

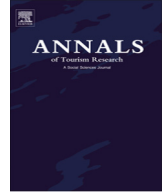


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The Banff Indian Days tourism festivals



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ABSTRACT

The Banff Indian Days tourism festivals, which occurred annually from 1910 to 1972, reinforced temporalized and exoticized images of local Indigenous peoples and informed the production of “Indigeneity.” While attention is directed to prevailing discourse, this research is also concerned with how Nakoda participants responded to this discourse through their participation in local tourism economies. As well as facilitating a process where Nakoda peoples returned to important locations within Banff National Park, the Indian Days offered unique socio-economic, political and cultural opportunities. Through interpreting the discursive production of Indigenous identities, it is revealed how some community members refused colonial structures and defied limiting definitions of their cultural practices. The festivals are established as key spaces of exchange that fostered identity-making possibilities.

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Introduction

Beginning in the 1880s, Indigenous peoples were increasingly refused access to the protected areas that were appropriated in the formation of Rocky Mountains Park (the precursor to Banff).¹ The exclusion of Indigenous peoples from the lands and resources that were fundamental to their cultural and

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¹ In 1885, a small tract of land was designated as the Banff Hot Springs Reserve on the eastern slopes of the Canadian Rocky Mountains. Two years later the area was significantly expanded to 674 square kilometers and Rocky Mountains Park was formed as Canada's first national park. Corresponding with the National Parks Act of 1930, the park was renamed Banff and its boundaries were established comprising 6697 square kilometers in what is currently the province of Alberta.

subsistence practices had significant impacts in their communities. As early as 1894, the Banff Indian Days tourism festivals provided an opportunity for local Indigenous peoples to regain access to the region.² This article examines discourses that informed the production of “Indigeneity” which partly emerged through the development of tourism economies in the Banff-Bow Valley, Alberta, from 1910 to 1972. The participation of Nakoda peoples in the Banff Indian Days festivals are the focal point of this analysis. Along with offering unique socio-economic, political and cultural opportunities, the Indian Days facilitated a process where Nakoda peoples returned to important sites within the park boundaries and reasserted their cultural links to these landscapes.

While the discourses that were circulated during this period are part of this research, it is also concerned with how Nakoda peoples responded to the expectations that were created in the production of “Indigeneity” through their engagement in the tourism industry. Of particular relevance is how some Nakoda peoples pushed the limits of what was possible by playing with the very boundaries that constrained their lives. By focusing on the discursive production of Indigenous subjectivities, this article demonstrates how some community members refused colonial structures and defied limiting definitions of their cultural practices and identities. Privileging oral accounts with Nakoda peoples, but also drawing from archival documents collected from newspapers, photographs and tourism materials as primary evidence, this article centers on how Nakoda peoples formed critical spaces of interaction as well as fostered identity-making possibilities through the Banff Indian Days.

Methods/Methodology

This article is based on six years of collaborative ethnographic research with Nakoda communities in Morley, Alberta. I worked with Nakoda Elders, band councils and community members to follow established protocol and collectively define the research objectives, including community perspectives of reciprocity, for this project. I also volunteered with youth programs in the community from 2006 to 2009. To foster a research process that was collaborative in orientation and held Indigenous perspectives at its core, Indigenous methodologies (IM) guided this study. This is a partnership approach that involves researchers and participants in all aspects of the research process (Kovach, 2009). IM and other participatory community-based approaches highlight inequitable power relationships and leading scholars acknowledge the strength of this approach (Alfred, 2005; Bishop, 2005). Key tenants of IM emphasize fostering a research process that is collaborative in orientation and one that holds Indigenous perspectives, as well as ways of knowing, at the centre of the project (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). This process also helped ensure that the community’s interests were recognized and access to sensitive material was appropriately guarded (Battiste & Henderson, 2000).

Primary information reviewed for this study includes: (1) transcripts of personal interviews conducted with 12 Nakoda First Nation community members between April 2006 and November 2008. Knowledgeable community members and Elders were identified and recruited based on the suggestion of leadership. All interviews were conducted in Morley and were transcribed verbatim; (2) tourism materials from 1910–1972 in the form of CPR posters; (3) photographs of the Banff Indian Days and related events from the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies and the Glenbow Museum and Archives; and, (4) newspapers, including the *Banff Crag and Canyon* (published weekly throughout this time period) and the *Calgary Herald* (published daily from Monday to Saturday in the month of July). The newspapers were reviewed from 1910 to 1972 and were searched for information on the Banff Indian Days and other tourism-related articles. Although all weekly issues of the *Banff Crag and Canyon* were reviewed throughout each year, the daily issues of the *Calgary Herald* were

² Currently in Canada, “Indigenous” has become a more useful term to collectively refer to First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. For this reason, throughout this article I have chosen the term “Indigenous” when describing general Canadian contexts. As Alfred (2005) recognizes, the term represents an experience that is shaped by a politicized colonial past and present. However, it is critical to invoke an individual nation’s own self-appellation whenever possible and I do this throughout by referring to Nakoda peoples. Attention to such terminological specificity prevents a homogenization of distinct cultures and recognizes the heterogeneity and diversity of Indigenous languages and cultural groups in Canada. I place the term in quotations marks at times to indicate both the efforts of tourism producers to homogenize diverse Indigenous groups, but also to refer to the expectations of tourists in Banff regarding local Indigenous communities.

reviewed using an index for the month of July in each year. Special attention was allocated to this month because the Indian Days were normally held during the middle of July throughout this period.

After the texts were collected, Foucauldian-informed discourse analyses were used to interpret the texts. This methodology aims to identify the discourses operating in a certain area of life and to examine the implications for subjectivity, practice and power relations. In addition, this approach aligns well with the theoretical perspectives utilized. These analyses show how discursive formations and systems of rules make it possible for certain statements, but not others, to occur at particular times and locations. Foucauldian-informed approaches aim to identify the power relations embedded in and being produced by discourse. This also includes how discourses are resisted, refused and transformed in various human interactions (Liao & Markula, 2009).

Contextualizing representations of Indigenous peoples

Although other research has traced the origins and growth of the Banff Indian Days as a tourism event (Mason, 2008, 2009; Meijer-Drees, 1993), this article focuses on the details of Indigenous participation. Over the many decades the festivals were celebrated, the Indian Days became one of the most influential tourism events in the history of the Banff-Bow Valley. Even though it was formally held as early as 1894, the Indian Days did not become an annual two-day affair until 1912 ([Newspaper article], 1912). The festivals originally involved only Nakoda peoples, but by the 1920s several other Indigenous groups, including Cree, Ktunaxa (Kootenay), Tsuu T'ina (Sarcee), Pikunni (Peigan), Siksika (Blackfoot), and Kainai (Blood) also participated ([Newspaper article], 1914, 1931a).³ A significant contingent of Nakoda peoples did regularly attend and with the support of other groups, some years there were over 1000 Indigenous participants with a record high of 1200 in 1959 ([Newspaper article], 1959). Although the audiences were dominated by Euro-North Americans and Europeans for the first four decades of the 20th century, in the 1950s and 1960s spectators were quite diverse. At some festivals, all American states and Canadian provinces were represented in the audiences and over thirty nationalities were noted in attendance ([Newspaper article], 1956a, 1963). At its peak, the Indian Days were attracting over 70,000 tourists to the region which facilitated substantial growth of the local tourism economy ([Newspaper article], 1922). Along with considerable economic impacts, the Indian Days were influential events that shaped regional, national and international perceptions of Indigenous peoples and the Banff-Bow Valley.

The Indian Days consisted of numerous activities that profiled the sporting and cultural practices of local Indigenous peoples as well as other events that featured Indigenous participants (Meijer-Drees, 1993). At the turn of the 20th century, very few Indigenous peoples lived in Banff townsites as they were effectively displaced from the surrounding national park (see Fig. 1). Moreover, as there were few spaces during this period which afforded extensive interaction between local Indigenous peoples, urban Canadians and international tourists, the Indian Days became an essential space for the exchange of intercultural knowledge ([Newspaper article], 1943). As a consequence, the festivals were important parts of the discourses that informed the production of "Indigeneity." This research examines how these discourses were partly engendered through the representations of Indigenous peoples at the festivals. Though there were many different factors that impacted the production of "Indigeneity," it would be impossible to assess all of these influences. As a result, this article will first center on how certain discourses supported pre-colonial images that exoticized and temporalized local Indigenous cultures. Importantly, this research will then examine the production of Indigenous subjectivities to demonstrate how some Nakoda peoples responded to these discourses and positioned themselves within these processes.

However, it is critical to first establish the spaces where representations occurred, the forms of sporting and cultural activities engaged in and the gendered dynamics of Indigenous participation. A 1958 article from the local newspaper, *Banff Crag and Canyon*, indicates that throughout the history

³ The Ktunaxa (Kootenay) and Tsuu T'ina (Sarcee) first participated in 1914 and soon after attended regularly, *Banff Crag and Canyon*, 18 July 1914, 1. While oral accounts suggest that the Cree from Hobbema and members of the Blackfoot Confederacy may have participated with the Ktunaxa, Tsuu T'ina and the Nakoda earlier, newspaper accounts first acknowledge Cree and Blackfoot participation in the 1930s. See, *Calgary Herald*, 6 July 1931a, 15.

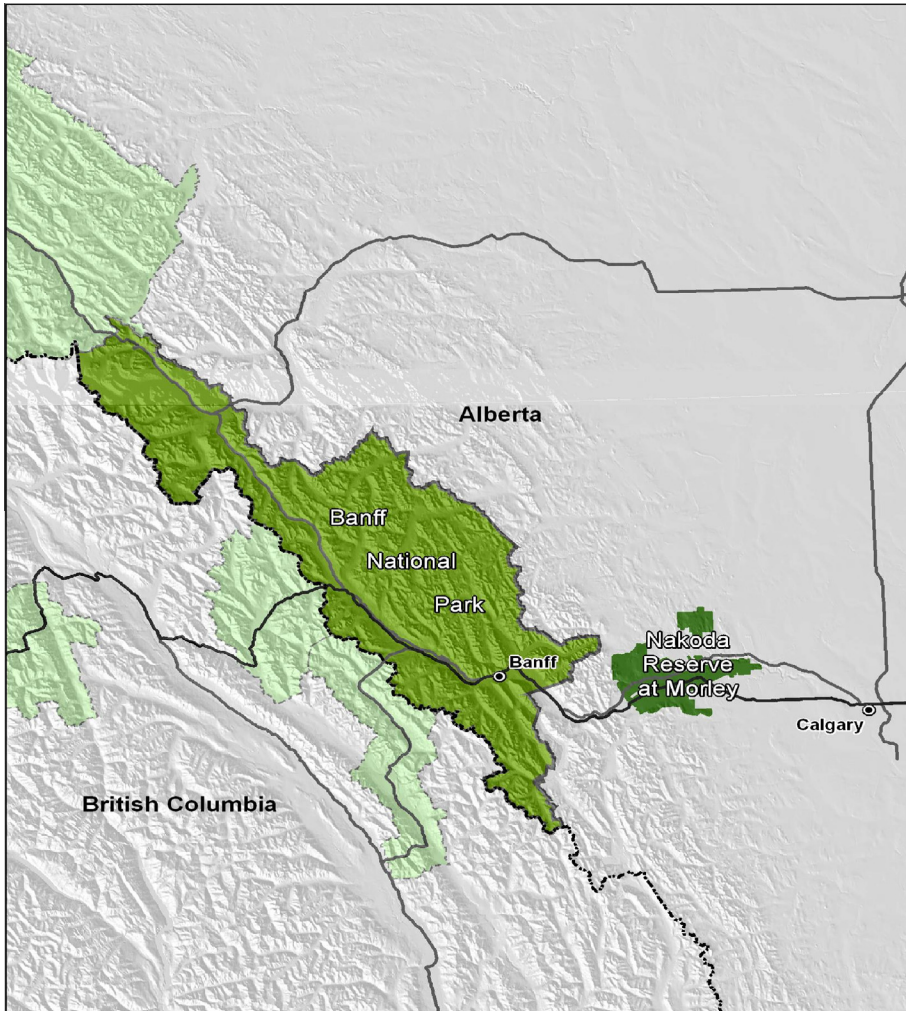


Fig. 1. Current boundaries of Banff National Park and the Nakoda Reserve at Morley. The lighter shade of green denotes the boundaries of Jasper, Yoho, Kootenay and Glacier National Parks. Map was created by Ali Buckingham, Parks Canada.

of the event a “typical Indian village” was erected at the “Indian grounds” and sporting competitions became the main forms of entertainment ([[Newspaper article](#)], 1958). While the location of the campgrounds did change on several occasions, the tipi village was always an aspect of the gathering. The campgrounds not only provided a space for Indigenous participants to gather, socialize, sleep and eat during the festival, but it was also a main tourist attraction. Promotional materials for tourists circulated by the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR)⁴ described the tipi village in the following manner:

⁴ The CPR was formed in 1881 with the intention of building a railway that would unite central Canada to British Columbia and the Pacific coast, a task they completed in 1885. From the 1880s until the beginning of the Second World War, the CPR diversified into tourism ventures, including hotel and other infrastructure construction, in addition to numerous other profitable businesses. By the turn of the 20th century, the CPR developed into the world’s largest and most extensive travel company ([Choko and Jones, 2004](#)).

The braves mounted on their gaily decorated ponies wearing magnificent bonnets of eagle feathers is a sight to be remembered. . . visitors are welcome at their camp where good-natured squaws sit at the doors of the tepees and watch their brown babies sprawling at their feet (Williams, 1922, p. 34).

A description from a regional newspaper, that promoted the Indian Days, also centers on exoticized aspects as it itemizes the contents of the village:

Beating tom-toms, ki-yiing Indians, madly galloping cayuses [horses], gaudily painted braves and squaws [men and women], papooses [children], dogs, a hundred tepees and everything that belongs to the Indian village ([Newspaper article], 1926b, p. 5).

These statements highlight some of the exotic elements of the camp, its subsequent appeal to the Western tourist gaze and the potential intimacy of encounters. Time slots were allotted for visitors to tour the campgrounds, examine the tipis, take photographs and interact with Indigenous participants ([Newspaper article], 1929a). As Nakoda Elder Margaret Snow states:

Especially the tourists from Europe liked the village. They would say that it was an Indian camp and would come to take pictures. . . it was the center of attraction (personal communication, November 14, 2008).

Nakoda peoples did open their camps to be toured by visitors, but some community members expressed concerns over the tours of the campgrounds because of their invasive nature ([Newspaper article], 1947). When discussing their experiences during the tours, some participants even suggested that they were uncomfortable with the attention they received. Elder Roland Rollinmud recollects his experiences:

As a young kid, all of these tourists were taking pictures of us and you know holding our hands. . . and taking more pictures. They wanted to be around you and they liked coming. For them. . . I'm not too sure, but to us it was a way of living, not a onetime show (personal communication, April 10, 2006).

In contrast to these concerns, other Nakoda participants welcomed the campground tours and viewed them as opportunities to display and sell their art, bead and quill work (R. Rollinmud, personal communication, April 10, 2006). Despite differing perspectives, visiting the tipi village was an occasion for tourists to be exposed to and learn from Indigenous cultures. The tourists' desire to tour the campgrounds were partly driven by their interests in Wild West genres of film, literature and theatre, which formed a significant component of Western popular culture, particularly in the first few decades of the 20th century (Kasson, 2000). These powerful genres, which re-enacted colonial narratives and primarily circulated pre-colonial representations of Indigenous cultures, shaped Western tourists' expectations of "Indigeneity" (Deloria, 2004). Exemplified by the mass appeal of Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West live theatre in the U.S. and Western Europe in the 1870s (Moses, 1996) and the incredible success of Karl Friedrich May's Wild West themed novels in Germany in the 1890s (Bugmann, 2008), these pre-colonial representations were highly visible in Western culture prior to the turn of the 20th century. Later, Wild West films, which were widespread by 1910, solidified the entrance of the genre into mainstream popular culture in both Europe and North America. The high level of interest in touring the campgrounds at the Indian Days not only reflects the mass appeal of these types of experiences to European and North American tourists, but also the Western desire for particular types of representations of Indigenous peoples.

Sporting competitions were also a central aspect of the Indian Days and by 1915 they comprised the majority of the program. An article from the *Banff Crag and Canyon*, which recounts the history of events, specifies that foot and horse races along with Indian wrestling, a unique competition which took place on horseback, were part of the Indian Days from the very beginning (M. Snow, personal communication, November 14, 2008; [Newspaper article], 1921). Other competitions, such as barrel jumps, bare and saddle bucks, calf roping, steer riding, relay and carriage races were some of the rodeo-oriented events that formed the festival's schedule in the 1920s ([Newspaper article], 1936a; M. Snow, personal communication, November 14, 2008). Nakoda Elder Rollinmud reflects on the rodeo events at the Indian Days:

Ah...and then there was the rodeo events. Back then there were no fancy suits and equipment, like the rodeos today. You just hold on to the horse, sometimes without a saddle or anything. As far as I can remember, back then you just got on. You'd bring your fastest horse and if you win you would have one-year of bragging rights [laughs aloud] (personal communication, April 10, 2006).

Tipi pitching, pie eating, archery and tug-of-war competitions were also eventually added to the itinerary in the 1930s ([Newspaper article], 1955, 1957). Along with entertaining spectators and profiling some aspects of Indigenous cultural practices, participants were positioned and positioned themselves within the Western tourist gaze during the athletic competitions.

Prior to discussing some of the cultural performances at the festivals, it is imperative to recognize the fundamental roles that Indigenous women played at the Indian Days. In contrast to most sporting and physical activity spaces in other regions throughout Canada at the beginning of the 20th century where women were often excluded or marginalized (Hall, 2012), Indigenous women were participants in the Indian Days in several respects. Nakoda women were key organizers of the events by facilitating their family's participation. While the tasks of preparing meals, organizing the campgrounds and taking care of children supported men's participation in the festival, Nakoda women also engaged in many of the sporting and cultural events ([Newspaper article], 1936b). Although men led most of the pre-festival negotiations with tourism producers and more often represented their communities through the various public ceremonies, Indigenous women were the backbone of the organization of the events (M. Snow, personal communication, November 14, 2008; R. Rollinmud, personal communication, November 14, 2008). Indigenous women were also participants in the cultural performances that often highlighted the schedule. In addition to the annual parade where women were directors and organizers, the music and dance performances relied upon women's participation. In the earlier versions of the Indian Days (1910–1930), the women's sporting events consisted mainly of foot races and horse races where, similar to the men, they demonstrated their endurance and skill on horseback in competitions for monetary prizes ([Newspaper article], 1926a). In Kelm's (2011) research on tourism and the history of rodeo in Western Canada, she suggests that although women competed at a few rodeos early in the 20th century, the rise of professional organizations sidelined them for several decades until they formed their own associations. Aligning with women's rights movements, it was not until the second half of the 20th century that women found new spaces in rodeo contests and performances. Wall's (2012) research on the social history of sport in Alberta highlights not only the limited participation of Indigenous women in rodeo during this period, but also how all women were marginalized from mainstream sporting life in the province. She notes that women were strongly discouraged from participation in sports that involved risk or more direct physical contact. While some Euro-Canadian women were at times supported to engage in the sports of tennis and golf, Indigenous women were also marginalized and excluded from these spaces because of their direct associations with particular class and Christian values. As Indigenous women actively participated in rodeo and other sporting events at the Indian Days throughout the first five decades of the 20th century, this is an interesting example of the inclusion of women that not only contradicts most rodeo forums in Western Canada during this period, but also women's sport and leisure participation in general throughout the province.

By the 1930s, women specific events, including travois races, tug-of-war, tipi pitching and nail driving competitions were also added to the program (see Fig. 2) ([Newspaper article], 1939; Margaret Snow, personal communication, November 14, 2008; Merisha Snow, personal communication, November 14, 2008).⁵ In 1954, an Indigenous women's fashion show was scheduled into the festival ([Newspaper article], 1954). Despite the verity that the number of events and participants in the women's competitions were significantly less than in the men's, the scale of participation of women in the sporting competitions remains quite remarkable considering their extensive contributions as organizers and facilitators in other aspects of the festival. Moreover, when one acknowledges the limited and

⁵ *Banff Crag and Canyon*, 16 June 1939, 1. Travois are mechanisms to carry loads behind a horse in rough terrain. They were often used by Plains peoples to carry children. Margaret Snow, (personal interview, 14 November 2008); Merisha Snow, (personal interview, 14 November 2008).



Fig. 2. Indigenous Women Participants in the Banff Indian Days (1941). Indigenous women race around the track during the travois race as a component of the rodeo events. Courtesy of the Glenbow Museum and Archives. na-1241-699. (photographer: F. Gully).

severely restricted involvement of women as competitors in provincial sporting events during this period, the extent of participation of Indigenous women during the Indian Days remains quite exceptional. This is especially notable when considering the struggles that Indigenous women continue to encounter as both participants as well as organizers and leaders in sporting institutions and structures in the 21st century Canadian context (Giles, 2008; Paraschak & Forsyth, 2010).

Moving beyond a focus on gendered participation in the event to an examination of the representations promoted during the Indian Days, it is clear that the festival temporalized Indigenous peoples as a part of a bygone era—a stagnant or unchanged aspect of Alberta’s past, not an active component of the historical present. In 1923, newspaper accounts that promoted the events advertised the Indian Days as the last chance for tourists to witness a “vanishing culture that was quickly disappearing” ([Newspaper article], 1923). In a *Calgary Herald* article entitled “Redskins Invade Mountain Resort,” the author describes a scene from the event:

Medicine men with their girdled loins and painted bodies dressed in their feathered finery and beaded costumes, others in simple Buffalo hides, paraded through the crowded streets of Banff to their teepee village at the foot of Cascade Mountain ([Newspaper article], 1925, p. 7).

This description of the clothing worn by some of the individuals and the spaces they occupied indicates some of the ways pre-colonial representations of Indigenous peoples were displayed at the festival. During the cultural events, Indigenous participants and performers were encouraged to endorse imagery which supported these particular representations of “Indigeneity” (L. Poucette, personal communication, October 9, 2007). From an analysis of tourism materials, photographs, newspapers and oral accounts, it is clear that understandings of how Indigenous peoples managed introduced European influences or the current state of their communities were not the focus of the cultural interpretations at the Indian Days. Resulting from the objectives of tourism producers to maintain

pre-colonial representations of Indigenous peoples to align with tourists' expectations, the complexities, histories and contemporary lives of local Indigenous peoples were not overtly part of the festival and its marketing campaigns (see Fig. 3). By juxtaposing pre-colonial representations with Indigenous accounts that highlighted their lived experiences, the Indian Days could have fragmented the perception of Indigenous peoples in an idealized past, forcing consumers to acknowledge Indigenous peoples as a component of contemporary Canadian cultural life.

Although attempts to fracture pre-colonial images were made by some Nakoda peoples, they were often rejected by tourism producers. As early as 1913, organizers prohibited any participants who chose to wear modern attire from marching in the parade ([Newspaper article], 1913). Later during cultural performances, a similar code of dress was reinforced. Despite these constraints, it is important to indicate that the ceremonial dress of Nakoda peoples should not only be characterized as disciplinary. Throughout the history of the Indian Days many Nakoda participants took a great deal of pride in displaying their forms of ceremonial dress (R. Rollinmud, personal communication, April 10, 2006). What is notable regarding the exchanges between Nakoda participants and Euro-Canadian organizers over appropriate attire is the amount of control that tourism producers attempted to exercise over what Indigenous peoples wore. How certain participants responded to these attempts in ways that either reinforced or disrupted tourists' expectations of "Indigeneity" is also of interest and will be discussed below.



Fig. 3. CPR Tourism Poster (1939). Focusing on exotic regalia, such as the peace pipe, this promotional image is an example of a pre-colonial representation. Courtesy of Canadian Pacific Corporate Archives A. 6143. (artist: unknown).

Tourism festivals as opportunities for Nakoda peoples

While the Indian Days did at times popularize pre-colonial representations of Indigenous peoples, it is imperative to recognize the roles that local Nakoda peoples played in these festivals and the significance of these gatherings. As scholars have reinforced, events celebrating physical and cultural practices can be influential spaces where Indigenous peoples can be self-determining as well as assert representations that either align with, or contradict, prevailing discourse (Robidoux, 2012; Springwood, 2001). The Indian Days offered local Indigenous communities considerable socio-economic, political and cultural opportunities. Becoming increasingly relevant throughout the first few decades of the 20th century, the festivals presented limited financial assistance for Nakoda peoples during particularly challenging periods. Although documented elsewhere (Mason, 2008), during the depression (1929–1939) some Nakoda peoples at Morley relied upon the food rations and supplementary income from their participation in the Indian Days for basic subsistence ([Newspaper article], 1935).

Beginning in the 1940s, the high profile of the Indian Days made it ideal for Nakoda peoples to hold inductee ceremonies and introduce honorary members of their nation. These special individuals, mostly prominent men and women from Calgary's business and political communities, were singled out for their dedication to improving the lives of Nakoda peoples ([Newspaper article], 1941). In some cases, famous celebrities and members of royalty were also given this honour or status. From 1940 until the 1970s, Nakoda leaders took advantage of the media exposure of the Indian Days to use their own cultural capital to build and publicly solidify connections with influential persons in broader urban Euro-Canadian communities and internationally. The Indian Days were used to strategically build political bridges between Nakoda peoples and individuals in powerful positions. Being made an honorary member was indicative of an interest in helping Nakoda communities in the past, but it also established a responsibility to do so in the future (L. Poucette, personal communication, October 9, 2007). In this capacity, the festivals were key political networking opportunities.

Along with socio-economic and political benefits, the festivals also offered cultural opportunities for Indigenous peoples during a period when spaces for representation were uncommon. Similar to Wild West theatre, these types of performances were one of only a few places in North American society where Indigenous peoples had some measure of control over material aspects of their lives (Moses, 1996). The 1877 Treaty Seven Agreement stemming from the 1876 Indian Act had significant consequences for Nakoda communities (Snow, 2005). The subsequent policies attempted to further assimilate Indigenous peoples, but resulted in advancing the socio-economic, political and cultural exclusion of Indigenous communities from many aspects of Euro-Canadian society (Hildebrandt, First Rider, & Carter, 1996). For much of the first half of the 20th century, this isolation limited interactions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. In many cases, events like the Indian Days were one of the main opportunities for international tourists and Euro-Canadians alike to learn from and engage with Indigenous peoples. This was a valued aspect of the gatherings as Nakoda communities were able to share their cultures with interested participants. As Nakoda man Jackson Wesley, who spoke about the Indian Days in a positive light, emphasized:

The people [Nakoda community members] enjoyed coming to Banff to interact and perform for tourists because we liked helping them learn about Native cultures (personal communication, December 3, 2007).

This sharing of cultures was recognized by Nakoda Elder Lenny Poucette who clearly depicted the Indian Days as honouring Indigenous peoples:

They [tourists and Banff residents] didn't want to make a mockery of us and they weren't bad people. Back then it was more about honour. They came because they wanted to understand us and honour our cultures (personal communication, October 9, 2007).

Nakoda peoples had few chances to interact with broader Euro-Canadian communities during this period. Especially earlier in the 20th century, the Indian Days were critical sites of cultural exchange. In contrast to other spaces where the Nakoda interacted with non-Indigenous peoples in the province

of Alberta, the festivals not only provided viable financial support for participants, but it also offered infrequent cultural opportunities for Nakoda peoples, tourists and participating residents of Banff townsite.

While some of the representations offered through the Indian Days did temporalize and exoticize Indigenous peoples in ways that negatively contributed to perceptions of “Indigeneity” by reinforcing the expectations of tourists, the festivals also presented several unique cultural possibilities to the Nakoda. As detailed by other works (Meijer-Drees, 1993; Parker, 1990), in addition to sporting competitions, there were numerous music and dance performances that were staged for tourists throughout the gatherings that constituted the Indian Days. Despite the fact that these performances were primarily held as tourist events, this does not negate the significant meanings Nakoda peoples generated from their involvement. Through their interactions with tourists, local entrepreneurs and with other Indigenous groups, Nakoda peoples valued these opportunities as critical spaces of exchange. It is important not to construe the tourist presentations at the Indian Days as insignificant to Indigenous participants. Oral accounts indicate that Nakoda participants relished opportunities to engage with both international audiences and local Banff residents. Poucette refers to the value community members placed in these types of interactions at the Indian Days:

We enjoyed meeting all the different people. We would mingle and . . . you know Native people we like to talk to people, laugh and bring humour . . . at the same time that was a gathering place to visit relatives and new friends and that was the only certain time that they could see one another as some of them live in different areas and they couldn't get together very much (personal communication, October 9, 2007).

In addition to the music and dance performances, both Nakoda and Euro-Canadian participants regularly organized theatre productions for the Indian Days that re-enacted aspects of Indigenous histories and cultures. Some years, these performances were entirely initiated and organized by Nakoda participants. These productions allowed Nakoda directors and performers a great deal of license to represent their cultures in the ways they desired ([[Newspaper article](#)], 1941; [[Newspaper article](#)], 1929b). It is crucial to recognize that there were few spaces throughout most of the 20th century where Indigenous communities could interact with broader society on such a mass scale. Furthermore, few of these experiences were more than brief encounters. Annually for over seven decades, the Indian Days provided these types of extended periods of interaction.

In addition to the performances staged for tourists, Indigenous participants held their own cultural events in conjunction with the gatherings; these included powwow ceremonies and Indigenous games or sporting contests (L. Poucette, personal communication, October 9, 2007). Often in the evenings after Indigenous participants had returned to their campgrounds, they continued to engage in activities away from the gaze of tourists and non-Indigenous organizers. These evenings for Indigenous participants, which were looked forward to by community members, were regularly referenced in oral accounts as the most significant aspect of the festivals (R. Rollinmud, personal communication, April 10, 2006). Poucette passionately explains the central rationale behind the evening components of the gatherings in his descriptions of how the Elders would share their stories around the campfire:

What we appreciated the most about coming down to Banff was the telling of stories of how life is and at the same time to express to all the young people what life is all about. Events may happen during the day . . . games and sports, but it was during the night that the Elders had time to sit down with the young people and talk to them. You see, a family member can tell her kids a story and then another family comes over and tells them their version in a different way. All of them may be different, but when you listen to these stories together, you'll understand who we are and where we came from. It was a great learning time . . . how to take care of a horse or how to present yourself to others. They would teach us how to listen with respect and that's why the gatherings were so important (personal communication, October 9, 2007).

These experiences were viewed as vital spaces for intergenerational knowledge exchange—where younger generations celebrated and learned about their cultures. In addition to understanding the histories that shaped Nakoda cultural life in the past, these learning sessions, articulated through stories,

also facilitated discussions about many of the contemporary issues facing their communities. The following statement by an Elder highlights this point:

This was not just a celebration. It was about the long learning process of survival. . . life moving from the traditional towards the contemporary. There's so many stories that I heard there [Indian Days campgrounds]. The stories were about what we should do in the future and what not to do. . . they told us who our relatives were and taught us to respect them as well as Mother Earth. All this and more. . . I learned there (L. Poucette, personal communication, October 9, 2007).

Oral accounts suggest that through their public interactions and private gatherings, Nakoda peoples considered the Indian Days important sites of cultural exchange. Although these experiences took place in both public and private spaces, they cultivated processes around the production and transmission of cultural knowledge for Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants.

In order to understand the cultural importance of these gatherings for Indigenous peoples, the colonial contexts in which the Indian Days occurred must be considered. It was not until 1951 that the federal government revised its policies of directly prohibiting Indigenous cultural practices (Hildebrandt et al., 1996). The Indian Days not only presented the opportunity for Nakoda peoples to celebrate their cultures among themselves, but also to interact and share with other participating Indigenous groups. Particularly during the decades when legislation banning their cultural practices was harshly enforced, the Indian Days served as critical gathering places for Indigenous peoples. This was also witnessed in the province of British Columbia where annual tourist festivals were considered by local Indigenous groups as the most significant annual gathering (Furniss, 1999). When taking into account the colonial policies of assimilation which continued to severely repress forms of cultural celebrations in Indigenous communities throughout most of the history of Indian Days, it is easy to understand why these gatherings were highly valued by Nakoda peoples.

In efforts to appreciate the Indian Days as opportunities to celebrate Indigenous cultural practices, it is crucial to connect the Banff-Bow Valley as a pivotal location for Nakoda peoples. Similar to the impacts of displacing Indigenous peoples in the formation of the national parks system in the United States (Burnham, 2000; Spence, 1999), the displacement from sacred cultural lands had critical consequences for Indigenous communities in Canada. The exclusion of Nakoda peoples from the lands redefined as national parks had significant impacts on their ways of life. The restricted access to these areas not only greatly influenced their subsistence land uses, but also limited the celebration of their cultural practices which were anchored in the places they traveled through and lived in for centuries (Binnema & Niemi, 2006). Over the last two decades, there has been an increase in the scholarly investigations into the fundamental links between landscapes and cultures (Cronon, 1996; Wilson, 1991). Land formations are now seen as repositories for memories as they always contain the cultures of the peoples who occupy them (Schama, 1996). This is particularly relevant for oral cultures, such as Canada's Indigenous peoples, whose histories are often stored in the many geological features that frame their lives (Palmer, 2005). Cruikshank (2005) suggests that there is a growing body of research on social memory that portrays landscapes as critical sites of remembrance for Indigenous peoples where culturally significant landforms provide archives that store the memories and related histories that are held within them. Early European explorers in the Canadian Rocky Mountains and later elite sporting men and women, viewed the region's rivers, mountains and glaciers as considerable but conquerable obstacles. Conversely, for Indigenous peoples these land formations evoked individual and collective memories, marked their histories and embodied their cultural practices.

For Nakoda peoples, the Banff-Bow Valley, particularly the proximal lands surrounding the townsite, contains their histories. Many specific sites also have close associations with aspects of their cultural practices (R. Rollinmud, personal communication, April 10, 2006). Nakoda man Wesley eloquently emphasizes the role that these mountains play in the storing of valuable knowledge and culture:

we keep our secrets secret. . . we are very quiet people who don't like to share stories with outsiders. You see these mountains around us? All of our secrets are in these mountains. . . millions of our secrets are held in these mountains and they are not meant to be shared (personal communication, December 3, 2007).

In reference to the importance of the Rocky Mountains and the land encompassing the national parks to Nakoda peoples, Chief Snow writes:

The Rocky Mountains are sacred to us. We know every trail and mountain pass in this area. We had special ceremonies and religious areas in the mountains. These mountains are our temples, our sanctuaries, and our resting places. They are a place of hope, a place of vision, a place of refuge, a very special and holy place where the Great Spirit speaks with us. Therefore, these mountains are our sacred places (2005: 19).

After decades of being excluded from the national parks system, the Indian Days were viewed as periods for Nakoda communities to reassert their physical and cultural links with the region. In the following statement, Rollinmud discusses why access to the lands around Banff townsite is integrally connected to his community's culture:

In the mountains around there the spirits are all around. You feel them. . . that is the place where we will never be forgotten. It is what we are and it preserves us. . . because we protected this land (personal communication, April 10, 2006).

Margaret Snow succinctly reinforces this point:

it is a healing place [Banff townsite and surrounding region]. . . when you are there. . . your mind is really calm as you have moments in time with nature (personal communication, November 14, 2008).

For some Nakoda peoples the Indian Days represented a type of homecoming ([Newspaper article](#), 1943). In reference to the exclusion of Indigenous peoples from park lands and their eventual return to the region, which was facilitated by the gatherings, Rollinmud states:

Well in that way the Indian Days have always been a bit about forgiveness. . . as we could return to use the lands that were important to our cultures for so long (personal communication, April 10, 2006).

For Nakoda communities the Indian Days were widely viewed as chances to not only leave their reserves, interact with other Indigenous groups and tourists, but also to establish or maintain relationships with Banff residents. However, perhaps the most significant aspect of the festivals for Nakoda communities was regaining access to the lands and sacred places that over centuries had become fundamental to their cultures. This access (re)asserted the links with the lands that shaped their practices and connected Nakoda communities to the places that hold their cultural secrets, knowledge and histories.

The production of Indigenous identities

In addition to facilitating a process whereby Indigenous communities returned to the places that were deeply connected to their cultures, the festivals also presented identity-making possibilities. For the purposes of this section, which examines the production of Indigenous subjectivities through the Indian Days, it is essential to deconstruct "Indigenous" racial categories. Like all individuals and cultures, Nakoda peoples are not homogenous. Poucette reveals in a discussion of his family's history or ethnic background:

I'm part Kootenay [Ktunaxa]! Yeah on my late dad's side, you know his great-grandparents were part Kootenay. At the same time. . . I don't know how this works, but I'm also part Cree. So you could say that I am represented by the meeting of all those peoples at the Indian Days [laughs aloud] (personal communication, October 9, 2007).

Even though prevailing discourses and related disciplinary technologies shape what is possible to understand in society about racial subject positions, this does not devalue the significant meanings that are formed through and around the production of any subjectivity. Especially when examining

marginal identities, whether they are racial or otherwise, one must acknowledge that the production and maintenance of these categories do have tangible consequences.

Instances of playing with Indigenous cultural insignia in tourism, whether it be for the purpose of entertainment or to co-opt Indigenous identities and cultures, have been well-documented (Moses, 1996; Nesper, 2003; Scanlon, 1990). Particularly in tourism industries, representations of “playing Indian” became prevalent in North American popular culture in the later decades of the 19th century (Springwood, 2001). There are numerous examples where Euro-North Americans took great pleasure in mimicking or mocking Indigenous cultural forms in ways that often reinforced discourses that informed the production of “Indigeneity.” With a few notable exceptions (Deloria, 1998; Robidoux, 2006), what is less prevalent in the scholarly tourism literature is how Indigenous peoples also employed these strategies through representations of their own cultures.

At the Banff Indian Days, Euro-Canadians did play with representations to project particular pre-colonial images of Indigenous cultures. While some readings of representations at the Indian Days can highlight exoticizing and temporalizing elements that supported pre-colonial perceptions of “Indigeneity,” it is more difficult to locate evidence of how these representations were fractured by Indigenous participants even though this process did occur at the festivals. Through their interactions with tourists, entrepreneurs and other Indigenous groups, Nakoda peoples actively sought out opportunities to challenge prevailing discourses and the related representations of their cultures. Numerous studies indicate that Indigenous performers in sporting and cultural events are particularly well-situated to challenge stereotypical representations of their cultures (Kasson, 2000; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). As Furniss argues, Indigenous peoples do “use performance to express distinct cultural meanings and identities, but also to subvert and challenge dominant colonial stereotypes” (1999: 172). Nakoda peoples also occasionally played with cultural forms in the performance of their own identities. Oral accounts with Nakoda performers indicate that even though many of the representations of their cultures were produced to align with tourists’ expectations of “Indigeneity,” participants also played with these expectations in ways that disrupted their reception (R. Rollinmud, personal communication, April 10, 2006). An example of this comes from Chief Tatanga Mani (Walking Buffalo) or George McLean who was extensively involved with organizing the Indian Days for many years, beginning in 1920 when he was elected Chief of Nakoda First Nations until his death in 1967. As well as a strong and committed leader, Tatanga Mani was well-known for his great sense of humour and his insistence on the acceptance of Indigenous peoples as an important part of Canadian society ([Newspaper article], 1956b). He regularly played with aspects of his own identity and those of tourists or Banff residents. He was known to refer to Euro-Canadians as “white savages.” In one instance in 1946 at the ceremonial address of the Indian Days following the parade, he used the “white savages” reference to “confuse and delight the large crowd” ([Newspaper article], 1946, p. 1). Tatanga Mani also added that he noticed how the “white savage women wore more paint on their faces than the Indians” (Newspaper article], 1946, p. 1). Indigenous Chiefs not only had more opportunities to play with representations and performances of their identities, but also had greater potential to draw attention to cultural stereotypes, as their positions as leaders afforded higher profile interactions.

By performing “Indigeneity” in the ways that played with representations of their cultures, Nakoda participants did confuse conceptions of race. As Butler (1993) asserts in her examination of the discursive production of subjectivities related to gender and sex, identities are stabilized by repetitions of stylized acts of certain behaviour performances over others. It is because identities are repeated performances of acts that they can be contested or refused. As a consequence, if one were to change the patterns of these repetitions, identities could be destabilized in ways that could subvert perceptions of them. One way in which this could be accomplished is through using forms of parody to play with identities (see Fig. 4). However, representations can be read in a multitude of ways and as a result only some readings have the potential to create alternative understandings or critiques. If the parody of a representation is lost in the consumption of it because the consumer lacks the necessary resources to reinterpret it, the readings can actually support damaging stereotypes of racial subjectivities. Unfortunately, there are no ways to ensure that practices of parody will reach their intended audience (Brayton & Alexander, 2007; Robidoux, 2006). Accordingly, the subversive value of any parody entirely depends upon the contexts and receptions in which the disruptions occur. For example, when an



Fig. 4. *Playing with Identities* (1935). The tourism industry became an interesting space to challenge one-dimensional imagery of Indigenous peoples. This picture was taken during the Indian Days for a postcard promoting tourism in Banff. It depicts several Nakoda leaders and one young woman golfing at the Banff Springs Hotel as tourism entrepreneurs caddy for the group. Courtesy of the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies. v263-na-3284. (photographer: Byron Harmon).

Indigenous participant exaggerates exotic regalia or plays with stereotypes of “Indigeneity” in their interactions with tourists, if their performance of identity aligns with expectations of the identities, instead of subverting stereotypical perceptions, it could serve to strengthen them within the audience.

While a number of foundational works in tourism studies did call for Foucault’s perspectives on disciplinary power to be taken up by scholars (Cheong & Miller, 2000, 2004; Hollinshead, 1994, 1999; Veijola & Jokinen, 1994), the specifics or micro actions of how individuals and groups engage with, or exercise, disciplinary power in and through tourism industries has not been comprehensively examined (Butler & Hinch, 2007). However, drawing from a Foucauldian approach, other researchers have demonstrated that discipline can take control of individuals by filling in gaps in space, time and movement (Markula & Mason, 2013; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Shogan, 1999). Organizations of these modalities constitute the technologies or constraints of docility that were used by agents of the colonial bureaucracy in attempts to assimilate Indigenous peoples by closing gaps of behaviour as well as to exercise control in tourism performances. Despite the relentless influence of disciplinary technologies, Nakoda peoples did not become homogenous because of the breaks or interruptions in identity production that are omnipresent. Technologies of discipline are not absolute in the ways they impact individuals or implicate the processes of identity production. Foucault emphasizes this point: “instead of bending all of its subjects into a single uniform mass, it separates, analyses, differentiates. . .” (1975: 170). Just as Foucault’s technologies of the self (1985) do not guarantee a weakening of disciplinary processes or changes in the discourses that produce power relations, disciplinary technologies do not ensure the production of homogenous subjects.

While Foucault conceptualized disciplinary technologies as producing homogenous and eventually docile bodies in the institutions he examined, the fact that discipline implicates individuals differently is exemplified in the production of hybrid identities in colonial societies. Hybrid identities are produced by the multiple and competing subject positions that individuals simultaneously occupy as well as the influence of disciplinary technologies (Young, 1995). Bhabha (1994) contends that it is the ambivalence of colonial rule that enables hybrid identities the capacity for resistance. In the case of

the Nakoda peoples participating in the Indian Days, individuals had different aspects at stake in the continuation of relationships with tourism entrepreneurs and in the performance of “Indigeneity.” Both newspaper and oral accounts indicate that convincing Nakoda youth to participate in the parade was always a difficult task as few were willing to wear the elaborate regalia and dress of the generations before them ([Newspaper article], 1931b). By the late 1930s, especially young Nakoda men were interested in showcasing the “cowboy” attire which, in some cases, more accurately reflected their quotidian lives as many were active participants in rodeo events throughout the spring and summer seasons (Newspaper article], 1936a). Although it was noted as an issue as early as the 1930s, it became a problem in the 1960s for the Indian Days organizing committee chairman Claude Brewster, who stated that “no one will be allowed in the parade unless they are wearing full Indian regalia” ([Newspaper article], 1961, p. 2). Even though it was strongly encouraged by tourism entrepreneurs for Indigenous participants to appear in pre-colonial dress when in the public spotlight or tourist gaze, Nakoda youth defied one-dimensional representations of their cultures by disrupting these images and insisting on dressing like “cowboys” throughout the festival ([Newspaper article], 1965). These representations of Nakoda peoples, which included chaps, cowboy hats and boots, not only conflicted with the discourses that supported pre-colonial imagery of Indigenous peoples, but they also signified the hybrid aspects of the identities of young Nakoda men. While some youth insisted on dressing like cowboys, they also wore traditional dress in other celebrations associated with the festival, including the evening powwows held away from the gaze of tourists (L. Poucette, personal communication, October 9, 2007). In this case, the presence of hybridity provides evidence of the different ways that some Nakoda youth were implicated by discipline and responded to the technologies that were designed to simplify, or in some cases assimilate, Indigenous cultures.

Just as Nakoda youth were reproved for their lack of compliance with dress codes established by tourism producers, representations of Indigenous peoples that do not align with tourists’ expectations are often discouraged by agents of the tourism industry (Bruner, 2001, 2005; Harkin, 2003; Sweet, 2004). Responding to prevailing discourses that promoted exoticized and temporalized aspects of their cultures, Indigenous peoples who successfully and creatively adapt to changing conditions are rarely conceived as cultural strategists, but more often portrayed as peoples who have lost their cultures (Deloria, 2004). As Wetherell and Potter (1992) demonstrate, this is one of the *catch-22* situations that Indigenous youth regularly encounter. This is particularly relevant as Indigenous peoples try to represent their cultures in forms that assert their contemporary realities but also meet tourists’ expectations (Blundell, 1993; Mason, 2004). Butler (1990) argues that it is when individuals are required to satisfy the demands of competing disciplines that they can “necessarily fail.” The disciplinary demands of subjectivities eventually open gaps for individuals to make decisions about how they will participate in various disciplines. Conflicts most often occur as individuals are managing the technologies of docility of one discipline and they cannot meet the requirements of another. Shogan (1999) notes that it is when participants realize some dissonance from the demands of other disciplines to which they are committed that they might choose to engage in the technologies of the self and refuse aspects of their identity. Although they often have limited resources to draw from and as a consequence have fewer opportunities to alter prevailing discourses in comparison to adults, youth are sometimes less invested in the disciplines they engage with and subsequently have more potential to refuse them (Dallaire, 2003). It is when refusals occur that opportunities are created to produce new understandings of “Indigeneity.” These understandings have potential to open up spaces for alternative ways of participating in discourses.

Discipline and refusals in colonial histories

Identifying the prospective spaces that refusals may occur in is critical, but understanding the colonial power relations that frame these spaces is essential to assessing the broader political implications that any refusals could engender. Foucault argued that in power relations there is always the possibility of resistance. He stated that “where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (Foucault, 1976, p. 95). In his theorizing it is necessary to recognize that disciplinary practices continue to function when there is resistance. As Foucault asserts in describing the role of resistance in power relationships:

Their existence depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance: these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations. These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network (1976: 95).

While Foucault spent less of his career examining how specific individuals responded to disciplinary technologies and prevailing sets of discourses, this was the focus of his later works. Foucault's technologies of the self (1985) and practices of freedom (1986, 1987) provided a sophisticated map of how individuals managed these structures to actively engage in processes of self-negotiation. These works not only give examples of responses to disciplinary technologies, but also strategies that individuals can employ to contribute to the production of their own subjectivities as well as problematize discourses with the intent of transforming them.

Despite the significant changes to Nakoda ways of life that were instigated by the disciplinary technologies that they were exposed to with the creation of the reserve system, many community members continued to pursue their long-established subsistence land uses. The regime of disciplinary power that Nakoda communities encountered before the turn of the 20th century was extended into the ensuing decades through a multitude of technologies. Many aspects of the Indian Days can also be considered disciplinary, but once again Nakoda participants at times refused certain disciplinary practices while engaging others. As Foucault (1980) recognized, when disciplinary techniques fail, it does not signify the dwindling influence of power, but rather that it requires a specific reorganization. From this perspective, resistance is not an indication that power is loosening its grip, but rather it is demonstrating that it is being exercised at a particular point. For Foucault, resistance simply symbolizes the need for power to be exercised in new ways. Resistance actually works as a catalyst to create new strategies of exercising power and consequently strengthens its positions in society (Markula & Pringle, 2006).

Some of the power struggles around the Banff Indian Days provide an excellent example of how Foucault's (1980) concept of strategic elaboration works on the ground in colonial contexts. How resistance produces new corridors for the exercise of colonial power can be seen in the history of the festivals. Whether considering local and regional newspaper coverage or oral accounts, the majority of perspectives present a positive image of the event and very little direct public resistance to the festivals has been recorded. However, in 1970, members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) arrived to investigate the involvement of Indigenous peoples in the festivals and convinced some participants to demand complete control over the event. The idea was raised by some Nakoda participants to shift the location of the festival to the Nakoda reserve at Morley to further facilitate this process. The influence of the AIM forced a reconsideration of the roles Nakoda participants played in the organization of the event which opened up discussions for representational changes and negotiations on compensation. While this resistance can be conceptualized as creating better conditions for Nakoda participants at the Indian Days, this fuelled an internal debate within Nakoda communities which led to a boycott of the Indian Days the following summer in 1971 ([Newspaper article], 1971). As a consequence of the Nakoda boycott, other participating Indigenous groups, including the Cree, Ktunaxa, Tsuu T'ina and members of the Blackfoot Confederacy, were asked to fill the void at the Indian Days and due to their participation, the event ran quite smoothly. As a result of the boycott, Nakoda peoples temporarily lost their position and status as the majority group, which over many decades had afforded them a unique position of influence compared to the other Indigenous participants who were considered guests of the Nakoda. The 1971 festival clearly demonstrated that the Nakoda contributions to the Indian Days were replaceable by other Indigenous groups and left them in a somewhat vulnerable position. The disapproval of the direction of Indian Days and the desire of Nakoda leaders to exercise more power over key decisions was certainly the intent of the boycott; however, this expression of resistance facilitated a shifting of the balance of power in ways that asserted the authority of Euro-Canadian tourism producers to run the events in ways that did not relinquish control to participating Indigenous groups. In this manner, resistance encouraged the formation of new and strategic currents of disciplinary power that allowed Nakoda peoples to participate in the Indian Days as long as tourism producers maintained a degree of organizational and representational authority. This example demonstrates some of the complexities in the ways power relations are exercised in colonial contexts. Moreover, this analysis also reveals the need for interpretive

frameworks that account for the intricacies of these interactions by acknowledging the strategies employed by groups and also how these points of resistance fit into broader processes of colonial power relations.

Conclusion

The disciplinary practices that were introduced as part of the colonial administration's objectives to control and assimilate Indigenous peoples cannot be viewed from only one perspective. It requires a multi-faceted approach to capture the heterogeneity, disjuncture and fragmented nature of the historical conditions that shape subjectivities and discursive realities in periods of colonial rule. Bhabha (1994) encouraged further interpretations of colonialism as dynamic processes that were more than something frozen in earlier temporal periods, but entities that continually inform the present by demanding that we transform our perceptions of cross-cultural relations. In this regard, Foucault's conceptualizations of how resistance can be theorized to examine how it can serve to reinforce, rather than disrupt, power relations adds to the complexities of colonial power and the diverse responses to it by Indigenous communities in North America.

This article offers a rethinking of the historical conditions and discourses of which the Banff Indian Days contributed to and existed within. The festivals had an incredible appeal to audiences as they were the region's most successful tourist draw throughout the first half of the 20th century. By selling specific pre-colonial representations of Indigenous peoples, the Indian Days contributed to discourses that informed the production of "Indigeneity." To comprehensively examine the impact of the festivals within a broader historical context, one must understand how they exoticized and temporalized Indigenous peoples in the processes of reinforcing pre-colonial conceptions of Indigenous cultures, but also provided atypical socio-economic, political and cultural opportunities for Nakoda communities. Important aspects of these opportunities included financial gain, establishing critical spaces of interaction, reasserting links to significant cultural sites and identity-making possibilities. In addition, it is clear that gender, race and class intersected in ways that offered unique opportunities to Indigenous women during this period.

As Kasson (2000) reveals in her study on Wild West theatre, the relationships between Indigenous performers, entrepreneurs and audiences were filled with complexity and contradiction. Similarly, questions of representations and derived meanings for Nakoda performers in the Indian Days were varied and complicated as each individual produced many layers of understandings on how they were represented by others and how they represented themselves through the performance of their subjectivities in response to tourists' expectations. Oral accounts with Nakoda peoples reflect the great diversity of experiences that were embodied by generations of participation in the Indian Days by their communities. Despite varied perceptions and interpretations of the event, Indigenous peoples who participated in the Indian Days were never passive victims of the colonial policies that marginalized and disadvantaged their communities. In response to the constraints that affected their lives, Indigenous peoples constantly negotiated with Euro-Canadian tourism producers, made decisions that best served their communities' interests and pursued any potential opportunities to celebrate their cultural practices and reassert their links to sacred cultural spaces.

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