

CULTURE CHANGE AND THE KUTENAI/SALISH TRIBES^{MAS}

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Whatever the justifications, the affirmative Western cultural tradition that had been inherited by the United States, became an alibi for domination of the Native American tribes, including the Kutenai and Salish. These tribes, as a result of their cultural values were ready victims of oppression from the beginning of contact. They couldn't fathom the White culture in the context of their own. Today, the Tribes' culture is manifested in their moral and ethical practices, which are sustained by their

oral and other traditions. These traditions provide a social construction of cultural identity and its continuity, and continue to be transmitted and preserved, thus providing a barrier against the total loss of their social identity. Any success they have over the tragedies of their lives is a result of their capacity for self-renewal as fueled by their reinterpretation of traditions and practices. These are experiential territories that were never conquered by the White culture.