

13. Indigenous interventions at Klahowya Village, ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ Vancouver/unceded Coast Salish Territory

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On a hot day in late July 2010, I walked through an area of Stanley Park, downtown Vancouver's thousand-acre urban park, with some participants from a youth exchange programme I was hosting between East Vancouver and Fort Good Hope, Northwest Territories.¹ On our way to a picnic lunch at the beach, we stopped so that the northern youth could take the chance to look at some of the park's huge west-coast trees. Just beyond the aquarium, a sign advertising Klahowya Village caught our attention and, close behind it, the false wall of a longhouse, built with cedar planks adorned with two large cut-outs of red hands upraised in a gesture of thanks and welcome (the logo of the Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia). Coast Salish iconography decorated the entrance. Although I had heard of the recently opened tourist attraction, a visit to the site had not been planned. However, since our visitors were interested, we walked through, lingering beside a carver working on a tree stump. He spoke to some of the group and, on learning they were participating in a youth exchange, decided to perform a ceremony with us. Getting us to join hands in a circle around the stump he was working on, he asked us to help him connect with the spirit of the wood. A costumed singer danced and drummed as we circled and sang along. As the music ended, he asked us all to lay our hands on the wood. We then packed up and went on our way.

I was left feeling ambivalent, not having understood what I had just experienced. I am wary of much of the cultural tourism that happens in Vancouver's public spaces and suspicious of the commodification of indigeneity. We had not been asked to pay any money for our experience but artisan-made cedar bark hats, dreamcatchers and bentwood boxes were on sale as well as tickets to the 'Spirit Catcher' train ride. I did not know where the performers and artists at the village had come from or who was paying them to be there, yet our interactions with them were positive. I felt uncomfortable and wanted to know why.

1 Since 2002, I have been an organiser for a youth exchange programme run by the Purple Thistle Centre, an arts and activism collective run by youth in East Vancouver. It involves exchanges with the Sahtu Dene people of Fort Good Hope, Northwest Territories, and is intended to build ongoing relationships between the two communities.

This chapter results from my trying to understand the source of that discomfort. In it, I argue that the presence of performing artists at this culturally significant site in Vancouver – metres from the former Coast Salish village of $\chi^w\text{ay}\chi^w\text{ ay}^2$ – asserts a limited form of ‘visual sovereignty’. Michelle Raheja has described this practice in indigenous filmmaking as one that addresses settler populations by using stereotypical self-representations while it connects to aesthetic practices that strengthen treaty claims and more traditional cultural understanding by revisiting, borrowing, critiquing and stretching ethnographic conventions (2011, pp. 19, 193). Encountering the stereotypes employed in this process could have been one source of the discomfort I felt, as could my venturing into an unsettling space inflected by colonial conventions. Expanding on Raheja’s analysis of visual sovereignty in indigenous filmmaking to consider the performative aspects of a live event, I demonstrate here the significance of the embodied experience of both performers and audience at Klahowya Village layered over the archival architecture of this tourist space.

Diana Taylor distinguishes between the archive, which she argues is generally misconceived as unmediated records that work across distance, space and time to preserve memory, and the repertoire which ‘requires presence: people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by “being there,” being a part of the transmission’ (2003, pp. 19–20). She asserts that the repertoire is equally important as ‘a system of learning, storing, and transmitting knowledge’, and that the archive and the repertoire exist in a constant state of interaction, thus expanding what we understand as knowledge (pp. 16, 21). In order to access this knowledge, Taylor develops a methodology of focusing on the ‘scenario’, which draws attention to the repertoire by emphasising the power of performance to transmit knowledge, social memory and identity (pp. 28–33). As the stripping of knowledge containing social memory and identity has been one of the methods employed in the colonial process to eliminate indigenous people’s culture (as exemplified by the residential schools system in Canada), the use of the repertoire to transmit that knowledge is an important means of recuperating indigenous subjectivities. My intention is to explore not only how indigenous people resist colonialism in the present, but also the ways of transmitting indigenous knowledge through performance that do not depend on the colonial archive. I also contend that the visual sovereignty asserted in this place creates a new archive to interact with this repertoire.

- 2 Naming of places and indigenous groups is different depending on whose language is used. In English the names of the local Coast Salish nations are Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh. In their own languages, they are $x\text{m}\text{ə}\text{θ}k\text{ə}y'\text{ə}m$, $Skwxwú7mesh$ and $səlil'wəta\text{ } \square\square$, respectively. Each language also spells slightly differently the original indigenous village on which Klahowya is located, either $\chi\text{ay}\chi\text{ ay}$ or $Xwáyxway$. In English this is translated as *Xwáyxway* and sometimes *Whoi Whoi*.

Focusing on multiple modes of performance observed over seven site visits in the summer of 2012, this chapter will examine the scenario of touristic encounter layered into the village, taking into account the historical context of indigenous performance in this region and the physical location. This focus on the scenario illuminates the knowledge transmission that occurs through the embodiment of social actors and the use of formulaic structures that predispose certain outcomes, while also allowing for reversal, parody and change. The chapter also considers the implications of the usage of what non-indigenous people might consider 'aberrant' cultural practices during a live performance as opposed to a film (Raheja, 2011, p. 204). Following Taylor's emphasis on the repertoire and the archive not being sequential or binary (2003, p. 22), and using Raheja's notion of visual sovereignty to analyse the tourist village's site design as an intervention in the colonial archive, the chapter demonstrates how Klahowya Village presents an enterprise which asserts sovereignty. It also shows how the village simultaneously enables some intra-nation, indigenous transfer of knowledge, although it is structurally limited as a site of indigenous critique of settler society due to its status as a touristic spectacle.

A Coast Salish genealogy of cultural performance

There has been a long history of settler government policy in Canada, including British Columbia funding cultural projects to capitalise on Aboriginal tourism, dating back to the early days of European settlement. One commentator asserts that '[y]oung people today are not able to find employment because they are not trained for new fields in business life ... Indian young people, by reviving old native arts, will find a profitable trade in the tourist industry' (Dawn, 2008, p. 12). This quotation could easily be from a recent news conference, but is not. The speaker is R.A. Hoey, head of the Indian Affairs Welfare and Training Division arts programme, who came to Vancouver in 1938 to announce the federal government's new policy regarding First Nations' art. Although the government had outlawed traditional ceremonial practices in the late 19th century, it began at this point to encourage traditional artistic practices for economic use. While not explicitly articulated in government policy, the fact that performances were banned while visual arts were encouraged is an indication that performance had the power to unsettle colonialist operations. The potlatch ban was enacted in 1884, 13 years after the colony of British Columbia joined the Confederation, and remained in place until 1951 even though indigenous groups publicly resisted its strictures through petitions, such as the one signed by Coast Salish people in 1910 (Shaw and Campbell, 2012, p. 165). As Dawn explains, the 1938 policy was considered to be the spur that started a post-war revival in indigenous art production, which was

in fact already flourishing. Instead, the policy helped to change the audiences for that cultural production from indigenous to non-indigenous people and recontextualised its tangible creations within museums as aesthetic objects that were consumable commodities, 'divorced from cultural meanings' (2008, p. 43).

Not ten years later, during the 1946 celebrations of Vancouver's Diamond Jubilee, the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia (NBBC) participated in an 'Indian Village and Show', a two-week installation at Kitsilano park on land from which the Squamish people had been forcibly removed in 1913 (Barman, 2007, p. 17). The show featured 'northern' and 'southern' dancers, performing on a platform designed to look like a giant 'tom tom', surrounded by dramatically lit totem poles and masks, its stage lights piercing the dark night. The final performance ended with a ceremony to make Canada's new Governor General 'an honorary chief of the BC Indians' (Vancouver Diamond Jubilee programme, 1946, p. 2). This event, funded by municipal and provincial governments, was both part of a congratulatory boosting of Vancouver's accomplishments and an opportunity to increase tourism, yet the NBBC's involvement complicated the official narrative, as newspaper headlines suggested: 'Disgruntled Indians may quit show' (City of Vancouver Archives, 1946); 'Indians, Jubilee smoke peace pipe' (*Vancouver News Herald*, 1946). Ronald W. Hawker notes that the leadership of the NBBC was determined to maintain control of the First Nations cultural presence at the event, and that 'art became attached to the Native Brotherhood's attempt to present First Nations individuals to the non-Aboriginal public as dignified, organised, and professional people' (2003, pp. 117, 120). Hawker does not distinguish between visual arts and performance, but it is important to note that the performances at this event were still officially banned, requiring special permission, while the visual arts were officially encouraged.

Centennial celebrations have also provided occasions for indigenous cultural performance. Susan Roy positions the Musqueam involvement in the 1966 Centennial celebrations in BC, including their enactment of a warrior dance at a totem-pole raising in Tsawwassen, south of Vancouver, as performing resistance to settler efforts to culturally homogenise all BC First Nations people. She also examines their decision to use *sx̱ay̱* dance in a ceremony to make a mayor into a chief, reading it as strategic:

[I]f we understand politics to encompass the strategies employed by Aboriginal communities to further their existence, visibility, and recognition as nations, then other activities (such as the display of expressive culture) can also be understood as political strategies ... Cultural performance makes the connection between people and place visible, tangible, and, it is hoped, memorable. (2002, p. 90)

Roy's observations support the idea that performances were banned because of their usefulness as political strategy and their ability to unsettle. Aaron Glass also recognises the opportunities that the Indian Village and Show, Centennial celebrations and other such encounters offered to First Nations people struggling under colonial oppression to elicit respectful engagement with modern Canadian settler society:

For the authorities, carefully circumscribed, aestheticized, and commodifiable production of the past was accepted as one minor step toward modernization; for First Nations, such gap in colonial policy (however contradictory) may have created a space (however marginal) for social and cultural reproduction under new conditions of material flexibility and artistic freedom. (2010, p. 30)

For these reasons, indigenous cultural performances have continued to be supported by governments and used strategically by First Nations groups in this region from the 20th century until the present. The groups were most internationally visible when participating in the 2010 Winter Olympics opening ceremony and the accompanying Cultural Olympiad.

A significant element of the plans the Vancouver Organizing Committee made for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (VANOC) was the negotiated involvement of some indigenous groups and the creation of the Four Host First Nations (FHFN) organisation. The latter was the official representative of the Lil'wat, Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh peoples on whose territories the events were being held. Their involvement and representation was intended to ensure that these groups benefited economically at the same time as the Olympic movement's social impact was legitimated (Silver et al. 2012, p. 294). O'Bonsawin asserts that the 2010 Winter games influenced the modern treaty process by motivating the government to settle with First Nations on whose land a major ferry dock had been built, in order to avoid transport disruptions, and that the process also 'encourage[d] First Nations communities ... to develop tourist centres with the purpose of promoting indigenous cultures' (2010, pp. 151–2). Her assertions make explicit the connections between land, political negotiations of power and performative events in this time and place.

The Olympic Games opening ceremonies featured FHFN members in full regalia who entered immediately after the national anthem, speaking words of welcome in their own languages, while four massive statues with outstretched arms rose from the stage. The spectacle then expanded to include hundreds of Aboriginal people from across Canada, dancing in the arena in arresting costumes throughout the athletes' hour-long parade ('Opening Ceremony – Complete Event', 2010). The games also featured an Aboriginal Pavilion

showcasing 232 performances as well as a film, *We are Here*, projected on the inside of the dome (VANOC, 2010, pp. 82, 85). Of the hundreds of events staged during the Cultural Olympiad, VANOC categorised 21 as Aboriginal, including two original plays. *Beyond Eden*, a musical by Bruce Ruddell, dramatised Canadian artist Bill Reid's 1957 expedition to recover totem poles in Ninstints on Haida Gwaii, and Marie Clements' *The Edward Curtis Project* recontextualised the work of the renowned titular photographer by imagining him in dialogue with a contemporary indigenous journalist who is trying to cover the story of two young children's traumatic deaths (see Couture, 2010, pp. 10–17).

The work done by the FHFN organisation during the Olympics is in keeping with the above-mentioned genealogy of ongoing federally and provincially funded projects to increase Aboriginal tourism. Since 1997 the closely related Aboriginal Tourism of British Columbia (AtBC) has been offering training, resources and networking to First Nations entrepreneurs and communities working in the business (Aboriginal Affairs, 2009; AtBC, 2013). The organisation has been the recipient of over \$10 million of combined federal and provincial funding in the last seven years alone (Aboriginal Affairs, 2009; Government of BC, 2006; Government of Canada, 2007). Klahowya Village, one of AtBC's current projects, is clearly a genealogical descendant of the provincial government's past promotion of Aboriginal tourism to encourage economic stability, and is likewise used as a political strategy by First Nations groups.

Archive: context, site, naming and place

Part of the political strategy was to rebrand the site on which Klahowya Village is located. In his broad-ranging study of Pacific performances, Christopher Balme draws from Taylor's concepts when he describes the buildings of the Polynesian Cultural Centre in Hawai'i as an archive (2007, p. 186). Similarly, the Klahowya Village site is an archive in the process of a politically motivated mediation, a concept Taylor elaborates in discussing archive myths (2003, p. 19). In 2009 the City of Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, facing a budget shortfall, decided to close the children's farmyard in Stanley Park. It had been losing money for years and the city could no longer afford to subsidise it (City of Vancouver, 2010a and b). In May 2010 the Board approved a motion that AtBC open Klahowya Village, using the site's existing miniature railway as an Aboriginal cultural tourism attraction and renaming it the 'Spirit Catcher Train'. Klahowya Village has been run every summer since, expanding each year. Currently there is no admission fee, but a small amount is charged for a puppet show and the train ride. The village is now layered over the various other

farm life signifiers remaining from the children's farmyard. A tipi structure has been set up in the middle of a yard surrounded by two barns, livestock pens, a red cast-iron water pump, some split-rail fencing and rough stonewalls. The farmyard's former ticket booth is now a BC Métis Federation display of information and artefacts. The miniature railway, which winds through the forest around various remnants of farm life (a farmhouse, covered wagon, wooden water-wheel and woodshed) as well as plastic replicas of livestock, has been transformed into the Spirit Catcher ride with the addition of two tunnels. On my visit, poster-sized photos of a tipi, a child in dancing regalia and a man drumming adorned the entrance while dark fluorescent masks glowed at the exit tunnel. The farmhouse roof was decorated with a cut-out eagle, and oversized bentwood boxes were placed as props throughout the forest for costumed performers to use when acting out the 'Legend of the Sasquatch'. The miniature railway is itself a particularly significant example of archival architecture – the train engine is a replica of Canada Pacific Railway Engine #374, which pulled the first Canadian transcontinental passenger train in 1887 (City of Vancouver, 2013). Although there had been some European settlement in the area for 60 years, the arrival of the railway consolidated the incorporation of the existing settlement into the city.

Signage at both entrances explains the meaning of the village installation's name – Klahowya:

Prior to European contact, the Aboriginal people of BC spoke Chinook, a trade jargon that was spoken between several First Nations and was made up by many First Nations languages which allowed communication and trade of resources that were not typically found in one zone territories. The Chinook language was used from Baja to Alaska and into Montana. In Chinook, Klahowya means Welcome. (AtBC, n.d.)

Using the Chinook word for 'Welcome' is diplomatic. As a language developed for intercultural communication, Chinook signifies the cross-cultural contact that is expected to happen between tourists and indigenous representatives at the site. It also signifies, however, that this site of $\chi\Box\Box\Box\Box\Box$, as well as Stanley Park and Vancouver in general, are on unceded and overlapping Coast Salish Nations' territories. At the Eagle entrance there is signage representing each host nation, the Musqueam, $S\Box w\Box w\Box mesh$ and $s\Box l\Box l'w\Box ta\Box\Box$. The Musqueam sign emphasises the continuing presence of Musqueam people 'on this location where you now stand', explains that their name means 'People of the River Grass', relays the story of their origin and stresses the importance of runners in protecting their land. The sign explains the orthographic system of their language, $h\Box n'q\Box m\Box n\Box m\Box$, and features the 2010 Canadian Olympic hockey team's jersey, which was designed by Musqueam artist Debra Sparrow. The

Skwxwú7mesh sign incorporates text from their language, as well as a map of their territory identifying the Klahowya Village as the site of the Skwxwú7mesh village of Xwáyxway. Modern and historical photographs of Skwxwú7mesh people are also included. The səlil'wəta□□ sign was printed in their language first and then translated into English; they identified themselves as People of the Inlet, described their traditional lands, mentioned their creation story and emphasised their knowledge of the land and the connection between the health of both their culture and the environment. The sign depicts Chief Dan George, a famous leader, poet and actor (who starred in the film *Little Big Man* among other screen and stage works), as well as recent images of those involved with the Olympic opening ceremony and torch run. Each nation, as well as the Sts'ailes Nation from further up the Fraser River and the BC Métis Federation, also had a weekend set aside during the summer which would feature their performers. These signs were an important part of the visual sovereignty being asserted. Their representations of traditional culture, along with performers, leaders and images from the recent Winter Olympics, mark the Klahowya Village project as part of the ongoing political strategy to increase recognition and connection to the land, as well as cultural continuation.

The rebranding of the site is a conscious choice. Each of the major reports on the project published by AtBC emphasise the brand, noting and enumerating its use in all creative designs and signs on site, and stating that branding the village as an integral part of AtBC is an important strategy (AtBC Management Team 2010, p. 17; 2011, p. 8; 2012, p. 14). This can be seen as a method of creating a visible public archive, just as the city of Vancouver has attempted to brand itself with indigenous signifiers over the years. In particular, this part of Stanley Park is where Vancouver, the settler city, also performs itself – and has for many years, as this chapter shows. Near this site is the remnant of an attempt begun in 1915 by R.C. Campbell-Johnston and the Art, Historical and Scientific Association of Vancouver (AHSAV) to purchase and move a Kwakwaka'wakw village from Alert Bay to Stanley Park. The AHSAV's plan was interrupted in 1925 when a Skwxwú7mesh representative, Andrew Paull, met with the committee and Indian Agent C.C. Perry to explain that the 'Squamish did not want a Kwakwaka'wakw village. They had no objections to a mixed village ... but they wanted the living Squamish to be recognized' (Phillips, 2000, p. 28; Hawker, 2003, p. 44). Now one of the most visited tourist sites in Vancouver, the Stanley Park totem pole collection is a leftover from this initiative. The City of Vancouver updated (and rebranded) the site before the 2010 Olympics to include commissioned Coast Salish portals carved by Susan Point, a Musqueam artist (City of Vancouver, 2012). In close proximity – just a ten-minute bike ride away – are well-known destinations such as the Vancouver Aquarium and Lumberman's Arch, an arrangement of large rough-hewn logs celebrating the logging industry.

The area is also home to an open-air performance venue, the Malkin Bowl, where the summer company Theatre Under the Stars operates. Nearby, visitors can also find the Shakespeare Garden, which contains all the trees and plants mentioned in his plays and poems. Another kind of settler performance can be seen when the Nine O'Clock Gun fires every evening; it is a decommissioned British naval cannon installed on the point in the late 1800s when there was still a community of indigenous people living on the site. In close proximity is the statue commemorating Lord Stanley's 1889 dedication of the park, in a clearing that once held the grave of a Skwxwú7mesh man (Barman, 2005, p. 93). Keeping these past and present settler uses of the site in mind, while also noting the AtBC interventions in the area, will help to clarify the dynamics of performance, history and spectatorship at Klahowya. This part of the city, which masquerades as a natural park, is actually a carefully constructed public archive with many layers of history, performance, tourism, commodity exchange and intercultural communication. Klahowya Village is only the most recent to be added as settler and indigenous people continue to contend with the task of reconciliation and restitution that has been the national project for the last few decades. Touristic spectacle, in order to be most accessible to a general public, often aims to avoid the difficult truths inherent in the settler/indigenous relationship; however, any encounters which occur here are nevertheless embedded in this context.

Repertoire: knowledge transmission, inversion and critique

Touristic spectacle mainly aims to entertain, yet this does not preclude an educational function. It can therefore overlap with knowledge transmission, a necessary part of reconciliation, both within a First Nations culture (to enable recovery) and cross-culturally (to correct misunderstandings). The dances at Klahowya enable one prominent means of cultural transfer. Each of the six dance troupes I witnessed performing over the summer was multi-aged, and included young children who were clearly being instructed to model themselves on the skilled performers. A couple of the youngest were under two – dressed identically to the other dancers, they were free to come and go onstage. One toddler was given a drum to play. The speaker for the Kwakwaka'wakw group, when introducing his little grandson, explained that this was part of their practice for passing on knowledge of song and dance. The Sts'ailes Nation dance group engaged in both kinds of knowledge transmission. Of all the groups I saw, they were the most multi-generational. The adults sang and drummed while a teenage youth led about six boys through the dances, with the younger children rarely looking away from him to the audience and the older boy watching each of them in turn as he danced. The most significant

dance was about Sasq'ets, a powerful Sts'ailes creature. The Sasquatch, a.k.a. Bigfoot, is well known all over North America as an elusive creature of the woods. The 2012 Klahowya Village's event space, website and promotional videos on YouTube were branded with Sasquatch images. The Sts'ailes Nation, however, reclaimed the story, explaining that Sasquatch was 'thought to be a mispronunciation of Sasq'ets' (AtBC, n.d.). Their dance troupe performed in mid-July, singing their 'Sasq'ets' song and explaining the story's origin. While reclaiming the story, and passing on their dance skills, the group also transmitted knowledge across cultures. A spokesperson for this Sts'ailes group emphasised that they were following protocol by only sharing some of their songs and ended their performance by opening up the touristic encounter and inviting spectators to join in the last dance, which many people did. In the railway play, the Sasquatch, which is usually cast as a mysterious and somewhat fearsome monster, was instead presented as a protector of the environment who only punished greedy people. The puppet show plot also featured the Sasquatch as a protector of the land, teaching an urban First Nations girl about where her food comes from and the importance of not polluting the earth.

The Sts'ailes group functioned confidently and generously, transferring knowledge through generations and across cultures, building through performance a strong position from which to negotiate reconciliation. When a woman in the audience interrupted the spokesman to ask if Sasq'ets was related to the name of the Canadian province of Saskatchewan, he patiently explained that it was situated far away from this region and derived from a different First Nations language, and then resumed his performance. His forbearing response to a seemingly obtuse question (rudely asked) was yet another indigenous demonstration of the kind of generosity necessary for inter-community reconciliation, which aims to restore estranged people to a peaceful coexistence (Coulthard, 2013). The Sts'ailes group also approached the story in dynamic ways. The original Sasq'ets creature is viewed as fierce, stinking – usually smelt before he is seen – and male. There is also a female counterpart, who steals children out after dark. The Klahowya Village adapted the story in order to connect with environmental concerns of contemporary life, thereby demonstrating that the transmission of knowledge is not from a static archive but can be active and incorporate change, as from a repertoire.

Another significant element to note about the dance performances is their location on the site. One of the major alterations to the children's farmyard is a stage built into the fenced area close to the barns. A large courtyard surrounds it, and a few viewing platforms, although all are separated by a large pond directly in front of the playing area. A striking sculptured eagle, made out of cedar shingles, overhangs the stage. Despite its appealing design, this area was rarely used over the summer. Balme's analysis of the Polynesian Cultural Centre

entertainments is helpful in understanding the place chosen by the Klahowya Village dancers to stage their displays. Balme contrasts the Māori and Hawaiian performances with those of the Samoans and Tongans, noting that as Fourth World indigenous cultures submerged in a majority colonising culture, both Māori and Hawaiian groups staged 'performance traditions which fulfilled the double function of presenting an image of cultural vitality to the colonial gaze and finding new functions for performance within a new cultural situation' (2007, p. 185). Balme describes the Hawaiian hula performances as 'entirely didactic', occurring in the village without a raised stage, the performers acting as cultural demonstrators while tourists gather around informally (*ibid.*). His insights into this didactic tourist spectacle help explain why dancers at Klahowya did not favour the usual dramatic stage. Rather than displaying themselves at a distance, which can make them seem far away and of the past, they chose to dance on the same ground the spectators were standing on. This emphasised their presence in the present, and their connection with the physical space.

A method of asserting strength is to elicit a formulaic expectation, but then refuse to fulfil it. The storyteller, who was onsite twice daily, did just this. He would call people to his area, which comprised a number of logs arranged as seats in front of a tree stump carved out so a person could stand inside it. Usually dressed in everyday clothing, he would occasionally wear his dance clothes. He did not introduce himself on any of the days that I attended. His performance integrated drumming, singing and telling stories. One of these, told first in his own language and then translated into English, was about an industrious beaver who carries a lazy porcupine up a mountain to force him to find a new shelter. In another story, presented as a way of explaining how plants and animals talk to us, an old man learnt from a spider's web how to make a fish net. These narratives, however, were only part of the storyteller's performance. He mainly initiated dialogues with his audience members, asking them where they were from and inviting questions, and he was incredibly patient with people coming and going and asking him to pose for pictures – sometimes even in the middle of his performance. He explained that the term 'Indian' was a government word which it was important to use in order to hold governments to their responsibilities. He spoke of Aboriginal title, giving a demonstration using a newspaper and his credit cards to show how it underlies all other titles and cannot be extinguished. He also showed – by lifting up a log from the ground and carrying it – what it was like to carry hatred around with you. The advertised storytelling session thus became a space for sharing insights and experiences. At each session he also shared his drum with visitors and would sing to whatever beat they played, always making sure any children present had a turn.

These performances went on for much longer than the scheduled half hour. At one session, after the storyteller had explained that there would be no more First Nations people by 2048 (I think he meant those with government-recognised status), a white man, identifying himself as a Mormon from Japan, was moved almost to tears and asked for suggestions about how to help indigenous people. I was struck by this interaction; it was so unlike the anthropological staging of culture in museums, what Andrea Zittlau terms an 'encounter without meeting' in her discussion of Nora Naranjo-Morse's 'Always Becoming' at the National Museum of the American Indian (2012). Instead, the performer had created a safe environment for conversation and meeting. He often repeated that he did not mean to offend people, and mentioned once that AtBC had hired him and given him leave to say whatever he wanted. The choreography of his performance also inverted expectations. As he moved from the defined performance area in the stump into the adjacent forest behind the audience and sometimes out of view to gather plants to use as illustrations for his stories, the spectator-performer arrangement dissolved into a space of dialogue for sharing insights and life experiences. This echoes the movement of the dance groups away from the Eagle stage on to the grass field behind the vendors and seems to indicate the performers' overall effort to create ambiguous encounters that could also be cross-cultural interactions without the barrier of theatricality.

One element of the performance was particularly puzzling. A red-and-white beaded and feathered headdress had been placed on a manikin head with an invitation to visitors to take photos of themselves wearing it next to the totem pole (see figure 13.1). The bedraggled headdress was not representative of any of the BC First Nations people and no one was in charge of it. I observed many visitors taking up the invitation. This item was incongruous, playful yet unsettling; it invoked a Hollywood stereotype of 'Indian' in a place that seemed to be making an effort to undo those conceptions. As an empty headdress available for visitors to put on, this prop recreated the settler vision of the 'imaginary Indian', a colonialist construction. Many people interacting with the headdress seemed surprised and laughed. Such moments can be illuminated by a concept that Phillip J. Deloria develops in *Indians in Unexpected Places*, making the point that people respond to images of Native Americans in modern situations with a chuckle (2004). He believes this patronising laugh has to do with the anomaly, but argues that settler expectations actually create the anomaly. By placing an object that signifies stereotypes of 'Indian' within a site where indigenous peoples were asserting both their modernity and the continuation of their traditions, the Klahowya organisers inverted the chuckles. This placed an emphasis on the present by inviting visitors to perform expectations from the past as well as to indulge in the desire to 'play Indian'. Not everyone accepted the invitation, however, and some passers-by

dismissed the headdress as a discomfiting relic. Discomfort and ambiguity, while not conducive to a simple, entertaining touristic experience, are part of the decolonising process. In that respect, this strange and unexpected object was among the most compelling elements of the installation. Balme calls this 'reverse colonial mimicry': rather than 'imitating the colonizer and developing forms of subversion by holding up a distorted image of the European', indigenous people mimic 'European projections of themselves' (2007, p. 182). These moments give the performers a chance to subvert the demands of the tourist spectacle.

In her discussion of visual sovereignty in indigenous filmmaking, Raheja notes that some directors deliberately show the aberrant – for example the eating of raw meat or polygamy – as a method to disrupt dominant narratives and create debate (2011, p. 204). In my analysis of performances at Klahowya Village, I have searched for representations of what non-indigenous audiences might consider aberrant practices. I could not find any. This led me to think about the difference between live performance and film. Aberrant acts displayed on film can affect an audience strongly and provoke reactions. No matter what the reaction, however, the actors in the film are safe. This is not the case with live performance, especially where the boundary between the audience and performers is so permeable, the dancer posing next to the spectator in the headdress, or the dancers and singers standing on the grassy lawn, surrounded by spectators. Raheja also discusses the potential for violent retribution for critical self-representations, noting that the 'threat of violence explains how early Native American cinematographers ... [worked] primarily within the bounds of hegemonic discourse out of fear of violent reprisal, while also subtly critiquing Indian images' (p. 231). Klahowya Village was well staffed and supported, in a very public place in Vancouver; potential for violence in some ways seemed very remote. However, on 21 June 2012, the opening day of the enterprise, an act of arson burnt down the Spirit Catcher railway station and information booth. Set at night, the fire completely destroyed the building (situated in the middle of the site) as well as \$40,000-worth of artists' supplies, tools and products (Harry, 2012). Still under investigation, the arson has not been attributed to any individual or group. The village's organisers held a healing ceremony a few days later in order to respond to the incident and carry on; however, throughout the summer the burnt site, with its safety fencing and singed trees, was a constant reminder of the violence. Even if the arson is completely unconnected to AtBC's work, in the context of past and contemporary acts of violence towards indigenous people, it must be recognised as constituting part of the milieu within which Klahowya operates. For this reason it is not surprising that the performers avoid shocking or aberrant cultural practices during the live events.



Figure 13.1. 'Indian' headdress at Klahowya Village tourist performance. Photo: Selena Couture.

At the ceremony to open Klahowya Village, on 1 July 2010, Skwxwú7mesh chief Ian Campbell noted the site's connection to the historic Coast Salish village and suggested that perhaps Stanley Park should be renamed Xwáyxway. The ensuing media storm, with comments both in support and virulently dismissive of the idea, was only put to rest when a federal cabinet minister with the governing Conservative Party, declared that it would not happen (Stueck, 2010, n.p.). This statement highlighted the layered colonial history of this area; the park is federal land because it was considered a strategic military position by the original colonial land surveyors and is only leased to the City of Vancouver, although no records exist to support this federal claim, as Barman explains in *Stanley Park's Secret* (2005, pp. 25–7).

I now recognise the source of the discomfort I felt upon entering Klahowya Village. The enterprise, which seemed like an easily dismissible touristic spectacle is actually what Raheja describes as ‘the space between resistance and compliance’ (2011, p. 193). In the summer of 2012, dance groups and the storyteller continued to express sovereignty over this land by transmitting their knowledge and inverting stereotypical expectations in the repertoire of performance enacted repeatedly over the weeks, as well as through their interventions in the archival landscape design. Each of the groups mentioned at some point during their performances the proximity of $\chi\Box\text{ay}\chi\Box\text{ay}$; indeed the spokesperson with the $\text{s}\text{ö}\text{l}\text{i}\text{l}'\text{w}\text{ə}\text{t}\text{a}\Box\Box$ group pointed out one of their young dancers, saying that his great grandfather had lived there and fished off the point nearby. Attending to language and place names also reveals a fascinating connection. The meaning of the Coast Salish name of $\chi\Box\text{ay}\chi\Box\text{ay}$ has been given as ‘masked dance performance’, and the origins of the $\chi\Box\text{ay}\chi\Box\text{ay}$ dance are explained as ‘a cleansing device to “wash” persons while undergoing life crises, changes in status, or removal of some source of shame’ (Suttles, 2004, p. 571; Roy, 2002, p. 84). The name of the original village therefore reinforces the notion that the current use of this place by Coast Salish groups is a continuation and adaptation of cultural practice from pre-settlement times.

Klahowya Village is still in the early phase of development. It represents a cooperative project between an indigenous group promoting an economy based on tourism and three levels of government. In this incarnation, it offers some opportunity for knowledge transmission, dialogue and unexpectedly humorous critiques of stereotypes, while still needing to be somewhat neutral in order to attract tourists and create a safe place for interactions. The current ironic visual layering of an 'indigenous village' over a 'settler farm' offers a rich metaphor for the possibilities of restitution. The next phase, which is already being negotiated with the City of Vancouver, will be for AtBC to

build a cultural centre on the site, in all likelihood removing the traces of the settler farm. Local company Full Circle First Nations Performance has also announced a work in development, *Reclaiming Xway Xway*, described as 'a site-specific, multidisciplinary collaboration' capturing the ongoing relationship of the Squamish, Musqueam and Tsleil-waututh to Xway Xway.³ A purpose-built cultural centre and this new performance promise to intrude more strongly into this palimpsestic landscape currently existing on the edge of Vancouver, named after a British Lord who visited briefly in 1889, built on top of and in the midst of an indigenous archive kept alive through an ongoing repertoire.

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