent either the tourists or the state apparatus or academics. As Chambers states in reference to a study of tourism in the Caribbean, "There is something missing here...we are left with little understanding of those other Antiguans' motivations, or to put it another way, of their 'agency'" (1997: 2). One of the goals of this study was not to merely hold tourism literature up for criticism but to show that the study of tourism can include alternative possibilities. Also, the emphasis of this study is to contribute to what is essentially missing in the sociological and anthropological study of tourism, and that is the motivations or intentions of the 'hosts', particularly the meanings embedded in the tourism sites and products. The lack of this voice is endemic in tourism literature and it

is this particular shortcoming that motivated the writing of this thesis. I have focused exclusively on the 'touree' for they are key players who are actively engaged in creating viable socio-economic alternatives in their respective communities that communicate cultural tradition. An exploration of a tourism initiative has provided insight into how the incorporation of tourism into society can reshape processes of cultural invention and self-definition (Wood 1998: 771). Sometimes the tourism text is essentialist but the practice is constructivist and informs us of the creativity of culture. Critics who fear the loss of cultural meaning through commodification are entangled in a modernist meta-narrative: meaning is never loss, it undergoes change.

Mato suggests that anthropologists must begin to study the practices and representations of dominant social subjects and scholars rather than "subordinated groups or segments of populations" (1996: 66). Though my research has made some Eel River Bar community members the focus of my study, Mato's suggestion is to scrutinize further the "practices of the involved global agents" (p. 66). In the context of this thesis, global agents would include the CTC, Heritage Canada, ABC, ATTC, Industry Canada, tourism associations, Band councils, and many other institutional agencies and government. I have obviously not explored in depth how these agents advance certain representations that legitimize the current developmental trends taking place in Aboriginal communities. Their place in my research is merely for context purposes; they are not considered part of "the case". I believe however that there is an opportunity for other scholars and researchers to explore and scrutinize further the practices underlying these dramatic changes in Aboriginal communities. I have explored a microcosm with can potentially inform an exploration at the macro level.

This work has really been about contemplating myself. I have been engaged in an ongoing process of fieldwork on my self. I have curious mixtures of allegiances, which are curiously incompatible. Many are even antagonistic: Roman Catholicism vs. Traditionalism; French vs. English; Native vs. White; African vs. Western). I have

reached the conclusion that my self is malleable and my culture is malleable. I carry an infinity of traces and different selves come to the surface depending on the context of my environment. This power and flexibility does not diminish me. My selfhood is a composite as described by Cohen, the constituents of which vary in public and private modes. If I move into an environment and shelve a certain part of myself it does not mean that it is being replaced or is being lost. With this knowledge I am able to see that others have selves as well and they are equally as variable and complex as my own. The heterogeneity of the individuals interviewed, their diverse expressions of culture, and their interpretations of their position in that culture are no longer marginalized; rather, they are honoured and valued for their diversity of expression as they continue their journey towards the 7th direction. As Maggie Paul of St. Mary's reserve says: "whatever you really need is going to come from inside. And you already have it – you just have to discover it. You just have to open yourself up, and everything will come pouring in" (Cayo 1997, July 5).

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