Canadian Content
2014

McGill Undergraduate Journal of Canadian Studies
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Notes on Contributors

Shaina Agbayani is a Filipina-Canadian freak, femme-inist and culinary visionary (a nice way to say she thinks about food all the time). She also happens to be a senior year Equity Studies and Political Science student. She looks forward to seeing Canadian Studies evolve as a self-reflexive field that thoroughly excavates and recognizes its settler foundations as a study of unceded First Nations territory.

Eden Abramowitz is a U3 McGill undergraduate student who is studying Art History. With a personal interest in Aboriginal art and life, Eden has focused her research on the reconciliation of Native material culture in the Canadian and international art markets. She plans on furthering her studies as a Master’s candidate in Art, Law and Business at Christie’s Education London following graduation, and hopes to continue contributing to scholarship on indigenous art, economies and policies.

Alexandra Lewyckyj is a U3 student at McGill University, graduating in Spring 2014 with a Bachelor of Arts in World Religions and Canadian Studies. Born and raised in Montreal, Alexandra is influenced by her dual identities as both a Canadian and a diasporic Ukrainian. A member of the Class of 2018 at New York City’s Cardozo School of Law, she lives in St-Henri with her partner, Paul, and their retired racing greyhound, Sam.

Cerian Phillips will be graduating this spring with a major in Art History and minors in Anthropology and American History. Her interests are museum studies and contemporary art and she plans to eventually pursue an MA in curatorial studies.

Katherine Ragan is a native Montrealer who recently completed her degree in Economics and Honours Political Science. She focused her degree towards Canadian and global health policy, and hopes to pursue graduate studies in public health in the near future. She also has a keen interest in matters of Canadian and Quebec nationalism and the politics of provincial-federal relationships.

Chris Gismondi is a U1 Art History and History student, new to McGill. Chris is also a conceptual artist dealing largely with themes of self-identity, repetition and emotional healing. The work under analysis, Romantic Canada, has recently been re-published for its «cultural importance» and it is important to view the work with a critical contemporary lens and make sure it does not lose its queer heritage. Chris has an interest in critical new art history incorporating queer theory, post-colonialism, feminisms and identity politics into scholarship.
Jaya Bordeleau-Cass is an undergraduate student from Montréal, currently completing a Joint Honours degree in Anthropology and Canadian Studies at McGill University. In solidarity with Indigenous Peoples worldwide, her work focuses on issues of social and environmental justice. Jaya is passionate about encouraging meaningful dialogue and cultural exchanges based on respect and integrity.

Juliette Allen is a Cultural Studies Major at McGill with a personal and academic interest in Indigenous Womanism and Two-Spirit critique. They are passionate about Native political resistance as well as contemporary and underground Aboriginal art. Additionally, Juliette is a video artist and a musician based in Montreal & Los Angeles. They aspire to create spaces for intellectual thought, art and radicalism in holistic community development.

Jelena Stankovic is in her last year of the English Literature Honours Program. When she’s not trying to write her thesis on H.D. and Ezra Pound (or spending too much time on Twitter), she enjoys watching Community, horseback riding, and looking for that perfect cup of coffee. Next year she will be starting a Masters of Information degree at University of Toronto in Librarianship, with which she hopes to become a Children’s and Youth Librarian.
Letter from the Editors

It is our pleasure to bring you the sixth volume of Canadian Content, a diverse and timely collection of essays that speak, in their variety, to the multi-faceted character of the field of Canadian Studies.

We thank all those who submitted essays for contributing to the academic discussion of Canada, including those whose work is not published here. We are also grateful to the Arts Undergraduate Society and the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada for their generous financial support, and to our editorial board for their valuable insight.

McGill's department of Canadian Studies is committed, in its undergraduate program, to pursuing an interdisciplinary approach to Canadian issues. We believe the complex questions arising from the study of Canada demand consideration from many perspectives, calling for an open discourse between academics of different backgrounds. Yet, while the questions of highest relevance change from year to year, the challenge of defining ‘Canadian’ issues remains formidable, due to the vastness of the subject under analysis and the baggage resulting from its colonial history.

In the academic milieu, ‘Canada’ can serve as shorthand for a variety of topics – a political body, a geographic space, an artistic/literary canon or a Northerly conceptual entity. Within the last half-century, the prevailing antidote to the search for a national characteristic has been diversity, in reference both to Canada's ethnocultural demography and its regional idiosyncrasies. The dual promise of national unity and acceptance of difference has garnered wide appeal since Confederation in 1867, and its pursuit has since manifested at the level of federal politics in instances like the policies of multiculturalism and universal health care. In the cultural arena, public broadcasting seeks – and currently struggles - to create distinctly Canadian programming with popular appeal, while national museums try to represent a version of ‘heritage’ that can be claimed by all Canadians.

Such nation-building projects have historically been intended to conceptually unite people from disparate corners of this vast and varied terrain. Nonetheless, these top-down approaches to defining Canada result, many claim, in the erasure or alienation of certain groups, including French Canadians, and especially Indig-
The results of Quebec’s most recent provincial election imply a more welcoming attitude toward cultural diversity than is sometimes attributed to the province, but Francophone Quebecers arguably still face the threat of cultural subsumption, as explored here in Katherine Ragan’s discussion of the Charter of Values, and Jelena Stankovic’s essay on the MMAQ.

As Stankovic implies, authoritative cultural institutions like museums and galleries can impose a vision of national identity on visitors to a greater extent than they reflect how Canadians see themselves. This is especially problematic where the exhibition of Indigenous art – or artifacts – is concerned, as here expressed by Eden Abramowitz. Instances of cultural appropriation and the exoticization of Native people can also be seen in works by non-Native artists but concerning Native subjects, demonstrates Jaya Bordeleau-Cass, and Cerian Phillips discusses how these works must be carefully displayed and critically understood.

In the wake of last year’s Idle No More movement and the final hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Canada’s Native population has gained increased visibility as they seek solutions to the widespread poverty in their communities, and reparations for historical and ongoing injustices. Their approaches to these issues are consistently characterized by adaptability and take various forms, as addressed by two of our authors: Alexandra Lewyckyj illuminates syncretic religious traditions in Inuit communities, while Juliette Allen considers the Indigenous body as a site of decolonization through erotic art.

The diversity of voices and issues in the pages to follow ranges even wider with Chris Gismondi’s investigation of non-normative sexuality in 1920’s Canada, and Shaina Agbayani’s discussion of the future of marketing in an increasingly multi-ethnic Canadian society. However, while rooted in different fields and concerned variously with the past, present and future, the essays in this volume work in unison to illustrate the value of the interdisciplinary study of Canada: while unreserved nationalistic celebration is short-sighted, conceptions of nation challenge us, as academics and Canadians, to find new and better ways to reconcile cultural and political difference without sacrificing respect for history. In light of recent cutbacks to the CBC, ‘what it means to be Canadian’ has seldom been more ambiguous. Let the scholars in dialogue here be among those who determine the role of Canadian intellectual institutions in the years to come.
Shopping For and From Ethnicity
Making and Seeking Green from amongst the Multicultural Rainbow of Canada

Shaina Agbayani
Canada’ establishment of a multiculturalism policy in 1971 officially embedded into our national identity a commitment to allow diverse groups and communities the freedom to retain their respective identities while joining Canada as equal partners in a united country (Abdel-Ghany and Sharpe 215). By 2017, the visible minority populations of Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver will become the majority (Zwiebach). Consequently, there will be a major transformation in the literal and figurative purchase that Canada's ethnic “minorities” have in determining the “will of the majority,” and the way that governments and markets respond. There is no clear understanding of what is entailed by the policy’s support for the retention of cultural identities in the form of specific material realities. Nonetheless, the retention of cultural identities in multiculturalism can occur through the sharing of seemingly mundane everyday acts such as eating, dressing, and listening to music, through which the boundaries of cultural membership become permeable (Koc 10). In the context of a globalizing marketplace, the demarcation of cultural membership reflects the evolving conditions of the production and consumption of identity (Koc 3). Accordingly, material possessions take on a new and distinct significance in multicultural Western contexts, and play a powerful role in the construction and preservation of ethnic identity (Chang and Cleveland 964). Thus, within the diaspora:

the farther one moves away from home, the greater is the burden placed upon material possessions, not only for anchoring identity, but also for constructing a new identity, especially when the move is voluntary and reflects upward social mobility (Chang and Cleveland 964).

Given this shift in cultural emphasis, it is not surprising that corporate institutions employ ethnicity as a marketing tool directed at a sector of society with increasing buying power (Halter 11).

This essay argues that, as a result of the combination of increased marketing attention toward immigrant ethnic communities, the expanding importance of material possessions as status signifiers of social mobility within migrant communities, and the existence of the marketplace as a cultural buffer site for affirming ethnic identity, the push for marketplace participation within ethnic communities is becoming more economically and culturally salient in Canadian society. In Part
I outline evidence that demonstrates that the recent increase in marketing targeted at ethnic consumers is prompted by the rapid demographic transformations of Canadian society. In Part 2, I consider research demonstrating that amongst ethnic immigrant consumers, there exists a growing heedfulness toward consumptive identity-construction sites, and I highlight two reasons for this shift amongst the multitude that exist. Firstly, material status reflects social mobility and “making it” in society. Secondly, the practice of consumption within the marketplace can be a social exercise for expressing affiliation with ethnic communities in a way that buffers the impact of culture shock and facilitates comfortable navigation of the marketplace and society. In my conclusion, I suggest that the corporate attitude toward the market participation of ethnic minorities through consumption informs a critique of the post-modern liberal discourse on ethnic identity construction and participation.

Part 1: Marketing Ethnicity (Making Green out of Rainbows)

Culture is one of the most complex and powerful influences on consumer behavior (Cleveland and Chang 963). Consequently, studies have shown that there is a clear correlation between consumer spending behavior, immigrant status, and ethnicity (Abdel-Ghany and Sharpe 223). Accordingly, Eve Lazarus affirms in “The Case for Ethnic Ad Spending” that while multicultural marketing budgets are often the first to go in times of economic retrenchment, the ethnic community is too important to ignore. A number of factors suggest that the ethnic minority market should be taken more seriously in future. First, the ethnic market is expanding due to a combination of higher fertility rates, a younger population and continuing migration. Moreover, this growth occurs within geographical concentrations that make ethnic communities easier to target (Burton 449). Second, immigrant ethnic communities are populations with enormous buying potential, especially when it comes to durable goods, such as appliances, home furnishings, cars and other necessities required make a fresh start (Halter 26). Insofar as they comprise a need-everything generation, immigrants are the ideal consumers (Halter 63). Not surprisingly, then, ethnic consumers can be constructed as “cash cows” from whom markets can profit (Lazarus).

Due this perception, the psychological and behavioural patterns of ethnic group membership are of importance for marketing managers within culturally heterogeneous societies like Canada. As a result, there is a growth in the perceived
need for ethnic marketing as an industry to reflect demographic shifts in Canadian society. “The ethnic shopper” thus seems to gain traction as a homogenous category charged with implications of profitability due to the sweeping claims associated with this identity. For example, in an article written for Supermarket News, a nationally circulated weekly trade magazine for the food distribution industry, Elliot Zwiebach notes that “ethnic shoppers” are exciting subjects for the retailer as they spend more time eating at home, and tend to have more people around the table for each meal (Zwiebach).

The expanding awareness of the profitability of catering to “ethnic” consumer demands is bringing together experts with the latest technological training and advanced research methods in order to investigate attitudes toward consumption that can determine the optimal ways to capitalize on the tendency to associate with ethnic membership (Halter 49). The term “ethno-marketing” has been coined to refer to a type of marketing paradigm that presupposes the importance of deeply understanding ethnically-particular consumption profiles, trends, tastes and preferences in relation to ethnicity (Morales 190). Based on the contemplation of consumption phenomena through ethnic lenses, consumers are classed, calculated, and categorized to develop future marketing strategies and programs to satisfy ethnic consumers’ deepest yearnings (Morales 190). This ethnicity-centric understanding of consumer patterns signals an important re-configuration of marketing emphasis from its basic assumption of a culturally homogeneous Canadian demography with common marketplace needs, to a marketing based on consultation with specific ethnic communities.

This recognition is reflected, for example, in Armando Martin’s “Use Your Common Census” in which he notes that as minority populations grow to become the majority, “data, logic, and common sense all point to a high-speed growth driven by an ethnic population that in some markets equals or transcends the growth and contribution of the white consumer population”. Accordingly, he castigates the corporate world for neglecting ethnic consumers based on their fear:

I give the white shopper more credit for being ready to embrace diversity than corporate America is willing to give, props for being curious about serving fresh, flavorful rich food at their dining room table… It will be interesting to see whether there’s a groundswell of activity in pursuing ethnic shoppers by those brave souls, the independent thinkers.
More than simply marking a fiscal embrace of the opportunities that attend the potential of market growth from expanding ethnic communities, Martin’s avid encouragement for the corporate word to countenance the “ethnic consumer” signals the distinction between a more politicized ethnic disavowal of the burgeoning ethnic population and an economic avowal of this demographic due to the obvious associated pecuniary boons.

Reflecting this latter sort of awareness is a cultural paradigm shift within marketing, away from its previous emphasis on waiting for consumers to assimilate to the marketplace to a desire to find ways to connect with ethnic consumers meaningfully in the marketplace in the here and now (Zwiebach). Accordingly, Publicis Diversité account director Ramesh Nilakantan states that his decision to start up his own consulting and marketing firm was an obvious decision to “help their clients reach out to new immigrants coming to Canada to establish early brand loyalty” (Lazarus). As more and more consumers articulate culturally distinct associations with the marketplace, their patterns of demands and product loyalty prompt more consulting, research and communications firms to begin specializing in multiethnic niche marketing (Halter 48). In this regard, the demographic shift toward increasing multiculturalism is likely to expand the horizons and significance of ethno-marketing in Canadian society in the years to come.

Part 2: Consumption (Practice of Status and Social Mobility) in Marketplace (Buffer Zone into the New World)

In this section, I will outline literature that suggests that consumption amongst ethnic minorities can serve both the distinct functions of (a) overtly signifying social mobility in a context where economic status in a new country is important for consolidating socio-cultural self-worth and success vis-à-vis the majority and (b) allowing ethnic minorities to use the ethnic marketplace as a buffer-zone for integration into Canadian society due to its concomitant social and material provisions of “homeland” culture and networking.

A) Consumption as Status Building Block

The relationship between the consumption of commodities and the autonomous construction of identity within the liberal individual rights framework has been well noted (Mcdonald, Wearing, and Ponting). For citizens of Western post-industrial societies, to acquire, to own, and to make money seem to be viewed as in-
alienable rights, increasing the understanding of living as a human being to include consuming and being a consumer as a process of self-identification (Firat 105). Ethnicity, in parallel, is also a process of self-identification whereby individuals define themselves and others in relation to specific groups (Jamal 1602). Thus, consumption can provide a means of re-constituting ethno-cultural identities. This is particularly true when upward mobility occurs or is anticipated, or when the experience of relocation has been jarring (Halter 63). Accordingly, within the Western multicultural framework, the practice of ethnicity through conspicuous consumption vis-à-vis a predominantly white society becomes a convenient way of articulating individual cultural identity and evidencing social traction. In this regard, conspicuous consumption – maintaining a specific lifestyle with the possession of luxury items – amongst ethnic minorities can serve as a mechanism for gauging success vis-à-vis the rest of society.

Wan Hsui Sunny Tsai notes the influence of social stigma and the resultant awareness of marginalization in shaping minority consumers’ struggle to win public validation (Tsai 85). Minority consumers may respond positively to targeted advertising as they struggle to gain public validation of their identity, particularly in the context of discrimination or marginalization in the political and socio-cultural domain. Accordingly, scholars indicate that racial minorities disproportionately display feelings of status insecurity – a concern about being viewed as second class – and therefore tend to exhibit a stronger preference for well-known national brands over private-label counterparts (Tsai 86). Tsai notes that minority consumers may see targeted advertising as a pathway to self-empowerment, insofar as consumers who belong to a numerically less prevalent and socially less powerful group are often acutely cognizant of the symbolic meanings of commodities that reflect themselves. Thus, their validation in the marketplace allows for the public confirmation of their identity in a way that redeems their struggle for self-acceptance and equal treatment (Tsai 87). In this way, for ethnic minorities, improved economic status and the ability to participate in the mass market are equated with membership in mainstream society (Tsai 89). That is, consumption in the marketplace for minorities can be understood as an agential practice of claiming civil subjectivity in a multicultural context in which minority status may reflect disenfranchisement. By extension, consumption allows participants to affirm their desire for normalcy through a delineated resemblance between their lifestyle and that of the Canadian majority.
B) Consumption: A Cultural Buffer of Community in the Marketplace

As outlined in Part A, consumption can be undertaken by visible minorities as a project to affirm socioeconomic status through assimilatory commensuration with majority culture. Nonetheless, consumption can also serve the function of supporting the retention of ethnic identity in a culturally familiar and comfortable setting that operates as a social and material buffer zone against the culture shock associated with integration into a new society. As we have noted before, ethnic consumers may have distinct identities, needs, and preferences to which advertisers pander through culturally embedded messages that highlight ethnic minorities’ distinct needs (Cheng 94). However, the choice of ethnic minorities to consume in Canada’s multicultural marketplace needn’t be sweepingly categorized as a superficial exercise of social status pursuit.

Within the multicultural setting, immigrants may have numerous possibilities and reasons to choose to remain distinct in their consumption patterns rather than assimilating full-throttle to “mainstream” norms of shopping behavior (Wang 695). Considering the plethora of immigrant-owned ethnic businesses, it is important to consider the cultural underpinnings of immigrant consumption behaviour.

Research suggests that ethnic affinity often has a greater effect on immigrants’ choice of shopping venue than economic rationality (Wang 684). In her research on the Chinese community in the Greater Toronto Area, Wang finds that shopping is a practice charged with socio-cultural meanings for immigrants:

“Chinese stores are treated not only as a market-place where purchases are made, but also social spaces where individuals (re)negotiate their identities through browsing, imagining, and consuming the goods, and through interacting with other co-ethnics” (Wang 690).

Shopping is not just about getting the product, but about the product being processed or presented in a particular cultural fashion; it is not just about getting the right items on the shopping list, but also about expressing individual identities and enjoying the unique cultural and social ambience of the ethnic shopping environment (Wang 691). Julie Mehta makes a similar observation in her exposition of South Asian cuisines in Toronto, when she outlines how the over one hundred mostly immigrant-owned South Asian ethnic grocers all across the GTA serve the purpose of allowing for the creation of co-ethnic ties as much as they serve the
purpose of filling the belly (Mehta 159). Thus, the social use of ethnic shopping spaces indicates that immigrants are not only avid seekers of steals and deals in ethnic shopping places. For them, rather than a simple forum for transactions that will satisfy consumerist desires, the ethnic marketplace serves as a spatial hub for exercising cultural subjectivity.

Conclusion: Critiquing the Liberal Discourse on Ethnic Consumption in the Multicultural Diaspora

My paper argues that in the case of ethnic migrant consumers in a multicultural Canada, marketplace participation manifests both (a) a practice of securing socioeconomic status vis-à-vis the cultural majority to signify successful integration and (b) an exercise of cultural affirmation in which ethnic affiliation is articulated through the social and material tangibility of practicing consumption in ethnic marketplaces. My research suggests that in the case of ethnic minority consumers, both a desire to retain an extent of ethnic identities and an aspiration to adopt success in mainstream consumer cultural environments inform consumer buying behaviours (Jamal 1603). Thus, there is a groundswell of discussion surrounding the ‘new’ economic geography of consumption that takes very seriously the dialectic between the cultural and the economic (Wang and Wo 684).

In Part 1, I outlined how marketers are availing themselves of the demographic shift of expanding multiculturalism in order to lay a conceptual groundwork for understanding the increasing traction of the ethnic demography as consumer targets in multicultural Canada. In conclusion, I echo the critical spirit of McGovern’s analysis of the discursive formations of gender in industrializing Canada. McGovern notes that advertisers concerned with selling goods and peddling ideas of self-transformation construct consumerism as a pursuit of personal liberty and autonomy for women, as a relatively disenfranchised group (McGovern 1). He prompts us to consider how the subsumption of women’s civil participation under a discourse of market participation entails an elision of the discussion around the conditions that limit the socioeconomic and political participation of women as dispossessed minorities.

In this same vein, it is important to question what Tsai identifies as the commercialization of minority experiences as a form on social inclusion (94). Importantly, he notes that within the liberal discourse of identity-through-consumption, minorities who are not financially eligible remain disenfranchised. Thus, there re-
mains much to be criticized even within the liberal-oriented literature on ethnic consumption that exists. For instance, Halter suggests that “modernization is seen as an enormous movement from destiny to choice” which allows for a re-configuration from being to becoming ethnic (194). She evidences this by noting the transition from (a) participation in the emergent mass consumer culture of the early part of the century as an effective mode of adaptation to mainstream America for new-immigrant arrivals to (b) descendants of those same immigrants today seeking out consumer goods for the opposite purpose of accentuating their cultural distinctiveness (197). Within this framework, Halter presumes that individuals can decide the degree of their ethnic affiliation, signifying a “monumental reorientation in how identity is constructed and expressed” (Halter 194).

Contained in this logic is the inference that ethnicity in the multi-cultural context becomes an image and a style that one can conveniently choose and adopt. Accordingly, Jamal suggests that “in consumer culture, ethnicity can be bought, sold and worn like a loose garment” (Jamal 1602). Within this liberal consumerist framework, Jamal sees marketers as facilitators of openness and tolerance or different ways of being and living amongst consumers of different ethnic backgrounds (Jamal 1613).

Jamal’s argument neglects the fact that certain ethno-racial groups, especially visible minorities, are disproportionately bound to the social and political liabilities of their identities. This vision of equal opportunity for assimilation through market democracy presupposes that minorities in multicultural societies are treated equally, without regard to gender, class, race, and sexual hierarchies (Tsai 94). Thus, this purely economic framework discounts the multiple stratifications that exist in the socio-political realm, conditioned not only by social factors such as race, class, and gender, but also, different forms of immigration. As Mustafa Koc and Jennifer Welsh note in research presented to the Multiculturalism Program for the Department of Heritage, we ought to understand membership in the modern state as characterized by the inclusion, empowerment, entitlements, rights, comforts and quality of life of immigrants. It is fundamental and necessary to understand integration as immigrants’ ability to utilize and contribute to every dimension of economic, social, cultural and political activities in society, free from systemic barriers (Koc and Walsh 3). Recognizing this multiplicity in types of civil participation is fundamental if we want to imagine a multiculturalism that values meaningful citizen interactions that go beyond the prosaic consumer transactions that the green in our pockets can afford us.


Reconciliation or Cultural Appropriation?

The Role of Tsimshian Treasures in Narrating Canadian History

Eden Abramowitz
Reconciliation or Cultural Appropriation?
The Role of Tsimshian Treasures in Narrating Canadian History

Objects are conceptualized as visual representations of heritage by virtue of the fact that they retain information about the past. Their preservation, then, is essential in order to sustain social, political, economic and cultural histories. When artifacts are appropriated into new spaces, this notion becomes more complicated. Objects acquire new information, threatening to challenge, overpower or replace older significances. In relation to indigenous artifacts, this irreversible process stands in opposition to modern efforts of reconciliation.

This paper will investigate how religious objects of Aboriginal origin enter into the inventory of private collections, 21st-century auctions houses, exhibition spaces and museum collections, and how buying and selling these artifacts inscribes them with layers of meaning. More specifically, I will demonstrate how the buying-and-selling process undergone by a Tsimshian mask transforms the artifact to the point where repatriation becomes implausible.1 Firstly, this essay will critique the commodification of religious objects when passed between cultures that do not share the same standards of value. It will explore how issues concerning information content, value and ownership of cultural heritage arise throughout this historical process. Secondly, this paper will trace five distinct phases in the life of the Tsimshian mask artifact: first its Native context, second its place as part of the Dundas Family Collection in London, third while on auction with Sotheby’s Auction House in New York City, subsequently as part of the traveling exhibition entitled “Treasures of the Tsimshian,” and lastly while on permanent display in the Art Gallery of Ontario’s Canadian wing. Finally, this paper will question the possibility of repatriation and challenge the feasibility of re-inscribing this mask with its original meaning.

Commodifying Religious Artifacts: Changing information content, value and ownership

Objects themselves do not have meaning; rather, they are pervaded with significance according to the context to which they are subjected. American-Indian socio-cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai argues that the value of an object is

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1 Figure 1: See appendix
perpetually being redefined by the conditions through which it circulates.\textsuperscript{2} Under the constant threat of cultural appropriation, objects are intrinsically predisposed to the potential of acquiring new meaning.\textsuperscript{3} This can be explained by Appadurai’s theory on candidacy, which is a critical factor in determining the value of objects in multicultural exchange. Appadurai describes the candidacy of a commodity as the standards and criteria that define the exchange of things.\textsuperscript{4} The consideration of candidacy denies implications that “commodity exchange presupposes a complete cultural sharing of assumptions, but rather that the degree of value coherence may be highly variable from situation to situation.”\textsuperscript{5} The base of Appadurai’s work assumes that the value of an object is not intrinsic to its physical properties but is completely dependent on its attributed worth by socio-political and cultural contexts. This hypothesis is of particular importance for the Tsimshian mask, whose significance is informed by a myriad of distinct phases in its social evolution. Since its creation (1820-1840), this mask has been passed across geographic and cultural barriers, and consequently procured a multitude of disparate meanings.\textsuperscript{6}

The existence of diverse spheres of exchange allows for objects to obtain different forms of value. Anthropologist Igor Kopytoff compares the notion of commoditization to that of slavery. He explains that slavery begins when individuals are stripped of their social identities, and thus become a commodity.\textsuperscript{7} Later, once they are “resocialized and rehumanized by being given a new social identity,” Kopytoff argues that slaves become “reindividualized by acquiring new statuses.”\textsuperscript{8} This parallel between slave and object demonstrates that the act of commodifying objects or individuals denotes a process of cultural redefinition, in which objects become inscribed with new meaning. This analogy aptly describes the issues that surface when looking at the Tsimshian mask’s changing ownership. Throughout its lifetime, the mask is stripped of its social context and thus becomes a commodity to the individuals with distinct value standards that take possession of it, allowing the mask to take on new significances. Whereas the mask is initially an invaluable religious object free of a monetary value and context, it becomes a highly monetized cultural


\textsuperscript{3} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{4} Ibid., 14.

\textsuperscript{5} Ibid., 15.


\textsuperscript{7} Appadurai, \textit{The Social Life of Things: commodities in cultural perspectives}, 65.

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid.
artifact. Anthropologically, the mask was initially understood to embody spiritual personalities. However, in accordance with the Marxian theory, the expression of its value in a capitalist society relies solely on financial criteria, and is therefore completely incongruent to its original religious connotations.

The contemporary context of this mask brings up questions concerning what information it conveys, and who has the right to access this information. Scholar Teresa Olwisk Grose explores the notion of provenance, which she defines as information creating a past and present context of an object. She articulates that provenance empowers artifacts “to convey a sense of history, evoke a sense of community, or contribute to religious, social or political action.” Essentially, provenance is the information about an object that renders it valuable to a given population. Grose articulates that when separated from its informative context, an object becomes devoid of value to its owners. In other words, an artifact is devalued when removed from a particular cultural setting. In regards to the Tsimshian mask, although the object continues to encapsulate information manifested by its original owners, it becomes worthless. For this reason, I will suggest that the idea of repatriation is unrealistic.

_A History of International Transport: Relocating the Tsimshian Mask_

An evaluation of five distinct phases in the Tsimshian mask’s social biography will exemplify how one artifact accumulates multiple significances, as defined by various cultures’ idiosyncratic standards of value. Today, the mask continues to articulate ideas informed by Pacific Northwest Coast Native Americans, the Dundas Family and 19th-century British collectors, 21st-century fine arts auction markets, and the modern national identity of Canada as defined by collectors, curators and art dealers.

This mask originally functioned as a religious object used in Shamanism by

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12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.
Northwest Pacific Coast Natives from the Tsimshian tribe. Decorative masks were particularly prestigious objects insofar as only shamans could wear them. The shaman held an esteemed status in Native communities by displaying spiritual powers, and by controlling witches to fight disease, death, bad weather and warfare. Shamans would wear objects, such as masks, that displayed images of their supernatural spirit helpers, known as yek. The appearance of yek on their paraphernalia worked to guide shamans through a liminal space between the spiritual and earthly realms, to fulfill their healing responsibilities. While in this phase of liminality, shamans would alter their perception of reality by transcending their human personalities and merging with their yek. The reverse process also occurred when re-entering the profane, guaranteeing both a safe return to his community and the reintegration of ill patients into society. The religious information attached to this object is therefore only valuable to its original user: a Tsimshian shaman. The mask’s religious properties, however, are meaningless for those who do not share the same cultural traditions and spiritual beliefs.

In the mid-19th century, this mask was acquired by Reverend Robert James Dundas, becoming a part of his private collection and entering the second phase of its social evolution. As documented in his travel diaries, Rev. Dundas obtained this mask, along with numerous cultural artifacts from the Pacific Northwest Coast, on October 26, 1963, during his evangelical mission in the town of Metlakatla, (modern-day Prince Rupert, British Columbia). While a part of this collection, the mask symbolized the ways in which 19th-century Britons explained and categorized “cultural diversity in their rapidly expanding world and their self-proclaimed superiority in it.” In other words, the object emphasized British hegemony as it displayed Rev. Dundas’ ability to acquire it in an attempt to eradicate Native beliefs and customs. The mask remained in the Dundas family’s private collection in London for

14 Ibid., “18.” Lot.
16 Ibid., 42.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid., 43.
19 Ibid., 45.
20 Ibid., 46.
21 Ellis, Tsimshian Treasures: the remarkable journey of the Dundas Collection, 16.
23 Ellis, Tsimshian Treasures: the remarkable journey of the Dundas Collection, 17.
143 years, until Rev. Dundas’ great grandson Simon Carey inherited it. During this time period, the information promulgated through this object about the legacy of Rev. Dundas and 19th-century British collecting practices is entirely disconnected from Native ideas of shamanism. As such, the mask’s new political significance overshadows its earlier religious character.

In 2006, after years of anticipation and negotiations with reference to the fate of the Dundas Collection, Mr. Carey agreed to sell the collection to Sotheby’s Auction House. At this point in time, the mask was completely stripped of its social context. It was commodified, and economic value became the only defining feature of its importance. However, its monetary worth was established by the mask’s provenance. Therefore, the information conserved within the artifact about Aboriginal religious practices and 19th-century British political endeavors were not lost. Instead, they were translated into the fiscal language that dominates capitalist society, and the 21st-century art market.

News about the auction in New York City in the fall of 2006 sparked the interest of the Canadian community, who became wary about the prospect of the collection being scattered across the globe. As expressed in an article written by Sarah Milroy for the Globe and Mail shortly before the auction, Canadians were particularly attached to the objects and felt strongly that it was time for the “return of this important cultural legacy.” Andrea Laforet, the director of ethnology and cultural studies at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, explained to Milroy in an interview that “with each transnational event, there is a greater and greater likelihood that some or all of the information will be lost.” In other words, if not returned to the lands of Canada, these objects risked losing everything they stood for. The information embodied in such artifacts would be forgotten when re-contextualized by a new owner.

Although the auction results were favourable for Canadians, as most artifacts were indeed sent back to the nation, the conception that their return signifies proper repatriation does not recognize the historical changes that occurred within Canada since their departure. Nine private collectors collaborated with Canadian museums such as the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the Royal BC Museum and

24 Ibid., 48.
25 Ibid., 25.
27 Ellis, Tsimshian Treasures: the remarkable journey of the Dundas Collection, 14.
the Museum of Northern British Columbia to acquire over 6 million dollars worth of the 7 million dollar auction sum. The mask was a highly prized commodity, which sold for a record of $1,808,000 USD. The investors decided to create a touring exhibition entitled “Treasure of the Tsimshian,” which was coordinated by the Royal BC Museum in Victoria and private art dealer Donald Ellis. This national tour was exhibited first on traditional Tsimshian territory, at the Museum of Northern British Columbia in Prince Rupert, and then at Royal BC Museum in Victoria, the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, and the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau. Dr. Victor Rabinovitch, President and CEO of the Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation, explains the mandate of this exhibition was “to preserve and protect important parts of [Canada’s] national heritage as well as to share this heritage with as many people as possible.” In other words, the traveling exhibition showcased artifacts originating from Canada in an attempt to expose the cultural legacy that had been neglected by their removal. Therefore, in order to adhere to the mandate of this exhibition, each object inherited new information to convey, which expressed a strong sense of Canadian values and heritage.

Although this exhibition successfully highlights older contexts within which artifacts of the Dundas Collection were used, it fails to acknowledge new information being affixed to them. The mask continues to proclaim the religious identity of Tsimshian peoples, particularly when briefly brought back to Prince Rupert, the site on which Metlakatla stood. Tsimishian leader William White explains that Native peoples believe the spirits of their ancestors are held in artifacts, and that they “could feel the warmth of their spirit coming out from behind the cases containing them” during the exhibition. He articulates that art is an extension of their worldview, and thus the advent of these objects in their community helps convey their traditions. As such, this mask simultaneously recalls the shamanic tradition and tells the story of present-day Tsimshian visions of the supernatural. However, the mask’s contemporaneous setting also evokes its history as part of the Dundas collection, and as part of 21st-century discourse concerning reconciliation towards

29 Ellis, Tsimshian Treasures: the remarkable journey of the Dundas Collection, 14 and 25.
32 Ellis, Tsimshian Treasures: the remarkable journey of the Dundas Collection, 134.
33 Ibid., 136.
34 Ibid.
Aboriginal communities in Canada. Whereas the exhibition strived to unmask older information, it engraves this mask with new meaning contingent upon modern museological practices.

The exhibition design is one example of the employment of 21st-century western museum methodologies. Firstly, each artifact was enclosed in a plexiglass case, with a textual panel accompanying it to describe its significance. Although textual panels aid spectators in developing an understanding about each work, and thus about the exhibition as a whole, they present issues of cultural construction. The curators of these texts inform viewers with their own biases, which, in turn, shape the viewers’ perceptions. Secondly, the glass boxes showcasing each piece do not comply with traditional methods of using such objects. They create a spatial divide between artwork and spectator, and do not allow for the physical contact that was essential to its Native utility. Finally, the artifacts were placed in established institutions that assert authority. As such, visitors to the museums unequivocally trust the information being conveyed, and dangerously do not inquire about their provenance.

The glass cases, didactic panels, and authoritative location of this exhibition all adhere to the functions of this mask in a modern context.

“Treasures of the Tsimshian” frames an experience that demands an understanding of the works that is contingent upon a specific history. The title encodes that these objects are a “historic document, a time capsule that reveals an aboriginal culture at a precise moment in time.” Despite postcolonial efforts to disengage with rhetorics that depict Aboriginal culture as primitive, placing this mask within an exhibition commemorating the past once again locates it within this colonial narrative. Originally, the exhibition was to be entitled the “Dundas Collection,” but was altered to agree with the Tsimshian community. They advocated for the exhibit to be called “Nluut’iksa Lagiyedm Ts’mysyeen,” which translates to its actual name “Treasures of the Tsimshian.” Regardless, the overtones insinuate a history of exoticism; the word “treasures” recalls the chronicles of exploration and discovery, in

35 Ibid., 34.
37 Ibid.
39 Corrin, “Artists Look at Museums, Museums Look at Themselves,” 381.
40 Milroy, “Heritage goes on the block.”
41 Ellis, Tsimshian Treasures: the remarkable journey of the Dundas Collection, 132.
42 Ibid.
which British explorers travelled to faraway lands and transported foreign artifacts back to Europe. Thus, although the mask returns to its original geographic location, its new North American context entirely transforms its message.

The mask continued to evolve after the exhibition, when Donald Ellis sold the artifact to collector Kenneth Thomson. Thomson’s Collection is now on display at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) in Toronto, and comprises of a variety of artworks spanning from diverse temporal and spatial milieus. The collection amalgamates European, Canadian and First Nations masterpieces that were created between 200 BC and the late 19th century. The AGO website page dedicated to this collection explains that Thomson’s First Nations works, such as the mask, were “integral to his Canadian collection.” Thus, the mask is part of a new visual language conveying national history, and proclaims an authenticity that is understood as Canadian in character. The Thomson Canadian Galleries are situated within the AGO’s Canadian Wing, offering the public “a narrative in which First Nations and the “newcomers” are understood to be equally committed partners in the unfolding history of Canadian art.” Such a statement is guilty of conflating the histories embedded within this artifact. This mask no longer professes Tsimshian shamanic traditions, 19th-century British colonial practices, or modern economic values of the art market. Instead, the work takes on a new function. The mask is now part of a dialogue that communicates the 21st-century worldview of Canadian history. Whereas the method of displaying this mask could explicitly trace its provenance, its position within the AGO merely allows the information contained within it to mould Canadian consciousness and establish a new record of the past.

Making Amends: Is Repatriation Possible?

After a long and complex history, the notion of repatriating Native artifacts is therefore impractical. Although returning the Tsimshian mask to its homeland in Prince Rupert demonstrates efforts towards reconciliation for past offenses, one cannot erase its history. Within each distinct temporal moment, the Tsimshian mask takes on new significations that adhere to the religious, political, economic and social values of its owners. The mask was first created for religious purposes, and conveyed information about Shamanism and the spiritual worldview of Pa-

44 Ibid.
cific Northwest coast Tsimshian culture. Once acquired by Rev. Dundas in the late-19th century, political meanings stripped the object of its religious implications. The mask conveyed British supremacy that dominated colonial behaviours. Next, the commodification of this mask marked a third stage of its utility. At the turn of the 21st century, its newly defined economic value both transforms and relegates the object’s previous religious and political intimations. The mask became defined in terms of monetary worth as determined by Sotheby’s Auction house and the art market. In 2006, the artifact took on new social messages by participating in the traveling exhibition “Treasures of the Tsimshian.” At this point in time, curators attempted to erase the political and economic information pervading the object. However, their exhibition failed to realize this task, and instead situated the mask within a Canadian history based on colonial rhetoric. Finally, the mask’s present-day residence further establishes its role within this national narrative. In the AGO’s Canadian wing, the mask is unable to display the religious, political and economic information it has acquired throughout its evolution. Instead, it has taken on a social role, attempting to define Canadian authenticity and character.

46 Bickham. “”A Conviction Of The Reality Of Things,” 30.
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Appendix

Figure 1: Tsimshian wooden portrait mask, 20.0 c 18.0 cm. Collected in 1863 at Matlakatla (Prince Rupert), British Columbia. Art Gallery of Ontario.
Discerning Spirits
The Shamanic Roots of Inuit Christian Traditions

Of Nunavut’s 30,000-person (and overwhelmingly Inuit) population, over 90% identified themselves as Christian at the turn of the twenty-first century.¹ This is a remarkably high number, considering the relatively late date at which Christian missionaries entered the Eastern Arctic: in contrast, and despite recent cultural revivals, only 0.25% of respondents identified their religious beliefs and practices as “Aboriginal spirituality.” However, what these statistics do not show is the unique character of Christianity as practiced in Inuit communities. This paper will argue that a distinct Inuit Christianity exists, and is a syncretic tradition responsive to Inuit social norms and needs, incorporating elements of angakkuuniq, or Inuit “shamanism,” into the Christian framework introduced by European missionaries. Key elements of its development include the secret/ambiguous nature of angakkuuniq, pluralism among missionaries, the pragmatic reasons for Inuit conversion, and the growing popularity in Nunavut of Charismatic Christianity (i.e., Pentecostalism), which evokes angakkuuniq rituals and traditions.

In religious studies, syncretism refers to the ways in which religious traditions combine to form new/distinct ones, though they may retain the outward features, terms, and name of only one parent tradition. Syncretism often results from moments of cultural contact or cultural transition, and can be understood as a form of cultural evolution where compromise and/or integration is needed to preserve one (or more) of the contributing traditions. Christianity among Inuit is syncretic due to both the ways it differs from Christian traditions “down south,” and the ways Inuit elders have reconciled the apparently mutually exclusive elements of Christianity and angakkuuniq by reinterpreting both traditions.

Though indigenous Inuit religious traditions are often identified as “shamanism,” the term will be avoided in this paper. As a category, “shamanism” is now used to refer to indigenous religious traditions which bear some or all of the following characteristics, outlined by historian of religion Mircea Eliade: belief in a world of spirits, the presence of a figure (the shaman) who serves as a communicator or mediator between humans and these spirits, the ability of the shaman to leave their body and enter the spirit world through trance, the role of the shaman as healer, and

¹ Data from Statistics Canada 2001 Census of Canada 2003. This number groups together Anglicans (58% of the total population), Roman Catholics (23% of the total population), and other various other Christian denominations (<5% of the total population each).
rituals involving drumming, divination, spirit guides, etc. As Alice Kehoe notes, however, the terms shaman and shamanism (as well as the basis for Eliade’s definition) come from the traditions of Siberian indigenous peoples, only later becoming umbrella terms (which have since begun being used by appropriative new-age groups). “Shamanism” as a category served to further evolutionism by collapsing the differences between “primitive” religions, and as a term does not tell us much about a tradition, beyond identifying Eliade’s characteristics of shamanism in its practices. That being said, these characteristics (which often appear together) can be described as “shamanic,” a term which succeeds at referring to a cluster of features without implying tradition’s inclusion in a larger category.

This paper will use the Inuit terms for their own traditions; angakkuuniq (Ɨ†sÅƈ), which corresponds to “shamanism,” and angakkuq (Ɨirƈ), which corresponds to “shaman.” Neither term refers to “shamanism” or religion in the abstract, but instead indicate a specific Inuit tradition.

*Angakkuuniq before European contact*

Despite issues with terminology, Inuit angakkuuniq displays several of Eliade’s shamanic characteristics. It is part of broader cultural traditions and is embedded in Inuit cosmology, which understands the world to be full of both human and non-human agents (which can be benevolent or malevolent), a world of spirits overlaid on the physical world. These worlds are mediated by the angakkuq (pl. angakkuit), a man or woman who is “chosen” by the spirits. After undergoing an initiation, the angakkuq gains helping spirits and special ritual objects, and becomes able to perform various key social functions. These include (but are not limited to) “procuring game, healing the sick, and correcting the weather.” Angakkuit are powerful individuals to be both respected and feared, as an ill-willed angakkuq can significantly harm a person, or kill them. While not strictly hereditary or familial, the spirit-helper, or tuurngait (Ӛwå חדשות) of a deceased angakkuq sometimes call individuals to the vocation, often preferring the angakkuit’s relatives. In other cases, angakkuit were married pairs (who may or may not work together).

One of the most important aspects of angakkuniq were its elements of secrecy and ambiguity. While angakkuit were sometimes involved in public “shamanic performance,” it was commonly believed that the more public an angakkuq was, the less powerful and respected they were. The more important angakkuit were secretive about their roles, even with their families and spouses, and the public outing or exposure of an angakkuq was considered a personal attack. Many of an angakkuit’s functions were performed privately, and so were not recorded by Europeans when they arrived in the Eastern Arctic. As a result, angakkuniq is relatively poorly documented, and probably under-represented in the written record.

Missionaries in the East Arctic and early Christian contact with angakkuniq

Angakkuniq’s secretive nature protected the tradition once missionaries arrived among the Inuit. The Moravian Brethren came to Labrador in the 18th century and spread north, and though they learnt Inuktitut and did not impose linguistic assimilation on Inuit, they considered angakkuniq incompatible with Christianity and opposed it intensely. But the early influence of the Moravians on Inuit Christianity, I argue, made it possible to create the angakkuniq/Christianity syncretism later evident. In his Spirit of the Moravian Church (1977), Clarence H. Shawe describes “unintrusiveness” as one of the five core elements of the church. Here, unintrusiveness refers to the Moravian belief that a wide variety of Christian churches are valid, and are merely the result of God addressing different people and their differing needs in the most appropriate ways. Additionally, the Brethren focused on an ideal of Christian unity which was valued an individual’s relationship with God, not their adherence to the structure of their church. As Shawe writes:

“There has always been that quality about Moravianism. Though Christianity has been to them an essentially simple thing, they have never fallen into the habit (so easy with those who think things simple) of despising those who think otherwise [...] they have not been drawn to pulling other peoples’ clever theologies to pieces, to belittling other Churches, to push-

5 Oosten, Laugrand, and Remie, “Perceptions of Decline” 460.
6 Laugrand and Oosten, Inuit Shamanism, lv-lvi.
ing forward their own.”

Though Shawe applies unintrusiveness only to Moravian interactions with other Christian groups in regards to the acquisition of converts and theological debate, the lack of Moravian competitiveness with other missionaries would have demonstrated to the Inuit a compatibility between various Christian traditions, between different modes of worship and theologies.

Not all missionaries were as willing to collaborate with one another as the Moravians. In the early twentieth century, there emerged significant competition for Inuit converts between missionaries from other denominations, especially between Anglicans and Roman Catholics. Some Inuit groups were subjected to conversion pressure by both groups, and tried to integrate both Anglican and Catholic perspectives into their budding Christianity. This meant that the earliest introductions of Christianity to the lives of many Inuit (both through Moravian unintrusiveness and through the syncretism resulting from the Anglican/Catholic competition for converts) were ones of pluralism, of blending and integration. Christianity in the Eastern Arctic was, from its inception, an adaptable tradition which was both willing and required to compromise in order to remain viable.

It is important to address the process and selectiveness of conversion in order to understand the religion these converts established. Of the early converts, some were those who felt alienated by Inuit society, especially by the changes it was experiencing during this time (e.g., some Inuit women, who felt threatened by increased competition for wives among men, sought protection from the missionaries). For others, conversion was largely pragmatic and economic. It meant easier relations with Europeans and increased access to trading, as well as access to communities which were already under missionary influence (the Moravian Brethren intentionally isolated Inuit converts). The number of converts described in missionary records cannot be interpreted as the number of practicing Christians, both due to the pragmatic nature of conversions and to the secretive nature of angakkuuniq traditions. Despite the many converts who rejected angakkuuniq as incompatible with their new Christian faith, converts for whom faith was not a primary motivator in conversion did not have compelling reasons to give up their traditions.

9 Laugrand and Oosten, Inuit Shamanism, lviii.
For the latter group, *angakkuuniq* practices eventually became incorporated into Christian traditions, forming a uniquely Inuit kind of Christianity. As Oosten et. al. write, “shamanism is not rejected by Christian Inuit but subordinated to a Christian framework.”

**Inuit Christianity**

*Angakkuuniq* and Christianity began to be blended early. Among the Moravian Brethren in Labrador, missionaries encouraged Inuit to informally testify, both publicly and privately, on their readiness for conversion. Very quickly, these testimonials began to include detailed discussions between Inuit and individual missionaries about the dreams of the former, though the latter were usually disinterested and did not assign much significance to these conversations. The interpretation of dreams, however, was traditionally the domain of *angakkuit*: by seeking dream interpretations from priests instead, these Inuit were drawing clear connections between *angakkuit* and priests, recognizing that Christianity and *angakkuuniq* could serve similar functions, and were themselves the driving force in the blending of the two, as opposed to missionaries. These first manifestations of Inuit Christianity, as early as 1770, represent the fluidity of religious categories for many Inuit, the syncretic potential of *angakkuuniq/Christian* interactions, and the clarify that these changes were Inuit-driven.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there emerged several Inuit-driven religious movements that diverged sharply from traditional forms of Christianity. These movements were largely parousial, or relating to parousia, the Second Coming of Christ. Though Christian, these short-lived movements were not founded, controlled or regulated by missionaries, and contained practices and beliefs more traditionally associated with *angakkuuniq*. Their development and their shamanistic content illustrate that Inuit were not passive recipients of Christianity: they navigated Christianity on their own terms by creating religious movements with uniquely Inuit elements.

Beginning in the late twentieth century, there has been a notable growth of Charismatic Christian traditions such as Pentecostalism in Inuit communities, so much so that Pentecostalism is now the the third-most represented religion in

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12 Oosten, Laugrand, and Remie, “Perceptions of Decline,” 466.
Nunavut, behind Anglicanism and Catholicism.\textsuperscript{14} Part of this growth may be in response to the acute social distress experienced in Inuit communities: Charismatic Christian beliefs in healing and in miracles also apply to social problems, such as the alcoholism, drug abuse, and high suicide rates common in the North. Charismatic Christianity is not a single tradition or doctrine: rather, included in the category are forms of Christianity with include some or all of its salient features, such as a focus on the Holy Spirit, performing miracles, and a belief in charismata, or spiritual gifts, with are supernatural powers endowed by the Holy Spirit such as healing, prophecy, discerning spirits, and speaking in tongues.\textsuperscript{15}

Charismatic Christianity does not, in practice, demand a total rejection of \textit{angakkuuniq} elements, but instead allows for their expression in a setting mediated by Christianity. Many of these spiritual gifts are similar to the abilities of powerful \textit{angakkuit}, and Pentecostal rituals can evoke those of \textit{angakkuuniq}, such as chanting.\textsuperscript{16} In particular, the belief of Pentecostals that there are spirits at work in the world for good and for evil, and that individuals with the spiritual gift of charism are able to discern them, is fully compatible with \textit{angakkuuniq} and with \textit{angakkuit}: traditional Inuit beliefs are thus easily reframed in a broader context of Christianity, where spirits have power but God is more powerful. This applicability preserved \textit{angakkuuniq}, and meant that even individuals born and baptized as Christians could become \textit{angakkuit}.\textsuperscript{17} Victor Tungilik serves as an excellent example of these religious interplays, though not Pentecostal himself. Born to Anglican parents but raised Roman Catholic, Tungilik was approached by the \textit{tuurngait} of his deceased father and lived as both a Christian and an \textit{angakkuq} for much of his life, before rejecting \textit{angakkuuniq} and relying on Christian power through prayer.\textsuperscript{18} There are others who agree that the similarities between \textit{angakkuuniq} and Charismatic Christianity single the latter out as not being “the right kind of faith.”\textsuperscript{19}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} Data from Statistics Canada 2001 Census of Canada 2003. It is important to note that many Charismatic practices have been incorporated into other religious traditions in Nunavut, including Roman Catholicism. The number of individuals described as Catholic or Anglican on the census may nevertheless include some whose beliefs and religious practices outwardly resemble Charismatic Christianity.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Margaret M. Poloma and John C. Green, The Assemblies of God: Godly Love and the Revitalization of American Pentecostalism (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 64-65.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Frédéric Laugrand and Jarich Oosten, “Reconnecting People and Healing the Land: Inuit Pentecostal and Evangelical Movements in the Canadian Eastern Arctic,” Numen, 54:3 (2007): 234.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Oosten, Laugrand, and Remie, “Perceptions of Decline,” 464.
\item \textsuperscript{18} http://www.tradition-orale.ca/english/the-transition-christianity-72.html.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Laugrand and Oosten, “Reconnecting People and Healing the Land,” 241.
\end{itemize}
Since the late twentieth century, discussion of *angakkuniq* has increased with the development of a theory of “*Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*” (ᐃᓄᐃᓕᒐᔪᒥᔪᖅᑭᖅᑑᖅᑎᑑᖅ), “knowledge that is still useful” (hereafter “IQ”).\(^{20}\) Developed as a counterpart to other kinds of knowledge, such as Western scientific knowledge, IQ is communal Inuit knowledge, culture, and tradition which can be used and performed in the modern world. It is not standardized, and is a changed, amended, and added to by the communities who will use it: IQ is dynamic knowledge.\(^{21}\) *Angakkuniq* knowledge and traditions can be part of one community’s IQ, while others have also incorporated Christian elements into theirs.\(^{22}\) *Angakkuniq* practices and oral histories involving *angakkuit* have begun to be recorded as part of developing IQ, though it is almost exclusively community elders who talk about it. The interplay between *angakkuniq* and Christianity, especially Charismatic Christianity, is most obvious in these public discussions. Young people feel they cannot talk about *angakkuniq* because they do not know enough,\(^{23}\) but the *angakkuniq* elements in Charismatic Christianity are what attract them to these churches. Elders, on the other hand, relay their stories and experiences, but some express concern over Church practices too similar to the old ways. This dynamic is complex; it is clear that *angakkuniq* cannot be described as extinct, but neither is it widely accepted. Involved are many other forces of culture, tradition, assimilation, and reclamation, and the discussions and controversies over the role of *angakkuuniq* for the Inuit today are paralleled in other areas of Inuit life and history. It is worth noting that a critical moment in recent Inuit identity-building and cultural reclamation, the film *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*, has *angakkuuniq* at the centre of its plot, both as forces for good and for ill.

**Conclusion**

In 2006, on the island of Qajartalik (ᕈᕐᔪᕐᑎᒪᖃᑦᑕ), petroglyphs dating back hundreds of years were defaced. Belonging to the Dorset archeological record, these petroglyphs had been the site of considerable back-and-forth between archaeologists and the federal government, resulting in a lot of red tape but not much protec-

tion or funding for the site. In the immediate aftermath of the vandalism, the site’s chief archaeologist, Daniel Gendron, was quoted as saying the attack was consistent with recent incidents involving conservative Christian Inuit, and was an attempt to destroy the “evil” images carved into the rock. This quote was entirely a fabrication on the part of the reporter, but spread quickly and widely, despite Gendron’s public rejection of the statements.²⁴

This incident reflects the popular perception of a conflict which is, I argue, largely artificial. Christianity is not incompatible with an Inuit identity and with Inuit traditions, and its introduction does not represent a hard break with previous religious traditions, as has sometimes been suggested (even among the Inuit). In fact, the distinctive elements of Inuit Christianity represent the incorporation of *angakkuniaq* “shamanic” elements into Christianity, especially Charismatic Christianity, by reimagining them in a Christian framework. From their pre-European roles to their encounters with missionaries, *angakkuit* have proved adaptable, while Christianity has proved itself flexible. The result is a syncretic religious practice covered with the fingerprints of both its constitutive traditions, one which allows religious practice and culture to grow and to adapt. As Inuit cultural reclamation continues, it will be interesting to see how *angakkuniaq*, both within and beyond its Christian connections, will be revisited and rediscovered as part of a greater sense of Inuit tradition and identity.

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The “Other’s” Perspective

Call for a Multi-Vocal Revision of the Native as Subject

Cerian Phillips
The “Other’s” Perspective: 
Call for a Multi-Vocal Revision of the Native as Subject

The exhibition and titling of portraiture of Native people by white Euro-Canadians has had consequences that have trickled down to today’s art institutions. For example, many works of art still appear in museums under titles such as young Huron woman or Indian fisherman, without any information on the problematic aspects of such titles or whether any research has been done to recover the original sitter’s name. Despite concerns raised by contemporary Aboriginal artists, and post-colonial scholars, large museum institutions such as the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA) have been slow to address similar issues about the artworks they have on hand - that is, until they receive direct criticism or influence from an outside party or Aboriginal movement. Representations of Native subjects are especially racist and problematic in the ways in which white artists portrayed their subjects, but also in the ways in which they have been exhibited and titled. Though major institutions such as the MMFA have no power over the way the artists portrayed their Native subjects, they do have control over whether or not they account for historical instances of racist colonial traditions, over the way they exhibit the works, and to some extent, over the titling of works. It is their duty, as educational institutions, to address the parts of these issues over which they have control. Failing to do so only perpetuates a bigoted art historical or historical approach which addresses the interests of the perceived general audience while ignoring the concerns and perspectives of viewers from minoritized groups.

For this paper, I will apply a post-colonial theory to evaluate the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and their use of a biased historical approach. I say biased because, while having recently opened up its exhibition to hold increasing numbers of works by non-white artists, and aiming towards multiplicity, the museum nevertheless continues to exhibit their older works through a colonial Eurocentric lens. By proposing a post-colonial revision of their exhibiting practices, I am suggesting a multi-vocal approach to history which takes into account post-colonial theory as well as Native and colonial perspectives, rather than solely colonial ones. This paper will look at instances where the MMFA has succeeded in adopting a multi-vocal approach, and other instances where they have failed to do so, when exhibiting portraits of Native subjects.
Acknowledging History

In order to achieve as unbiased a historical account as possible, influential institutions ought to consider the historical context in which these racist and stereotypical images were produced. This calls for a historical revision of the pieces exhibited in their space and recognition of sensitive content that may be offensive or harmful to viewers with a history of oppression. Portraiture, in a colonial context, was one of the means by which white Euro-Canadians constructed stereotypical images of Native Canadians. According to art historian Charmaine Nelson, portraiture was a visual tool used by white Europeans to create a “hierarchization of human subjects through class and racial identifications.”¹ White upper class European subjects were therefore considered worthy of representation as “historically specific individual[s]” while non-white or lower class subjects were represented in more generic forms.² This is made all the more evident in portraits of Native subjects, and through their titles, which often left out the sitter’s name, instead focusing attention on the race of the sitter. These images, which stripped Native subjects of their individual identity and agency, served to group Native people as a whole. This homogenization allowed for a more monolithic perception of Native people as ‘other’ or non-white, which in turn allowed for a further marginalization of Native people in Canada. Not only should this history be acknowledged when exhibiting such artworks, but it also ought to be related to viewers in a way that provides a full account of the colonial contexts in which these portraits were produced; in other words, one that looks at both the perspectives of the white artist and of the Native subject or sitter.

Native art historian and art curator Tom Hill states that it is not the responsibility of museums and galleries to engage in critiques of colonial practices. However, according to Hill, a historical narrative must be provided “if we are to include Aboriginal representation” in our galleries.³ With the case of portraits of Native people by white colonial artists, context provides the viewer with an understanding of how and why these artworks were produced as well as what kind of relationship existed between the artists and the sitters. Furthermore, it allows the viewer to question whether or not such portraits are truthful representations of

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¹ Charmaine Nelson, “Slavery, Portraiture and the Colonial Limits of Canadian Art History” Representing the Black Female Subject in Western Art (New York: Routledge, 2010), p.64.
individuals who once lived or whether they are generic representations of Native people, as colonizers used to perceive them. These questions of perception could lead the viewer to further question how we perceive Native people today. By providing historical context, then, museums will have been successful in educating their public and providing some viewers with a reconsideration of Native individuality and agency. As art curator Steven Loft states in his reflections on the past 20 years of developments for Aboriginal art, “without acknowledging the colonial violence and cultural oppression committed against Indigenous peoples by settler states, there can be no peace, no rapprochement, no moving forward.” In influential institutions must also take on the responsibility of acknowledgement in order for public education to move forward.

Recognizing Achievements and Failures

Art historian Ruth B. Phillips has noted in her latest work, Museum Pieces: Towards the Indigenization of Canadian Museums, an increase in collaborative exhibitions between Indigenous artists, art historians, and the Canadian museums that provide viewers with what she calls “hybridity” and “cross-cultural” historical and social contexts. However, there is no mention of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and whether they have been working towards an indigenization of their exhibition spaces. In this section of my paper, I would like to evaluate instances where the MMFA has succeeded in acknowledging the historical context of works portraying Native people, as well as explore the ways in which they have failed to provide viewers with “cross-cultural” contexts. Furthermore, I will look at the limitations the museum sets up for itself in achieving a multi-vocal approach.

The MMFA recently acquired two works by Kent Monkman. Monkman, who is an artist of Cree ancestry, often addresses these issues of Native portraiture and representation within his works. He reasserts individuality, agency, and the perspectives of the Native subjects who were too often subjected to white European perceptions. For example, his work *Trappers of Men* (2006), which was presented to the MMFA as a gift in 2006, is a Native perspective on and historical account

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4 Steven Loft, “Reflections on 20 years of Aboriginal Art” Lecture at University of Victoria, 8 February 2012, p. 21.
of the manner in which nineteenth century artists such as Paul Kane and George Catlin portrayed Native people in racialized and stereotypical ways to match their perception of the “authentic Indian.” Monkman writes:

In the nineteenth century, the predominant view that the First Peoples of North America were doomed for extinction was a favorite theme employed by romantic artists such as Paul Kane, George Catlin, Albert Bierstadt, and Edward Curtis. These artists had little regard for the civilized Aboriginals, such as the Cherokees and other tribes living in or around eastern settlements, whose cultures and blood had, by this time, intermingled with that of the Europeans. The adoption of new modes of dress and customs was at odds with the perceived authenticity of the doomed race and was scrupulously avoided in their paintings and photographs.7

This is only a segment of the information plate provided for Trappers of Men, yet it manages to provide the viewer with significant historical context surrounding the production of portraits with Native subjects in the colonial tradition. The plaque was not written by a museum worker but by Monkman himself, demonstrating the significance he places on providing historical context in combination with artworks. By including this work and its information plaque in their exhibition space, the MMFA is also asserting its recognition of the racialized, stereotypical, and constructed colonial perceptions of Natives by white Europeans, thus creating a successful space of multi-vocal inclusion.

It is therefore disappointing to see, in other areas of the new Quebec and Canadian art Pavilion, various examples that demonstrate the museum’s perpetuation of a white Euro-Canadian biased historical approach towards portraits of Native people. Hanging in the same room as another one of Kent Monkman’s pieces, The King’s Beavers (2011), are two portraits by Paul Kane, one of a man who he named Mah-Min and another of a woman he named Caw-Wacham (fig. 1 and 2). This is the same Paul Kane who was criticized by Monkman for purposely avoiding “civilized” Native people and preferring to portray those Native people who fit his idea of the “authentic Indian,” thus perpetuating a stereotypical and constructed image of all Native people in the nineteenth century. Still, the MMFA contributes to the further

perpetuation of this notion by describing Kane’s so-called portraits as having an “ethnographic character” and “providing a more accurate idea of the Amerindian’s way of life.”8 What kind of information does this offer the viewer, other than the notion that these portraits are providing a somewhat accurate representation of what Native people looked like and how they lived in the nineteenth century? There is no mention of the nineteenth-century constructed image of the “authentic Indian,” nor that these portraits were part of a commission for Kane to document the “vanishing Indian” - a notion “envisioned as a marker of Euro-Canadian history and progress” and believed by many white Europeans to be the inevitable fate for the “primitive race” of Native people.9 The only information offered which might suggest to the viewer that these portraits are not accurate portrayals of specific individuals is the disclaimer at the end of the paragraph maintaining that “his composed settings and subjects adhere to the painting conventions of the time” and that his portraits were the results of a study of over 500 sketches he made while travelling.10 The viewer is not informed of the methods used by Kane to group together various Native subjects and construct a generic image of the “vanishing Indian” which served to “justify the supremacy of European ‘races’ and their rightful occupation in North America.”11 In other words, the image of the “vanishing Indian” legitimized white Euro-Canadians’ right to take land that was not theirs and marginalize a group of people considered “primitive” and a “dying race.” The MMFA has failed to provide a historical account of the context in which these portraits were produced, and by omission reinforces the colonial perspective of these portraits as being “ethnographic” works and “accurate” representations of Native subjects.

Further legacies of colonial exhibition practices can be found in the titling of certain works at the MMFA. Titles given to portraits of non-white subjects, more often than not, referenced the sitter’s race. This practice used by colonial artists resulted in the further “othering” of sitters as non-white subjects. This is why, for instance, you will never see a title that looks like Young white woman, Elise Kingman, but you will see Young Huron Woman, Bedawbenokwa at the MMFA. Young Huron Woman, Bedawbenokwa (fig. 3) is a plaster bust produced by French-Canadian artist Sylvia Daoust, in 1936. As referenced in the title, this is assumed to be a portrait

8 “Information Plaque for Mah-Min by Paul Kane” Founding Identities (1700’s-1870’s) room, Pavilion of Quebec and Canadian Art, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 2013.
10 “Information Plaque for Mah-Min by Paul Kane”
bust of a young Huron woman named Bedawbenokwa. However, the MMFA does not provide any information regarding the context in which this bust was made. Did the artist actually encounter an individual named Bedawbenokwa or does she simply represent an allegorical or generic portrayal of a young Huron woman? Furthermore, what is particularly interesting about this piece is that the MMFA actually has it on record that the bust in question is signed by the author, dated, and title as solely ‘Bedaw P(sic)nokwa.’ Why then, was the prefix Young Huron Woman added to the tile, by whom, and for what purposes? Are we even certain that the woman in question is a Huron woman? These are questions that ought to be asked by the museum staff in order to minimize racist colonial exhibition practices. I suggest the name be changed back to simply Bedawbenokwa in order to match the artist’s initial intention and restore individuality to the subject, assuming the sitter actually existed, until more information is found which might attest to the significance or veracity of the sitter being Huron.

Another issue to consider when looking at portraiture is the agency of the subject. The MMFA may want to consider whether portraits of Native subjects, in the colonial tradition, were being commissioned by the sitters, by art patrons, or by the artists themselves as a means to fulfil their voyeuristic curiosities about the “other.” These issues of agency are being considered and addressed more and more by contemporary Native artists who seek to restore agency to Native subjects. Art historian Michael Ames attributed these changes to a generation of young Native artists which he considered to be “more culturally conscious, politically active, and numerous” and therefore more willing to take control over how their history is told and how they are represented. In 2009, the National Gallery of Canada (NGC) held an exhibition presented by Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography (CMCP) entitled Steeling the Gaze: Portraits by Aboriginal Artists. This exhibition showcased works from the CMCP’s extensive collection along with works from the NGC, and was co-curated by the CMCP’s Andrea Kunard and by the NGC’s first ever


13 What’s more is that there is a bronze version of the bust held by the National Gallery of Canada for which the name Bedawbenokwa has been completely dropped leaving only Young Huron as its title (fig. 4).

curator-in-residence for Indigenous art, Steven Loft.\textsuperscript{15} The works were produced by 12 Native Canadian contemporary artists exploring themes of portraiture which allowed them to challenge stereotypes of Native peoples. As co-curator Loft stated, “these artists use their cameras to create a means of cultural self-determination. By reconstructing the narrative of race, they have captured the wide plurality of Aboriginal histories, cultures and contemporary realities and have created their own visual identities.”\textsuperscript{16} By taking place in an influential institution such as the NGC, the exhibition reached out to a larger audience on issues of diversity in museums and challenged stereotypical representations. That such an exhibition took place at the NGC demonstrates the museum’s willingness to engage with contemporary issues. By acquiring works from Kent Monkman, the MMFA is also participating in contemporary discourse. However, a more all-encompassing and permanent change is needed.

\textit{Providing Solutions}

In order to achieve permanent change, museums such as the NGC and the MMFA ought to hire permanent staff who can bring a plurality of perspectives to the institution. Although exhibitions such as \textit{Steeling the Gaze} are successful because they engage with contemporary issues and provide museums with multi-vocal approaches, they also reveal the limitations museums are facing. Temporary exhibitions are an effective way to inform the public about contemporary issues and alternative viewpoints; however, these alternative viewpoints are quickly contradicted when the viewer encounters the permanent exhibition and sees that Paul Kane’s portraits are still being described as accurate portrayals of Native people in the nineteenth century. If museums are to provide their public with a multiplicity of viewpoints, then they must hire permanent staff with a multiplicity of viewpoints to address the concerns of all.

One such concern which may not cross the mind of the average white viewer but which may be offensive to others is the continuous use of the word “Indian” within the MMFA. I am thinking, for example, of Prudence Heward’s \textit{Indian Child} (1936) (fig. 5), though there are many more examples where “Indian” still appears in titles. \textit{Indian Child} is the portrait of a young girl of native descent sitting in what looks like a log cabin, wearing Western clothing and a red bow ribbon in her hair.


\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
The portrait is displayed only a few feet away from another portrait, this time by artist Jori Smith titled *Little Girl in Blue* (1947) (fig. 6). Though both portraits are of little girls, one's title makes reference to her race while the other makes reference to her attire. This contrast is made all the more evident by the fact that these two portraits are, as mentioned, only a few feet from each other. While the MMFA did not take part in the titling of this artwork, as I suspect they did with *Young Huron Woman, Bedawbenokwa*, failure to recognize the racist nature of this title and to provide a historical account for its usage further exemplifies the MMFA’s neglect of duty. As a student in post-colonial theory, I would like to suggest a text that could appear in the plaque for *Indian Child*:

The word “Indian” was a colonial term used to describe Native people living in the North American continent. The term, which has historical significance in North America, originates from geographical confusion of European explorers who first crossed the Atlantic Ocean and arrived in what they believed to be in India. Though travellers quickly realized they were not in India, use of the term was widespread and institutionalised through legislation like the ‘Indian Act,’ and was still commonly being used in the 1940’s in Canada; therefore, it was not unusual for artists like Prudence Heward to use this word to describe their Native sitters. Due to its inaccurate geographical context and its derogatory usages, the term is no longer acceptable in describing the Indigenous peoples of Canada. In the early twentieth century, it was also common for artists to name their portraits of non-white subjects by race, while portraits of white subjects often had titles that referred to the sitter’s clothing or actions. This practice was often used because “white” was considered the norm, and therefore unnecessary to mention, while non-white was considered different and “other,” therefore necessitating some kind of recognition. Although Prudence Heward is considered to be one of the first Canadian artists to “conceive of First Nations subjects as powerful and confident individuals,” her titling practices still followed colonial trends.17 The museum would like to keep the original title for its historical significance and accuracy; however, we would also like to suggest a contemporarily appropriate title for our viewers: *Little Girl with Red Bow*.

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17 Joan Murray, *Canadian Art in the Twentieth Century* (Toronto: Dundurn, 1999), 79.
Conclusion

If museums are to approach their exhibits with a multi-vocal methodology, they must first approach history with that same lens. Furthermore, in order for any institution to adopt a multi-vocal approach, they must first adopt a multiplicity of perspectives. While collaborations with minoritized communities have proven to be effective for temporary exhibitions, the hiring of a permanent staff with multiple views and perspectives provides the museum with the resources to address issues brought up in both permanent and temporary exhibits. In 1994, the MMFA published a new mission statement which provided recommendations and proposals for their exhibiting practices. In regards to the permanent collection, the proposal recommended that “the display of the works in the permanent collection reflect the state of our knowledge about them.” The current state of knowledge for museums, according to Art Historians such as Susan Ashley, is that “criticisms of gender, class, and racial exclusion” be revised “by opening up and reflecting upon the process of representation.” The full potential of this current state of knowledge cannot be achieved if the MMFA continues to adopt a colonial historical narrative - a narrative which treats representations of Native subjects through the perspective of the white artist and ignores the perspective of the Native subject and sitter.

Institutions such as the MMFA must adjust and adapt their exhibition practices to engage in a multi-vocal approach. One point that I feel needs to be emphasized is the attention paid to multiplicity. While multiplicity advocates for the voice of the once excluded, the dominant or colonial voice must also be acknowledged in order to remain historically accurate and avoid a post-colonial theoretical bias. In the example of the plaque I gave for Heward’s Indian Child, the museum voice is giving a historical account of the term “Indian,” taking into account various perspectives of the term and subject. This goal of this paper is not to criticise colonial practices as they were used in their time, but rather to suggest that these practices should no longer appear at the MMFA and should be replaced by a post-colonial method which advocates for multiplicity in perspectives.

21 When treating artworks produced in colonial times or addressing colonial practices and issues.
Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Dr. Shelley Ruth Butler for her guidance, helpful suggestions, and corrections of this paper. I am also grateful to Seth Levine for his constant support and advice.

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Plate List

Fig. 1 Paul Kane, *Mah-Min* (1848), Oil on Canvas, 76 x 63.3 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Canada.

Fig. 2 Paul Kane, *Caw-Wacham* (1848), Oil on Canvas, 75.7 x 63.2 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Canada.
Fig. 3 Sylvia Daoust, *Young Huron Woman, Bedawbenokwa* (1936), Bronze, 44.8 x 23 x 23.7 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Ottawa, Canada.

Fig. 4 Sylvia Daoust, *Young Huron* (1936), Bronze, 43.8 x 22 x 23 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada.
Fig. 5 Prudence Heward, *Indian Child* (1936), Oil on Plywood, 36 x 30.5 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Canada.

Fig. 6 Jori Smith, *Little Girl in Blue* (1947), Oil on Canvas, 61.2 x 51.5 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Canada.
Explaining the PQ's Push for Sovereignty

Lessons from Israel on the Role of Rediscovering Ethnocultural Memory for State Creation

Katherine Ragan
Explaining the PQ’s Push for Quebec Sovereignty: Lessons from Israel on the Role of Rediscovering Ethnocultural Memory for State Creation

A study of nationalism must follow a comparative method, it cannot remain confined to one of its manifestations; only the comparison of the different nationalisms all over the earth will enable the student to see what they have in common and what is particular to each, and thus allow a just evaluation. Hans Kohn, 1944

Since the eighteenth-century defeat of New France on the Plains of Abraham, Quebec nationalism has constantly adapted to internal and external influences, and national identity has oscillated between ethnic and civic conceptions of nationhood and group membership. Over the years, collective identity has been expressed using a variety of labels: first French, then Canadien, then French Canadian, and finally Québécois (Gougeon 1993). The Quiet Revolution is commonly acknowledged as a turning point in the evolution of national identity in Quebec; before 1960, identity and group membership centered around ethnic criteria of a common French Canadian descent and Catholic religion, whereas the modernization and secularization that characterize post-1960s Quebec inspired a more civic conception of nationalism based on a territorial presence in the province of Quebec and the continuity of the French language. Later, in 1990, the Quebec government adopted an official policy of interculturalism with the aim of reconciling the liberal values of a globalizing world with a desire to maintain and preserve a distinct collective Québécois identity.

It is amidst this historical context of the evolution of Quebec nationalism and collective identity that we can consider the recent proposal by the Péquisteen government to adopt the Charte des valeurs québécoises (the Quebec Charter). This paper will argue that the introduction of the Quebec Charter is an attempt to rekindle an ethnocultural understanding of the nation by rediscovering and mobilizing traditional notions of a collective French Canadian identity. Further, the utility of such a strategy for the Péquiste government’s ultimate goal of secession from the Canadian federation and creation of an independent state will be explored.

1 Péquisteen is a term commonly used to refer to the Parti Québécois, a provincial political party committed to the preservation of French Canadian identity, and which advocates for the separation of the province of Quebec from the rest of Canada.
An Unlikely Comparison

To better understand the role of ethnic mobilization for the purposes of state creation, lessons will be taken from an unlikely source — the state of Israel. Israel's existence as both an ethnically defined and a democratic state renders it an interesting, although unexpected, reference for students of contemporary Quebec nationalism. Moreover, the strategies used by the political Zionist movement in garnering sufficient ethnic support for Israeli state creation in 1948 offer important tactical lessons for policy-makers in Quebec with the objective of establishing independence from the Canadian federation.

It should be acknowledged that in a pure comparative sense, there are sufficient dissimilarities between Quebec and Israel to render a full comparison inappropriate. The most glaring difference between the two cases is that since before the establishment of the state in 1948, Israel has faced an ongoing security threat from outside of its borders, forcing the Israeli state to constantly define itself in ethnic terms to maintain a distinct identity among a particularly hostile set of neighbours. Essentially, Israel must prove that its Jewish majority population is unique enough to warrant its own state within a primarily Arab world region. Quebec, on the other hand, has never experienced a comparable level of threat. Its membership in the Canadian federation has allowed Quebec to maintain a certain level of self-government without needing to establish full independent statehood. For Israel, the project of state creation was a zero sum game — in Zionists' perspective, they would either succeed in the Zionist project of securing a homeland for the Jewish nation, or they would face total annihilation as a coherent people and eventual assimilation into the global melting pot (Sicker 1992). For Quebec, the failure of the sovereignty scheme meant that the movement had to turn to the next best alternative — continued membership in the Canadian federal structure and quasi-autonomy in the form of a decentralized provincial government. Assimilation into the global melting pot is of course still a concern for Quebec nationalists within this federal structure. Compared to the Zionists prior to the creation of the state of Israel, however, the Quebec sovereignty movement has not faced a similar level of urgency with regards to protecting the existence of a collective people. Though quasi-autonomy is insufficient for proponents of Quebec independence, it offers a substantial degree of insurance against the possibility that Quebecois collective identity will disappear into the increasingly globalized pan-Canadian reality. Clearly, the pressures facing the Israeli and the Quebec cases are different. However, it is this very dissimilarity that
provides the most important lesson in the consideration of the Quebec sovereignty movement and the possibility that the Charter of Values is an attempt by political elites to rebuild the dormant independence movement. It suggests an even greater need for leaders of the contemporary Quebec sovereignty movement to mobilize a strong support base founded on traditional ethnocultural and historically emotional ties. Before assessing the motivations behind the Quebec Charter and any possible lessons from Israel, let us better understand the dichotomy between ethnic and civic group membership in the literature on nationalism, and what this means for the study of Quebec nationalism in particular.

*The Ethnic-Civic Dichotomy*

Students of nationalist movements commonly presume a dichotomous relationship between ethnic and civic nationalism. With this Eurocentric dichotomy, there exists an implicit Western assumption that ethnic nationalism belongs to “traditional” societies, while a society’s development towards a civic conception of nationalism indicates “modernity” and liberal progressiveness (Lecours 2000). While ethnic nationalism uses criteria of common ancestral descent, religious affiliation, and common language to determine membership within the national collectivity, civic nationalism draws on individual skills and characteristics to determine the inclusion or exclusion of any one person. To categorize a nationalist movement as exclusively one or the other would be inappropriate in most cases, as nationalisms tend to exhibit features of both ethnic and civic conceptions of group membership simultaneously (Alter 1994; Brubaker 1998; Lecours 2000). Thus, for any meaningful assessment to be made of a particular nationalist movement, analysis must escape the reductionism inherent in the classic ethnic-civic distinction, and focus instead on the specific aspects of the movement that sway it towards one end of the spectrum or the other.

In the case of Quebec, it will be argued that the Charter of Values is an attempt to rekindle an ethnocultural definition of the nation, while retaining strong features of a liberal democracy. Though there is no attempt made in this paper to assess the normative value of mobilizing support for a nationalist project along ethnic or cultural lines, it should be remembered that peoples who have never been marginalized at the expense of their collective identity may tend to overlook the importance of ethnocultural preservation:
Those whose identities are rarely questioned and who have never known exile or subjugation of land and culture, have little need to trace their ‘roots’ in order to establish a unique and recognizable identity. Yet [the identity of critical Western observers] is only an implicit and unarticulated form of what elsewhere must be shouted from the roof-tops: ‘We belong, we have a unique identity, we know it by our ancestry and history’. (Smith 1986)

In this passage, Smith is referring specifically to ethnic nationalisms in developing regions of Africa and Asia. Quebec is not a developing nation, and its own colonial nature complicates the issue. In addition, one could reasonably argue that the subjugation faced by the Quebec nation is minimal when compared to that faced by other peoples around the world, including the Jews prior to the foundation of the state of Israel in 1948. However, the advice still applies in the context of Quebec-Canada relations. Whether as a result of intentional policies or the inadvertent consolidation of identity within Canadian federal borders, the pan-Canadian identity has, at times, subsumed that of the Quebec nation (Balthazar 1995; Gougeon 1993; Handler 1988). Thus, similarly to other defeated peoples, it remains important for Quebec to be able to define its collective identity based on the very ethnocultural attributes upon which the continuity of the Quebec nation has historically been threatened.

The assertion of the Quebec nation’s freedom to define itself based on ethnocultural criteria is a bold and contentious statement, and it requires an important qualifier. The Quebec nation exists predominantly within the provincial borders of the province of Quebec, making up a demographic majority in this territorial political space. The implication here is that the decisions made by the Quebec nation as a collectivity will necessarily impact all residents of the Quebec province, regardless of any one individual’s membership in the majority Québécois nation. Quebec must therefore craft a careful balance between its existence as a modern liberal democracy which has a responsibility to consider the rights of resident minorities, and as the host of a strong Québécois majority with a distinct identity and, likely, distinct expectations of what their democratic state should provide for them in terms of national identity protection (Barker 2010; Oakes and Warren 2007). Achieving this balance is an intricate task. It is beneficial to now turn to Israel for reference on the complexities of balancing democratic values with the preservation of an ethnocultural majority identity.
In his seminal work on the topic, Sammy Smooha (2002) categorizes Israel as an archetype of an ethnic democracy. A state which defines itself along both ethnic and democratic lines is one which is composed of a “core” ethnic group constituting a majority in the state. The core ethnic group uses its majority to exert its control over “non-core” groups, and though citizenship and full rights are granted to members of non-core groups, the core ethnic majority considers non-core groups a threat to the survival of the state in question. Such is the case in Israel, where the Jewish population constitutes the core ethnic group, and despite minority Arab and non-Jewish populations holding full right to state privileges, the Jewish majority considers their presence and membership within the state as posing a serious existential threat to Israel as a Jewish polity.

Quebec fits within Smooha’s model of ethnic democracy, though perhaps for the Quebec case it is more appropriate to substitute the term ‘ethnocultural’ in place of ‘ethnic’ to accommodate for the fact that the evolution of Quebec nationalism and identity has resulted in a collective definition centred more around linguistic and cultural criteria as opposed to common French Canadian descent and Catholic religious affiliation (Lecours 2000). In an interview with Radio-Canada in 1993, Quebec historian Louis Balthazar commented on the appropriateness of characterizing Quebec nationalism in purely ethnic terms:

*Il est devenu contradictoire de nous définir suivant une dimension purement ethnique. Nous n’en avons plus le droit. Québécois ‘pure laine’ sont des expressions qui n’ont plus de sens. [La nationalisme québécoise] doit être une idée culturelle qui englobe des gens d’origines diverses.* (Gougeon 1993)

Under the model of ethnic democracy, the Francophone Québécois population constitutes the core ethnocultural majority within the territorial confines of the province of Quebec, while members of Anglophone and other sub-national collectivities are relegated to non-core status. Similar to Arabs and non-Jews in Israel, non-core groups in Quebec are granted full rights and privileges as citizens of a liberal democracy. Despite their official inclusion in the state system, however, the

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2 English translation: “It became contradictory to define ourselves in a purely ethnic dimension. We no longer have the right. Québécois ‘pure laine’ are expressions that have no meaning. [Quebec nationalism] must be a cultural concept that includes people of diverse backgrounds.”
membership of non-core groups within the Quebec nation is perceived as a threat to the continuity and integrity of a Québécois national identity (Barker 2010).

Smooha elaborates on the model by asserting that the core group’s perception of an existential threat to their collective identity may be heightened by affiliation between the non-core group and sympathetic external entities. Such affiliation is present in both the Israeli and Quebec cases. The Arab states neighbouring Israel present an opportunity for reinforcement and support of Arab minorities living within Israeli state borders, considerably intensifying the perceived threat posed by the existence of Arab populations in Israel. A similar situation exists in Quebec, where despite being a majority within its own provincial borders, the Francophone Québécois population is a minority within Canada. The anglophone population dominating the rest of Canada reinforces the significant threat imposed by the Anglophone minority residing within the Quebec nation on the continuity of Québécois national identity (Blad and Couton 2009; Oakes and Warren 2007).

Considering Quebec within the framework of an ethnocultural democracy helps us to appreciate the primary concerns and motivations underlying the Quebec nationalist movement. Ultimately, there is a desire to reconcile the inclusive, individualistic values of a liberal democracy with a desire on the part of the Québécois majority population to maintain and preserve a distinct national identity. Such was the aim of Quebec’s policy of interculturalism in the 1980s, which developed as both a delayed response to the Quiet Revolution shift towards a civic conception of Quebec nationhood, and a more timely response to Trudeau’s conception of Canadian multiculturalism (Barker 2010).

**Interculturalism: Quebec as a Liberal Society with Ethnocultural Foundations**

To a certain extent, interculturalism as pursued by Quebec escapes the reductionism of the ethnic-civic dichotomy. Officially adopted as a provincial policy in 1990 with the publication of the government document *Au Québec pour bâtir ensemble: énoncé de politique en matière d’immigration et d’intégration*, the aim of interculturalism was to integrate a distinct definition of collective Québécois identity into an increasingly liberal global context (Blad and Couton 2009). As such, it is neither explicitly ethnic nor civic in motivation; rather, it attempts to preserve aspects of national definition based on ethnocultural criteria of group membership, while simultaneously achieving the inclusiveness of a modern democracy. The ethnocultural national definition supported by the intercultural approach is one based
primarily on language, as is evident as early as 1978 in a Quebec government White Paper titled *La politique québécoise du développement culturel*:

A French society first and foremost, Quebec must also find a source of vitality in its minorities. [...] The total assimilation of all new immigrants is not a desirable objective. The common good and even that of minority groups requires the integration of these diverse groups into an essentially French-speaking Quebec totality. But once this fundamental requirement has been established and respected, the existence of dynamic and active minority groups can only be an asset to Quebec as a whole. (Government du Quebec, 1978; translated in Oakes and Warren, 2007)

Thus, diversity in an intercultural Quebec would be centred around the primacy of the French language. The introduction of a national cultural strategy based on language as the primary cultural marker of Quebec national identity followed naturally from the shift which took place after the Quiet Revolution in Quebec; the traditional ethnic standards of membership in the French Canadian collectivity of common descent, religion and language were reduced to simply language as criteria for membership in Québécois national identity (Dupré 2012). As such, the intercultural approach to cultural integration was a logical response to the dramatic shift towards civic citizenship which occurred during the 1960s, and reflects a move by policy makers to embrace this shift while acting to preserve the fundamental tenet of national identity: the French language.

Further, interculturalism came as a response to the multiculturalism espoused by Trudeau and others in the 1970s and 1980s (Blad and Couton 2009; Dupré 2012). The multicultural approach to minority integration embedded within the 1982 amendment to the Constitution has been criticized for essentially “reducing the global culture of French-speaking Quebec to one ethnic component of the Canadian mosaic” (Balthazar 1995). In order to temper the effects of federal multiculturalism in Quebec and protect the status of a distinct national identity within the province, interculturalism “respects the value of ethno-cultural diversity in Quebec; however it does so with the explicit understanding that a singular cultural tradition will serve as the official discursive medium” (Blad and Couton 2009).

Québécois nationalist critics of the intercultural strategy have argued that the reduction of membership criteria to language alone has allowed the deterioration of the traditional French Canadian collective identity that characterizes the
pre-Quiet Revolution era (Bock-Coté 2007; Lisée 2000). By equating language with culture, interculturalism has contributed to the decline of Quebec nationalism and the dwindling of support for Quebec secession from the Canadian federation. According to this view, the existence of a distinct national identity based on strong ties of shared collective memory and historical experience is critical to the mobilization of sufficient support for the realization of an independent state for Quebec (Bock-Coté 2007). There is nothing new about the fundamental thesis that the emphasis of ethnocultural ties is an important marshaling force for the process of state creation; seminal authors on the topic of nationalism have long acknowledged the crucial role that ethnic memory and historical connection can play in garnering the emotional domestic support necessary to support the sovereignty project (Kohn 1944; Smith 1981; Anderson 1983).

It should be noted here that the existence of ethnic memory is, of course, neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the process of state creation. The success of any one particular nationalist movement is subject to the impact of innumerable influences both within and without the national community itself. Nevertheless, the rediscovery of common ethnocultural ties remains an important tool in mobilization and state building exercises. The power of ethnic memory formation will thus be explored rather myopically in the next section in an attempt to assess it as a strategy for nationalist mobilization. Later, it will be evaluated within the broader context of the Quebec nationalist movement, with a special focus on why mobilization along ethnocultural lines may be especially important in the pursuit of Quebec secession from Canada.

Mobilizing Ethnocultural Support for the Nationalist Project

Many authors have expressed the importance of emphasizing ethnocultural ties in an effort to garner support for secession or state creation. André Lecours (2000) argues that there is an important role for elites in “build[ing] the internal coherence of the group they claim to represent through the politicization and manipulation of cultural markers.” He adds that cultural markers are not inherently political, but rather need to be “politicized to serve as a basis for claims of self-government.” In a comparative work on contemporary nationalist movements, Michael Keating (1996) notes that “leaders of civic movements may seek to invent an ethnic identity as a mechanism for political mobilization.” Similarly, Anthony Smith (1986) qualifies that “if there is a causal link between ethnicity and the for-
mation of nations, then it suggests support for drawing upon ethnically unifying historical experiences, or ‘creating’ identity.”

These quotes display a clear appreciation for the role ethnocultural memory can play in mobilizing nationalist support for state creation. These authors allude to the possibility that not only is there a place for the rekindling of traditional historical memories and shared experiences, but that leaders of political movements may invent an ethnocultural identity for the explicit purpose of state building. Thus, though the motivations for a sovereignty project may be predominantly political and elite-driven, the project may appear to be inspired by a grassroots devotion to a traditional ethnic memory and cultural familiarity (Conforti 2012). National identity is a fluid and fickle thing, and as a result it is a difficult phenomenon to analyze with any real accuracy. Are the political moves behind the Quebec Charter serving to stir up historic nationalist ties, or are they imposing a new collective identity upon the Quebec nation? Let us look briefly at examples from Israel, where the rise of the political Zionist movement at the turn of the twentieth century succeeded in recreating a Jewish past with the explicit aim of establishing an independent polity in *Eretz Yisrael*, the land that is the modern state of Israel.

Before the foundation of Israel in 1948, Jews were dispersed around the world, often oppressed and subjugated due to their ethnic and religious membership. According to Judaic belief, Jews living in exile would be reunited as a coherent nation upon the coming of the Messiah. This belief imposed a passive role on the Jewish people when it came to determining their future as a unified nation (Shelef 2010). The Zionist movement, led by a man named Theodor Herzl in the 1890s, attempted to reject the passivity inherent in traditional Jewish doctrine by convincing Jews around the world to participate in the Zionist goal of establishing a ‘homeland’ for the Jewish people. The state of Israel was thus founded upon a fundamental contradiction to traditional Jewish religious belief, and this explains why ultra-orthodox Jews to this day oppose the existence of Israel (Conforti 2012).

In order to mobilize sufficient support for the state-building project, Herzl and other leaders of the Zionist movement were forced to arouse a nationalist inclination among the dispersed Jewish people which was powerful enough to obscure the traditional religious assumption that Jews would be reunited with their homeland only upon the coming of the Messiah. Of course, the history of the Jewish people is replete with memories of oppression, subjugation, exploitation, and outright violence, so there exists a strong feeling of common identity and shared historical experiences among Jews upon which political leaders can easily draw to mobilize
nationalist support (Sicker 1992). Nevertheless, leaders of the Zionist movement were forced to rewrite Jewish history to forget those dimensions of collective identity which were not conducive to statehood (Nimni 2009). Thus, with tactics of selective ethnic memory formation and the strategic emphasis on particular elements of the Jewish historical past, leaders of the Zionist movement garnered the support necessary for their state-building project. Sicker (1992) comments on the important role played by emotional connection in the Zionist process: “the heart of man is moved not by reason but by emotion, we may argue all day and cry aloud that we are a people, even though we are bereft of a homeland.” It seems, therefore, that it was only by the political tactic of “integrating the demand for a state with Jewish cultural and religious precepts that the movement was able to establish a mass base and attract the first immigrants to Palestine” (Suzman 1999).

Fascinating in its own right, and the subject of extensive academic study, the success of the Zionist state-building project provides an interesting reference point for students of the contemporary Quebec sovereignty movement. The literature suggests that Herzl and other Zionist leaders deliberately emphasized aspects of the Jewish religious culture that were conducive to state creation, and deemphasized those aspects that strictly opposed it. Ultra-orthodox and anti-Zionist groups go so far as to claim that Zionism was a movement founded solely on political aspirations of a few elite leaders, and that the national identity mobilized for the purpose of establishing the state is wholly unrepresentative of the traditional Jewish nation (Conforti 2012). It is likely that the reality falls somewhere in the middle, with political aspirations of a minority elite playing a role in spearheading the movement, and national identity evolving with elements of both traditional culture and an imposed identity as “new Jews” in Israel (Kimmerling 2011). Could a similar phenomenon be occurring in Quebec with recent moves by the PQ government to introduce an imposed culture of secularity through the Quebec Charter of Values? If so, to what extent is the Charter an attempt to rekindle traditional conceptions of national identity and group membership, and to what extent is it offering a new cultural marker in the hopes of creating a rallying point for supporters of Quebec sovereignty? These queries can be better understood through Anthony Smith’s three-stage model of the evolution of nationalist movements.
Smith’s Three Stages of Nationalism

Smith (1986) proposes a three-stage process of nationalist movements through which a people can progress from existence as a stateless nation to existence as a ‘territorialized’ political entity. The first stage is mobilization, in which support for the nationalist movement is harnessed using ethnic demography as a basis for the nation. Second, the nation experiences territorialization, where members of the nationalist movement become territorially grounded to a particular geographic location. At this stage, ethnic and ‘homeland’ ties may be easily harnessed towards the goal of state creation. Lastly, the nation progresses to a stage of politicization; once statehood is achieved, ethnic ties are transformed into ties to the state, and the political community’s conception of nationalism gradually develops into an increasingly civic definition of group identity.

Looking at the case of Israeli state creation in terms of Smith’s three-stage process, it is clear that the argument has historical merit. At the dawn of the Zionist movement, Herzl’s goal was to create a homeland for the Jewish people – not necessarily in the territory comprising the modern Israeli state, but rather anywhere where Jews could become a majority in their own political system. “Jews were everywhere a minority, nowhere a majority,” and it was therefore paramount to the Zionist cause that an independent state be established where this would be changed (Shelef 2010). Herzl thus embarked on a project of national mobilization, harnessing historical memories of Jewish subjugation and oppression for the purpose of circumventing the Judaic tradition of waiting for the Messiah, and awakening a collective Jewish consciousness with the explicit will to establish a territorial homeland.

It was therefore only several years into the existence of the Zionist movement that Eretz Yisrael was marked as the necessary territorial location for the materialization of a Jewish homeland, indicating that the Jewish nationalist movement had progressed to Smith’s second stage of progression from a stateless people to a political entity. The territorialization of the Zionist project can be traced in particular to 1903, when Herzl and members of the Zionist Organization officially rejected an offer from the British Empire to establish a Jewish state in the land that is now modern day Uganda (Sicker 1992). According to historical records, the reason for passing up the Uganda offer was that there existed a fundamental historical connection between the Jewish people and Eretz Yisrael, and it would be inappropriate to lay claim to a territory to which they had no natural claim (Conforti 2012). Considering that the original mandate of the Zionist project was to establish a state for the
Jewish people wherever possible, this is a noteworthy development in the Zionist story, and it suggests that the attempt by political leaders to harness ethnic memory and mobilize emotional support for state creation had developed a life of its own by the time the Uganda offer was made. Despite Herzl being in favour of accepting the offer, general opinion among Jewish Zionists was that they had to hold out for the land around which their collective historical identity was centred (Suzman 1999). Fortuitously for the Zionist cause, the Jewish claim to the land of Eretz Yisrael was accepted positively by the international community, and this attitude was only reinforced following the atrocities experienced by Jews during the Second World War. After state creation in 1948, Israeli Prime Minister David Ben Gurion pursued an aggressive policy of statism in order to consolidate the strong collective identity that characterized twentieth century Jewish nationalism (Suzman 1999). Politicization was thus achieved, and the third stage of Smith's process of nationalism completed.

Smith's model of nationalist development is not so neatly applied to the Quebec situation. Quebec’s existence within a federal framework allows the province a sort of proxy autonomy without explicit statehood, an alternative that was clearly unavailable to the Zionists prior to the existence of Israel. According to Sicker (1992), the Jewish Zionists were playing a zero sum game; they could either succeed in the establishment of a Jewish state and thus preserve their collective ethnic identity, or they could fail at creating a state and ultimately assimilate into the global culture with no coherent homeland as a people. Though there were of course innumerable other factors contributing to the success of the Zionist state-building project, the fact that there was no viable alternative to full sovereignty is an important aspect of the story, and should be remembered when considering the cases of Israel and Quebec side by side.

Quebec’s status as a semi-autonomous province within the Canadian federation allowed the Quebec nationalist movement to experience territorialization and politicization in the absence of an independent state. It is commonly acknowledged that the territorial component of Quebec nationalism developed during the transformative years of the Quiet Revolution, when national identity evolved from a conception of a territorially dispersed French Canadian nation sharing common ancestry, religion, and language, to a Québécois nation territorially grounded in the province of Quebec and characterized primarily by a common French language. Oakes and Warren (2007) point out that “territorialization brought de-ethnicization” in Quebec after 1960, leading to an increasingly civic definition of the nation at the expense of traditional ties based on ethnicity and culture.
Further, the relatively decentralized nature of Canadian federalism meant that there was a fairly strong quasi-state apparatus (the provincial government) around which national identity could be centered. If “the first steps towards transition to a political nation are taken when a cultural nation is politicized and statist ideas take root of it,” then for Quebec these steps were taken when growing focus was attributed to the role of Quebec provincial policy in defining collective identity (Alter 1994). One can link the statist consolidation of identity-building power in Quebec to growing provincial jurisdiction in matters of culture, language, and, following the 1991 Canada-Quebec Accord, full administrative control over immigration and citizenship policy (Blad and Couton 2009). Will Kymlicka (2001) proposes an interesting paradigm wherein “sub-state nations move progressively towards a position of civic openness and post-ethnic multiculturalism as they acquire the power to control not just immigration, but also the terms of integration.” Terms of integration, such as education and language policy, played a significant role in distinguishing Quebec from other Canadian provinces; officially following an approach of interculturalism as a strategy to embrace the realities of a globalizing world and an enduring desire to preserve a distinct identity, the trend towards a civically defined nation spawned considerable backlash from the public as well as from some notable public intellectuals and policy makers. The ‘reasonable accommodation’ debates are a particularly memorable outcome from the attempt by political elites in Quebec to impose an understanding of national membership and collective identity (Dupré 2012).

It is possible that the existence of a provincial polity provided an illusion of statehood to supporters of the Quebec nationalist cause and paved the way for the decline of traditional ethnocultural conceptions of Québécois nationalism. Thus, the fact that the Quebec nationalist movement had a viable alternative to explicit statehood in the form of quasi-autonomous membership in the Canadian federation allowed it to progress to Smith’s stage of politicization in the absence of full independence. Statist consolidation of national identity was centred around the province of Quebec, and as national identity began to evolve into a civic conception of group membership, ethnocultural ties were deemphasized and partially forgotten. Essentially, politicization happened too fast for the Quebec sovereignty movement to mobilize sufficient support for secession from Canada and establishment of a fully independent polity. This suggests that successful mobilization will require Quebec to ‘backtrack’ to the mobilization stage of nationalist evolution in order to effectively restart the three-stage nation-building process outlined by Smith.
Support for a Return to a Traditional French-Canadian Identity in Quebec

The sentiment that the Quebec nationalist movement must turn to traditional ethnocultural ties of citizenship for the purpose of successful secession has been expressed by public intellectuals in Quebec, albeit outside of the explicit ‘state creation’ language of Smith’s framework. Jean-François Lisée (2007), Jacques Beauchemin (2002) and Mathieu Bock-Coté (2007) are the most recent and visible proponents of the view that Quebec nationalism has gone awry with the interculturalism of past decades, “often decrying policies and discourses aiming at de-ethnicising the Québec nation from its French Canadian content to the profit of ethnocultural pluralism as unnecessary obstacles to Québec’s national affirmation” (Dupré 2012). The criticisms of interculturalism put forward by Bock-Coté, in particular, offer an interesting contribution to this paper’s hypothesis that in the pursuit of statehood by a nationalist movement, ethnocultural ties can be ‘rediscovered’ and harnessed for the mobilization of support for the creation of a new state.

Boldly, Bock-Coté (2007) makes a case for the parallel nature of nationalism and sovereignty: “les deux opérations peuvent et doivent aller de pair, sans quoi elles échoueront.” Following from his claim that nationalism and sovereignty are mutually reinforcing phenomena, it is logical, then, to accept that a strong and distinct nationalist sentiment is an important precondition for successful state creation. Bock-Coté continues:

*En fait, l’intentionnalité francophone doit être réouverte, une intentionnalité que Jacques Beauchemin n’hésite pas à nommer comme on l’a toujours fait: un destin. [...] L’histoire devient importante lorsque la possibilité de l’indépendence réapparaît.*

Bock-Coté acknowledges the important role that Québécois historical experience and shared memory can play in contributing to the success of the independence movement. Though he does not express the idea in terms of Smith’s three stages of nationalism, his thinking is clearly compatible with the conclusion that Quebec nationalism has lost the mobilizing spirit of the traditional French Canadian identity amidst an increasingly politicized national culture. He attributes the

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3 English translation: “Both operations can and should go hand in hand, otherwise they will fail.”

4 English translation: “In fact, the Francophone intentionality must be reawakened, an intentionality that Jacques Beauchemin does not hesitate to name as we always have: a destiny. [...] The story becomes important when the possibility of independence reappears.”

bulk of the blame for the decline in traditional collective identity to the intercultural approach taken by the Quebec government in past decades, claiming that the era of reasonable accommodations constituted a period of “dénationalisation québécoise” in the province. For the realization of the Quebec independence movement, Bock-Coté suggests that the traditional conception of the French Canadian nation must be reawakened and mobilized. His words give the distinct impression of being a call to arms themselves, warning his readers that modernists will disapprove of a traditional revival of collective identity, but that it is imperative for the ultimate goal of Quebec independence:

Il pourrait bien s’aviser qu’il n’était pas nécessaire de poser au révolutionnaire pour transformer la conscience nationale, qu’il fallait seulement accepter une tradition pour la poursuivre en l’amendant, pour la transformer en lui demeurant fidèle. Mais que la meilleure manière d’être ouvert à l’inédit consiste à suivre le chemin entrouvert par la tradition, voilà une idée qui fait peur aux modernes, qui donne un air affligeant de conservatisme [...] Il n’en demeure pas moins que cette idée est vraie et seule porteuse d’avenir pour notre peuple.5

However, we must recall the words of Louis Balthazar, who cautioned that the archaic ‘pure laine’ definition of collective French Canadian identity which prevailed prior to the Quiet Revolution is no longer plausible given the diversity of cultural backgrounds present in contemporary Quebec (qtd. in Gougeon 1993). Inevitably, mobilizing support for the independence movement along purely ethnic lines would serve to alienate massive segments of the population who do not meet these criteria. It therefore becomes necessary to conceive of a Québécois identity that escapes the ancestral measures traditionally used in favour of a more inclusive – yet still distinctive – group definition.

5 English translation: “It should be noted that it was not necessary to ask for the revolutionary transformation of national consciousness, it had only to accept a tradition to which amendments could be made while remaining faithful to it. But that the best way to be open to the unexpected is to follow the path left ajar by tradition is an idea that scares the modern among us, for it gives a distressing air of conservatism [...] Nevertheless, it remains that this idea is the true and promising future for our people.”
Conclusion: The Quebec Charter of Values Proposes a New Collective Identity

The 2013 proposal for the adoption of a Quebec Charter of Values offers the opportunity for a new Québécois identity to be formed around an imposed culture of secularism. Though secularism has been a distinguishing characteristic of Québécois nationalism since 1960, the more recent focus on laïcité emphasizes the imposition of a “secular” culture within public spaces. Dupré (2012) argues that the conceptualization of secularism as a “cornerstone of the cultural mainstream into which immigrants are being urged to integrate” reflects efforts by Quebec’s political elites to “reclaim the cultural prominence of the French Canadian majority in provincial institutions and press for measures aimed at enhancing Quebec’s distinctiveness and autonomy within the Canadian institutional framework.”

Like the Zionist leaders who aimed to rally particular aspects of Jewish culture for the realization of their political aspirations, it seems that leaders of the contemporary Quebec independence movement are pursuing strategies of identity creation with the recent proposal to adopt a Quebec Charter of Values. Despite the considerable media attention surrounding the Charter, the ideas espoused in the Quebec Charter should not have been unforeseen. In 2007, the PQ party, led by Pauline Marois, proposed the Quebec Identity Act, which suggested the introduction of formal Quebec citizenship, as well a motion to add a clause in the preface of the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms “ensuring the predominance of the French language, protecting and promoting Québec culture, guaranteeing equality between women and men, and preserving the secularity of public institutions” (National Assembly 2007; qtd. in Dupré 2012). This demonstrates that political elites are utilizing citizenship policy as a mechanism for state creation; by redefining national conceptions of collective identity and group membership, it becomes possible to mobilize support for a sovereignty project through an imposed cultural identity. In the case of the Charter of Values, this imposed identity centres around the secularization of public spaces and a declared devotion to gender equality (Dupré 2012).

Knowing what we do about the role of ethnocultural memory in the mobilization of support for a sovereignty movement, it seems likely that the motivation behind the Charter is to introduce a new cultural marker in the form of laïcité, or secularism of public spaces, around which supporters of the Quebec independence movement can rally. This paper has drawn examples from the case of the Zionist movement and the establishment of the state of Israel in order to better comprehend
the significant role such cultural markers can play in garnering the support necessary for a state-building cause. Quebec’s existence within a strong Canadian federal framework renders the need to emphasize shared cultural markers even more important, since federalism offers sub-state nationalist movements an arena for quasi-self governance and autonomy outside of explicit statehood. It will remain to be seen how this new development in Quebec politics will play out – will emphasis on a culture of secularity be enough to harness the emotional and historical collective memories necessary to accept secession from Canada and establishment of a new state? Only time will tell.
References


The New Lesbos and Photos*

Edith Watson’s Journey through Rural Canada with her Loves, Victoria Hayward and a Kodak

Christopher Gismondi
The New Lesbos and Photos*: Edith Watson’s Journey through Rural Canada with her Loves, Victoria Hayward and a Kodak

*The terminology “Lesbos” is not a usage of the contemporary derogatory slang term, but rather an allusion to the Greek Isle from which Lesbian derives its name. The word “photos” - being Greek for light - is a continuation of this nod to Grecian culture and more importantly as one of the root words of the English word for the invention of photography.

Before the advent of queer destinations such as Provincetown and Castro Street, Church/Wellesley and Rue Saint Catherine East, would rural Canada have provided a space for early twentieth-century women to lead a non-normative lifestyle? Could it be that rural Canada was the new Mediterranean paradise to openly live, work and love for two female journalists? Victoria Hayward and Edith Watson published a massive travel narrative, titled *Romantic Canada* (1922), exploring the rural Canadian experience and the racial diversity therein, with Watson supplying photographs to accompany the text. The physical concept of creating the travel narrative required these two women to travel and work intimately together for long durations in near seclusion. Thus, the rural site and photographic medium allowed Watson to pursue and subsist off of her alternative lifestyle. I will use a discussion of social context inspired by Nelson’s analysis of Mary Edmonia Lewis’ racialized experience in Rome in *The Color of Stone* (2007) to help situate Watson and her work in the context of social history. ¹ I argue that the setting of rural Canada and the occupation of photography provided Watson an outlet to pursue a non-normative and non-conforming lifestyle. ² I will follow this with a critical social analysis of Watson’s photographs to ask the same questions scholar Huneault asked when analyzing Frances Anne Hopkins: “At whose cost comes the empowerment of the white, Western woman away from home?”³

² I chose to respect the spectrum of sexuality and refer to Watson and Hayward’s relationship as non-normative or the general term queer, instead of imposing a more restrictive definition onto their relationship or their individual sexualities. My decision is contrary to scholarship I encountered which chooses to apply the very restrictive defining label of lesbian to these historical female relationships.
Scholarship and “Evidence”

This work is important to me as it is about a larger reassertion of the presence of diverse sexualities traditionally denied and policed in patriarchal societies defined by gender and sexual “normativity.” However, issues with scholarship make a difficult task of reclaiming retroactive queer histories. As would be predicted, the publications of the eras in question, and even primary sources, generally fail to confront sexual identity directly. A period example would be Girls Who Did, published in 1927, which I encountered in the initial stages of research when the scope included photographer Clara Sipprell. An interview in this text fails to ever mention Sipprell’s alternative relationships. Even more troubling is modern scholarship’s reluctance to address sexuality. Although Frances Rooney’s work on Edith Watson, Working Light (1996) was factually informative, he fails to address Hayward and Watson’s relationship as anything more than a working relationship. This denial of a romantic or sexual relationship occurs alongside Rooney’s choice to use Watson’s term of endearment for Victoria Hayward: “Queenie.” The appropriation of the name — a symbol of their relationship — along with the simultaneous denial of their relationship was a frustrating fault in the work. This work of modern scholarships refuses to consider Watson’s queer sexuality as worthy of identifying even with a long term relationship present.

Another difficulty in retrospective queer history arises around “evidence” of non-normative sexuality. Cameron Duder found a lack of “evidence” of physical sexual acts in primary sources in his work on early Canadian lesbianism, Awfully Devoted Women (2010). Analysing the letters and correspondence of female same-sex couples, he found that references to genital sex were distinctly absent. Duder then states, however, that the absence of reference to physical sexuality might be a commonality in the era. In the early 1900’s it was impolite to discuss one’s own sexuality, so only the medical community, sexologists, or members of the

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government could openly discuss the sexuality of others. Sharon Marcus found an identical absence of genital references in her analysis of intimate female same-sex relationships in Victorian England. However, she notes that even hetero-nomative correspondences never make references to genital sex. Marcus pokes fun at the issue of “evidence,” asking if menstruation and excretion happened in Victorian England since there is no recorded evidence of them. Marcus rejects this obsession with evidence, stating that “if firsthand testimony about sex is standard for defining a relationship as sexual, then most Victorians never had sex.” To put the question of “evidence” to bed once and for all, Lillian Faderman’s work *Surpassing the Love of Men* (1981) includes a quotation by scholar Barbra Ponse. “Lesbian is an essential identity that goes far beyond sex,” argues Ponse. Marcus also states that “Lesbian studies place women’s friendships on a continuum with lesbian relationships and equate both with resistance to the family and marriage. [These women’s friendships] defy compulsory heterosexuality.” Speculative attention towards physical sexuality then becomes irrelevant. Even if there is no recorded evidence of physical sexuality, to dismiss these relationships as either non-existent or not monumental in their achievement of resistance to dominant society would be a major fault.

*Context and Parallels*

To begin to provide a “social context” for Edith Watson’s life and work, one should look at non-normative female relationships elsewhere in the same era and the time period leading up to the 1920’s. As previously mentioned, I consulted Marcus’ analysis of female relationships in the homo-social saturated society of Victorian England. Nelson's contextualization of Lewis included extensive information about the predominately white “flock” of female neo-classical sculptors who set up base in Rome in the mid 19th century. This community of female artists and sculptors was a phenomenon that did not go unnoticed by male artists and other male thinkers. For these women, Rome was a haven for “alternative significations of the white female body that ruptured and displaced normative ideas of bourgeois gender, sex and sexuality,” which were well established in the American culture from which

10 Sharon Marcus, *Between Women*, p. 43
12 Marcus, *Between Women*, p. 29.
most of them came. Many of these women in Rome were openly involved in what Nelson classified as lesbian relationships, and their shared experiences provided a “safety zone, support network and community” for one another. The use of travel for art as a means to live beyond confined definitions of sexuality parallels Watson’s circumstances decades later.

An additional parallel can be drawn between Watson’s experience in Canada and the solace American sculptors Florence Wyle and France Loring found in eventually settling in Toronto. Loring met Wyle at The Chicago Art Institute in 1907. Interestingly enough, it was rural Canadian resources that exposed Loring to the possibility of Canada when her father moved to Cobalt, Ontario for a mining job. After being established in Greenwich Village, financial trouble had the two move to Toronto in 1914 with financing from Loring’s father. In a more contemporary biography of these two women, Elspeth Cameron recounts that after summering in Cobalt the pair built a log cabin in Temagami. According to Cameron, the Lorings did not object to Wyle sharing studio space with their daughter because they thought Wyle “stabilized” her. Here a parallel of rural seclusion, free of scrutiny, in pursuit of free love can be applied to Watson’s experience. The couple was an accepted fixture in the Toronto social scene and commonly referred to as “Loring-Wyles”. In the colonial context of Watson’s work, Florence Wyle played a monumental role exhibiting work and being the only woman juror in the Canadian Exhibition for the British Empire Exhibition in 1924 in Wembley. This Exhibition is important to consider as a celebration of colonial empire - a heightened colonial moment - and, for Wyle, as a white woman breaking into previously denied circles of patriarchial knowledge production. Cameron also considers the context of the expanding role of women into political life, with suffrage in Canada extended to include white women on 24 May 1918. These parallels between the experiences

20 Elspeth Cameron, And Beauty Answers, p. 64.
21 Cameron, And Beauty Answers, p. 160.
22 Cameron, And Beauty Answers, pp. 138-145.
23 Cameron, And Beauty Answers, p. 145.
of Loring-Wyles in travelling to Canada, employing the rural setting and working in a colonial and masculine-dominated realm, and those of Watson, can provide contexts for consideration.

Although extremely recent, Stone’s analysis of the small-town lesbian experience from a case study of a small Newfoundland outpost reveals implications that can perhaps be rightfully transcended across geography and history to Watson’s setting. Stone found that there is a fear in small centres of being publicly identified because of the risk of backlash. In comparison, “coming out” in urban spaces never means that the entire population can be knowledgeable of one’s sexuality, and thus it will not hinder opportunities in areas like employment.\(^{24}\) Perhaps the secluded environment allows even more truth and liberalism than the urban environment. In the secluded “wilderness,” pursuing a non-settled/pseudo-nomadic lifestyle, one does not have to remain “closeted” and hide within a massive population, but quite contrarily this environment may allow for an openness of character. It is then important to consider, especially with Watson’s extensive travel history, that she was able to manipulate her class status and wealth in travel, which allowed for the pursuit of this voyageur queer lifestyle. It was exotic destinations and rural seclusion that would become the sites of sexual freedom for Watson and her partner. The means of achieving this travel was through access to class privilege from social circles in the broad colonial world which she travelled extensively.

\textit{Watson and Hayward}

Watson was born in Connecticut in 1861 and pursued watercolour with her sister Amelia.\(^{25}\) But it would not be until 1890 that she would be exposed to photography, learning from her uncle Sereno Watson, an instructor at Harvard.\(^{26}\) Here, one can see Watson’s access to the medium of photography stemming from class status. Her class status becomes increasingly significant as she travels extensively as a freelance writer, journalist and photographer. Rooney discovered

\begin{footnotesize}
24 Sharon Dale Stone and the Women’s Survey Group, “Lesbian Life in a Small Center: The Case of St. John’s” in 
25 “WATSON, Edith” \texttt{Canadian Women Artists History Inative}, http://cwahi.concordia.ca/
sources/artists/nameSearch.php?artist=watson (date of last access November 25 2013)
26 “WATSON, Edith” \texttt{Canadian Women Artists History Inative}, (date of last access November 25 2013)
\end{footnotesize}
that Watson’s travels were numerous, wintering in Bermuda early on since 1898. In a clear illustration of Watson’s utilization of class privilege in the pursuit of a non-conforming lifestyle, Rooney shows that in 1911 it is through friends made in Bermuda that Watson meets her future partner Victoria Hayward. The history of white upper class privilege being leveraged for publishing opportunities from traveling experiences is plentiful and well documented, and it is here that we can insert Watson into this colonial tradition. The choice of Canada for subject matter is particularly interesting given the colonial context of both Watson, being American-born, and Hayward, being a white Bermudian. Rooney speculates it was both loyalist fascination and restricted European travel in 1914, due to the outbreak of war, that had the two change plans from pursuing European subject. Travelling in Canada with “ease” and the known existence of “Natives” and “immigrant groups” in Nova Scotia, the Plains and the west coast were of “interest,” according to Rooney. This is important to consider in analysis, as the two women would have preconceived notions about the groups of people they would encounter and this will influence their representations and how they perceive these groups. It appears the Canadian travels from 1914-1925 were not completed all at once, but rather in stages. Rooney documents the two summering with Mennonites in Manitoba and with Doukhobors in Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. It was through the network of friends made in Bermuda that they were able to stay in Victoria and observe Indigenous people trading by canoe. The two boarded with families they encountered when available, but otherwise camped in the “wilderness.” The last piece of contextual information to provide was that the post-war period was difficult. Men back from the war effort resumed work in freelance areas, and travel became expensive as the Canadian Pacific Railway cancelled their program to exchange work for train passes. It would be in 1921 that the work Romantic Canada would be compiled retrospectively from their documentation of their travels.

29 “WATSON, Edith” Canadian Women Artists History Inative, (date of last access November 25 2013)
31 Rooney, Working Light, p. 15.
32 Rooney, Working Light, p. 16.
33 Rooney, Working Light, p. 16
34 Rooney, Working Light, p. 16
35 Rooney, Working Light, p. 17.
36 Rooney, Working Light, p. 17
However, as it is apparent in the introduction to *Romantic Canada* by Edward J. O’Brien, the book is largely about a celebration of racial “others” and diversity displayed in contrast to the United States, where “the passions for conformity...have crushed them.”\(^{37}\) These representations already need to be called into question on the grounds of intended morality and racialized representation. It is interesting to note that it is in this work that Hayward coins the term “Canadian mosaic,”\(^ {38}\) later to be rendered iconic as a metaphor for Canadian multiculturalism policy, then to be questioned by critical whiteness studies. Watson and Hayward’s notions of racial diversity are exclusively limited to white and Native representations and deny the existence of other racial groups like Chinese descendants in British Columbia or citizens from the African Diaspora. This representation of the exclusive interplay of white and Indigenous in the colonial moment is a decision that cannot be ignored, especially with the background of moral superiority implied through comparisons in racial diversity with America, as noted by O’Brien in the introduction. The images focus on human subjects, but a few landscapes are included and cannot be viewed outside of the colonial and racial celebration. They appear as a continuation of the philosophy of *terra nullius*, with representations that connote conquered land with structures and evidence of settlement. When viewed in the nationalistic colonial context, they read as shared pride, with nationalistic connotations limited to the chosen group of predominately European immigrants within a system that favoured them and policed who could settle in Canada\(^ {39}\) (fig. 1).

*Romantic Canada*

The choice of photography as a medium has already been noted as being available to Watson through her class privilege. However, it is important to note that there is also a democratization inherent in the medium. Watson is able to capture images that are important to her as a non-conforming white woman. In this democratization of artistic representation and the use of what could be defined as a “queer lens,” Watson seems to have focused on lower class female subjects engaged in labour beyond the domestic sphere (fig. 2-6). In the context of Watson's

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37 Victoria Hayward, illustrated by Edith S. Watson, *Romantic Canada*, (Toronto: The MacMillian Company of Canada Ltd.. 1922) p. xiii
upper class background and the changing social and political roles of women, these images become emblematic of a rebellion against bourgeois conformity. These female subjects labour to support themselves and their families in the rural context; Watson, then, may identify with these women, as she is now subsisting off her own labours in a male dominated world. Male subjects are present, but compositionally are usually displaced from the frame and thus displaced from importance in Watson’s eye (fig. 4).

Early queer female relationships seem to have been characterized by androgyny and performance play by at least one partner in a “butch-femme” pairing. One image of special consideration in this queer context is an image of an androgynous-appearing girl, defined by the gender neutral and labour connotative term “angler” (fig. 7). On the topic of female subjects, an image dubbed Madonna of the Kootenaya is of significance (fig. 8). It is interesting to ask what this image means when contextualized behind the queer lens and within the moralistic and racialized colonial context. The work employs the problematic use of geography in naming - which Watson does to other Native and white subjects - as markers of identity in the absence of a name. Images of this subject matter have already been noted extensively in history as purposely representing alterity from traditional white-motherhood and an implied evolutionary scale of morality through motherhood. How then do we reconcile this representation of motherhood by Watson, a woman seemingly not interested in procreation, but simultaneously a woman who seems to use race and class privilege as a means of self-empowerment at the expense of others? This image is a bizarre intersection of colonial contexts and the “normative biological role” of women, functioning as mothers, in Watson’s context as a non-conforming female.

The majority of the photographic works included in Romantic Canada are an interesting collection of ethnographically charged photo-portraits that are presented (and function inherently) as anonymous and generic genre scenes (fig. 2-7,9-11,18). This raises issues such as the ethics of anonymous portraiture titling and the business of portraiture, since these subjects have not commissioned the work, and one could assume they will not see any royalties from the reproductions. Even within Hayward’s writings and Watson’s practise of naming, most of the

40 Duder, Awfully Devoted Women, pp. 28-35.
41 Anna January, “Savage Motherhood: Discourse on Canadian Motherhood, Nationalism and Race in the late Nineteenth Century” Oh Canada!: Nation, Art and Cultural Politics, McGill University, Department of Art History and Communication Studies, Montreal, Canada, 19 November 2013
subjects, even those of a Euro-Canadian white race, are not identified by name and therefore go anonymous. A very small number of people are given specific names in the text provided by Hayward. In this case the relationship Watson had with her subjects was purely extractive for capitalist means, refusing them specific identity in her works, which were later to be published for profit. At the same time, Watson’s work is commendable in the sense that it broke into exploratory subject matter, a previously male dominated area in visual arts, as evidenced by the primacy of the Group of Seven. Nevertheless, there is an inherent “othering” in the treatment of all of her subjects. More overt examples of this practise can be seen in what is dubbed the “Abenaki Basket-Makers” in the text, or “Pour Madame’s Boudoir” (fig. 12) and An Eskimo Grandmother (fig. 13), set in Labrador. In the absence of their names, the two subjects’ race, age and form of labour in the souvenir industry function as their tags of identity for viewers.

The British Columbia chapter has the highest concentration of photographs with Native subject matter (fig. 8,14,15). One should consider the context of Emily Carr’s early work and later the landmark exhibition in 1927: The Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art Native and Modern. This portrayal of the West coast as the site of Native populous is a larger theme in the identity-building of Canada, functioning in tandem with a tradition of searching for cultural symbols and an overall fascination with this region. This fixation seems manifested even in the representations by foreign-born artists, such as Watson, in Canada.

An issue of canonicity arises with a strange image of a boy at a window blowing a bubble (fig. 16). The only way to reconcile the unnatural subject matter is to wonder if the scene was staged. This nod to the master Chardin (fig. 17) raises issues of quotation as a means to assert legitimacy for canonization. Within the patriarchal society, and the era of relative female empowerment of the 1920’s, this allusion to art from an institutional and sexist structure is worthy of considerable attention. Previously, Watson had engaged in watercolour, which was accepted as a ladies endeavour but deemed unimportant in the canonical hierarchy of genres. Could this be an overt comment on the issues raised by Linda Nochlin about the patriarchal nature of the artist tradition and institutions that marginalized women.

44 An art historical term referring to “the canon” of great artworks, for an artist to claim canonicity is to reveal quotations to master works in the hopes of legitimizing their own practice as worthy of being hailed “great, master or genius”
or on what Griselda Pollock called the “masculine narcissism”\(^{46}\) of the canon? In the post war context of male dominance being reasserted in Watson’s field, is this an attempt to legitimate her work for consideration of canonicity? What else could be made of this quotation by a queer woman? The homo-social circles of the bygone eras that birthed the canon could also be called into question through this quotation. This canonical nod in the masculine post-war context can be read as an interplay of both the gendered and policed queer experience from the social circumstances and artist’s tradition.

Certain images of Watson’s contain a particular aesthetic of the low-picturesque, defined by the romanticism of poverty and low class rural life (fig. 18). This becomes noteworthy given Watson’s context of class privilege, and when considering the question, raised in my introduction, “at whose cost comes the empowerment of the white, Western woman?”\(^{47}\) The picturesque was about a cruel pleasure and delight in the “graceful decay” and suffering of others.\(^{48}\) This also could be interpreted as a canonical nod to the picturesque aesthetic of the Eighteenth Century, like in the work of JT Smith (fig. 19). The aesthetic of the picturesque developed over inter-Britannic tourism as the French Revolution made broad European travel to the Mediterranean impossible.\(^{49}\) Given the “othering” noted, as well as the devotion of labour subjects in underdeveloped rural scenes, claiming a parallel to the cruel picturesque would not be a stretch. This critical take on Watson as a white American with class privilege reveals issues of the romanticization of a rural class near poverty.

**Conclusion**

Rural Canadian subjects allowed Watson to venture into their secluded setting, away from scrutiny, to pursue a definitively non-normative lifestyle and to subsist off the arts. These were drastic departures from the “appropriate” roles for a woman of the era, and this intersection of critical social analysis of the work becomes important to see where this power is gained. Overall, it would appear the empowerment for the queer white female came at the expense of racialized depictions

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\(^{47}\) Kristina Huneault, “Placing Frances Anne Hopkins,” p. 9.

\(^{48}\) Matthew C. Hunter, “The Picturesque Radicalized: Constable and Turner” Introduction to Eighteenth Century Art and Architecture, McGill University, Department of Art History and Communication Studies, Montreal, Canada, 19 November 2013

\(^{49}\) Hunter, “The Picturesque Radicalized: Constable and Turner” McGill University, 2013
of Indigenous peoples, deliberate absence of other races in limited representations of diversity, embedded colonial and canonical connotations, portraiture mal practice turned into anonymous genre scenes, and many assertions of class power over impoverished rural life. At the same time, Watson’s work is commendable for democratizing the field of art with a queer woman’s lens and breaking into the inherently masculine realm of exploratory subject matter. The ability, due to class privilege, to pursue travel for photography seems to have allowed Watson to escape from normative gendered life and urban sexual scrutiny into a remote and nomadic lifestyle with her partner. Watson and her work provide an interesting insertion of the queer woman into a colonial heritage in a competitive realm of masculine dominated art and more broadly, masculine dominated society.
Bibliography


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Through the **Lens** of William Notman’s Camera

The Exoticization of “Indianness” in Montreal Fancy Dress Balls and Skating Carnivals

Jaya Bordeleau-Cass
Through the Lens of William Notman’s Camera:
The Exoticization of “Indianness”
in Montreal Fancy Dress Balls and Skating Carnivals

In the late 19th century, Montreal was alive with the swift expansion of commerce, the railway and canals, the rise of population, and the tourism industry boom—all of which were part of a nation-building project. During these times in Canadian history, European and Indigenous cultures collided intimately in ‘contact zones’ such as Montreal, “where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination.” This period also coincided with the development of photography as a medium, which provided artists with a method of capturing these significant moments of transculturation and nation-building efforts in Canada as well as the opportunity to disseminate a desirable ‘self-image’ of the country and its people. The power dynamics present in Montreal during these times are exemplified in photographs such as “Mr. Reynolds in costume” (Figure 1) taken by William Notman who commonly photographed costumed dress balls and skating carnivals. This portrait blurs the lines between the individual and the representation of a stereotypical ‘type’ since costumes were often created from “a pastiche of decontextualized objects” in attempts to represent ‘exotic’ Others. The photographs taken during these events also acted as colonial objects documenting a particular moment’s racialized and asymmetrical power structure and how photography as a medium was used to serve these ideological functions. Thus, through the examination of William Notman’s late 19th century photographs of fancy dress balls and skating carnivals and by placing particular emphasis on the act of dressing as an “Indian,” one can begin to unravel how the Indigenous Other was stereotyped and exoticized in this period of Montreal and Canadian history.

A native of Paisley, Scotland, William Notman arrived in Montreal in 1856 at the age of 30. Leaving all family ties and acquaintances behind, he completely remade himself

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in Montreal by diving into the relatively new medium of photography and the wondrous potentials it offered for the creation of permanent images. In this sense, photography is an important tool for examining a particular piece of history as it offers an exact image of a person or scene. By the time Notman arrived in Canada, the production of photographs through a wet-plate process was gaining popularity and allowed for the easy reproduction of images, compared to the older daguerreotype method which only produced one unique image. A cunning businessman, Notman soon expanded his business to other major cities, including studios in the United States.

One could say that Notman’s success can be attributed to his being ‘in the right place at the right time’ as Montreal was entering a period of great prosperity, playing host to a large, wealthy business class and attracting those who wanted access to this wealth. Compared to England, Montreal’s class system was much less entrenched and it was therefore easier for one to ‘work their way to the top.’ The Montreal of the mid-to-late 19th century included a large English population who occupied the majority of the upper-middle class. The strong military presence – soldiers sent from England to defend Canadian borders during the American Civil War – added to this upper-class society. It was this segment of the Montreal population who provided Mr. Notman with most of his business, commissioning portraits of themselves and their families – of which Notman produced 14 000 per year – or buying landscape photographs of quintessentially ‘Canadian’ scenes to send to relatives in Europe. With such a booming business, Notman employed a team of approximately 30 staff who assisted with photography, props, makeup, costumes, and editing.

As explained in the 1989 film “Notman’s World” by Albert Kish, Notman strategically chose to photograph the pleasing aspects of Victorian society while negating the widespread poverty, hunger and discrimination afflicting the lower-classes and minority groups of the time. For instance, in 1885 - the year smallpox gripped Montreal, Notman’s studio took 3000 images, “yet, looking at them, you’d never know this tragedy took place.” Despite how the birth of photography democratized the art of portraiture,

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4 Kish, Albert, Notman’s World (1989), National Film Board of Canada., 29 minutes, 7 seconds.
5 Kish, Notman’s World (1989).
6 Conversation between author and Nora Hague, McCord Museum.
7 Kish, Notman’s World (1989).
8 Kish, Notman’s World (1989).
9 Kish, Notman’s World (1989).
10 Kish, Notman’s World (1989).
11 Conversation between author and Nora Hague, McCord Museum.
12 Kish, Notman’s World (1989).
13 Kish, Notman’s World (1989).
making portraits much more accessible to lower classes in White society, Notman predominantly photographed the upper classes or ‘interesting’ characters such as Sitting Bull and Buffalo Bill (Figure 2). This was quite fitting with the period in which he lived, mirroring the ruthlessness deployed by the entrepreneurial class to build ‘society’ and the new Canada into the image of a respectable ‘civilized’ nation.

During the Victorian era, photography played a large role in this nation-building project as photographs of the country and its people could be disseminated to the world and used to create a desirable ‘self-image’. As noted by author Benedict Anderson, “[a] nation…is an imagined community, and nations are distinguished from each other by the stories they tell about themselves.” Considering this, one must also question who had the power and the authority to tell these stories and to disseminate the ‘self-image’ of the Canadian nation at this time as well as how photography served to reinscribe this phenomena of exoticizing the Indigenous Other. As explained by Eva Mackey, “[i]n Canada […] the white Anglophone majority undoubtedly has cultural, economic, and political dominance. If Canada is the ‘very house of difference’, it contains a family with a distinct household head.” Considering this fact, with regards to photography, white male artists such as William Notman played a large role in how the story of the new ‘Dominion of Canada’ (formed in 1867) would come to be represented in visual culture. In a Montreal Gazette article from 1955, nearly 65 years after William Notman’s death, Notman is remembered for having been part of a national heritage, having recorded “famous personages of Montreal, and of Canada …[and]… the gaieties of the winter carnivals in Victorian and Edwardian Montreal,” preserved into elaborate composite photographs. These skating carnivals and elaborate masquerade balls were social events that helped create cohesion between members of upper-class Montreal society in the Victorian era.

As emphasized by Cynthia Cooper in her book “Magnificent Entertainment”, “over several decades, Victorians of many walks of life had generated a veritable passion for dressing up.” Picking up in the late 1830’s, fancy-dress balls became widespread

14 Charmaine Nelson, “Defining Nation (Canada) and National Belonging (Canadians),” Introduction to Canadian Art (ARTH 300), McGill University, Undergraduate Art History Lecture, 15 October 2013.
16 Mackey, “Unsettling Differences” p.12.
18 Cynthia Cooper, Magnificent Entertainments: Fancy Dress Balls of Canada’s Governor General, 1876-1898 (Fredericton: Goose Lane Editions, 1997) p. 21.
throughout Europe as well as in Canada, where fancy costumed skating carnivals were also popularised. As they required a fair amount of leisure time and money to pay for costumes, fancy dress balls were often only accessible to the white upper classes of society.\textsuperscript{19} Significantly, “the characters people chose to represent and the costumes they devised reveal their perceptions and beliefs about their own identities and the identities of the country.”\textsuperscript{20} As such, examining the costumes of wealthy, white attendees dressed as ‘Indians’ can also reveal information about how they positioned themselves vis-à-vis the Indigenous ‘Other’ and how they came to create the stereotypical images of the caricatures they chose to play.

On the other hand, fancy dress skating carnivals, held on a more regular occurrence, were open to a wider range of costumed attendees and popular among people of ‘many walks of life.’\textsuperscript{21} As explained by Cooper, “newspapers indicate that in the winter most [Canadian] towns and cities held one large carnival a month in the 1870s and 1880s.”\textsuperscript{22} On March 1, 1870, a skating carnival was held at the Victoria Rink in Montreal to honour of Prince Arthur, the Duke of Connaught.\textsuperscript{23} One of the best-known pictures of this event is William Notman’s composite photograph that commemorates the evening and the diversity of costumes worn (Figure 3).

Because of the long exposure-time needed to take photographs, as well as the fact that the skating carnival was held indoors and packed with skating attendees, it would have been impossible to photograph this event. And so, to commemorate the skating carnival, William Notman placed an ad in the Gazette on February 25, 1870, inviting attendees to come have individual portraits taken which “were then cut out and pasted to a painted backdrop of the rink, and the whole rephotographed”\textsuperscript{24} and painted over with oils by Edward Sharpe and Henry Sandham. Containing approximately 300 figures,\textsuperscript{25} all individuals are recognizable in this scene, having each been photographed individually and then pasted into the composite, unlike a genre-style where individual likeness is unidentifiable. Notman’s innovative advertising and marketing skills become evident with works such as this one as most upper-class attendees would end up purchasing two photographs from the studio: one of their individual portraits and one of the larger composite, therefore doubling the profit from the event.\textsuperscript{26} Thus, advertisements such as

\textsuperscript{19} Cooper, \textit{Magnificent Entertainments}, p.22.
\textsuperscript{20} Cooper, \textit{Magnificent Entertainments}, p.18.
\textsuperscript{21} Cooper, \textit{Magnificent Entertainments}, p.24.
\textsuperscript{22} Cooper, \textit{Magnificent Entertainments}, p.24.
\textsuperscript{23} Conversation between author and Nora Hague, McCord Museum.
\textsuperscript{24} Cooper, \textit{Magnificent Entertainments}, p.25.
\textsuperscript{25} Kish, \textit{Notman’s World} (1989).
\textsuperscript{26} Conversation between author and Nora Hague, McCord Museum.
the one included in the Gazette on February 26, 1870 are demonstrative of Notman’s skill as a creative businessman as well as the widespread exposure these photographs and depictions of ‘Indianness’ received.

Often described as “kaleidoscopic,”27 the costumes present at these skating events also featured a significant amount of cultural appropriations and stereotypical depictions of ‘exotic’ populations, including costumes of Turks, Greeks, Chinese, Spaniards, Jews, ‘Indians’ or people in blackface.28 These costumes “reinforced widely accepted cultural ideas about ‘the other’ [and]… conformed to prevailing ethnocultural and racial stereotypes,”29

As abovementioned, at the time of the 1870 Skating Carnival in Montreal, Canada as a country was only three years old and was therefore undergoing a strong nation-building project. As part of this, the social categories of ‘white’ and ‘Indian’ became key tropes in the discourses surrounding Canadian nationalism. Indigenous Peoples were regarded as exotic Others, lower on the civilization scale – yet worthy of photographers’ attention for the exoticism and tourism potential they provided. As reiterated by Daniel Francis in “National Dreams: Myth, Memory and Canadian History,” “the Indian represented the untamed, uncivilized essence of the New World.”30

Significantly, Indigenous Peoples in ‘contact zones’ like Montreal also strategically adopted these ideas imposed on their identities (‘noble savage’, ‘picturesque exotic’) in order to benefit from the tourism market.31 This idea is further explained by Kathleen Buddle in “Media, Markets and Powwows: Matrices of Aboriginal Cultural Mediation in Canada:”

“Euro-Canadian settlers effectively inscribed Canadian nationalism through the stories they told themselves about themselves in relation to a fabricated Indigenous otherness. Euro-Canadians, in general, approached Aboriginal peoples after having framed their own virtual realities or ‘pictures’ of Indianness, after compiling information about the imaginings about Indian peoples communicated by other whites in public discourses.”32

28 Conversation between author and Nora Hague, McCord Museum.
29 Cooper, Magnificent Entertainments, p.35.
As such, previous depictions of ‘Indianness’ as well as the souvenirs and information collected during cross-country travels provided the stereotypical images used to put together ‘Indian’ costumes. One of the portraits featured at the very front of William Notman’s 1870 composite is of a Mr. Reynolds dressed as an exoticized caricature of an “Indian” (Figure 4). When he came into the studio the day of the skating carnival, Mr. Reynolds was also photographed in multiple poses and with a friend. A powerful and chilling image, Mr. Reynolds’ costume is best revealed in the portrait entitled “Mr Reynolds in costume” (Figure 1).

In this portrait, Mr. Reynolds wears a costume “composed of authentic Aboriginal-made elements, all available at this time in the Montreal area, juxtaposed incongruously. Referred to as “‘Quewaygoosquequamteros,” an unpronounceable name most likely made up to sound ‘authentically Indian’, Mr. Reynolds is dressed in a buckskin jacket with matching leggings and leather moccasins. On his head, he wears a wig of dread shoulder-length black hair, on top of which sits a headdress. Mr. Reynolds accessorized his skating carnival outfit with a beaded bag, beaded bracelets and a matching choker as well as a longer necklace on which hang small artifacts. Seated on what look to be furs, with his legs crossed and his head tilted towards the camera, Reynolds also holds a tomahawk-pipe up to his lips with one hand while the other carefully holds an unusable bow.

Mr. Reynolds’ costume is an agglomeration of Indigenous clothing and accessories from across North America. For instance, according to curators at Montreal’s McCord Museum, the beaded bracelets and matching choker are said to be the style of Plains Nations (Southern Canadian Prairies and Central United States) yet are also “typical of work being done by Native people in Quebec in this period.” This fits in with the transculturation processes of the time, where, in order to appeal to European and settler tourism markets and ideas of ‘authentic’ indigeneity, “Woodlands Indians would increasingly replace elements of their earlier dress with the pan-Indian styles derived...”

33 Please see McCord catalogue entries I-43611.1, I-43612.1 and I-43615.1 for more poses of Mr. Reynolds, McCord Museum, Montreal, Quebec. http://www.mccord-museum.qc.ca/scripts/search_results.php?Lang=1&keywords=Mr.+Reynolds+in+costume (date of last access 26 November 2013).

34 Conversation between author and Nora Hague, McCord Museum.


36 Cooper, Magnificent Entertainments, p.35.

37 Conversation between author and Nora Hague, McCord Museum.

38 “Mr. Reynolds in costume” McCord Museum, Montreal, Quebec. (date of last access 26 November 2013).
from Plains clothing.” Additionally, it is speculated that the headdress worn by Reynolds is Huron-Wendat (Quebec City). This is a sound assumption as another Huron-Wendat headdress dated pre-1911 and found on display at the Canadian Museum of History (Figure 5) very much resembles the one worn by Reynolds. As a final example of the diverse backgrounds and stories of the objects worn by Reynolds one can look to the small comb featured on his necklace (Figure 6). The McCord Museum remarks that this piece is of particular interest as it has been identified as an ‘authentic’ item from the Arctic Thule culture, ancestors of today’s Inuit, dating from the 11th to the 17th century.

Mr. Reynolds’ ‘lumping together’ of these distinctive objects into one ‘pan-Indian’ costume essentially wipes out the uniqueness of these cultural groups’ identities. For instance, for the Plains Indians, their beading is viewed as a visual expression of family values and tribal identities, while beading for more Eastern nations such as the Haudenosaunee may be linked to treaties and the shell beads that went into making the wampum belts used to make agreements between nations. It is also important to acknowledge that the various origins of these items demonstrates the effects of trade and the widespread travels that European immigrants undertook, having established contact with these diverse societies to obtain these objects.

Moreover, when discussing an earlier painted portrait of a British officer named Mr. Caldwell (c. 1780, Figure 7), who is also dressed as an Indian chief with items of clothing from different Indigenous groups, author Beth Fowkes Tobin argues that “separating the items from those who created and wore them has the effect of reducing their power to signify, to be a part of an elaborate sign system that constitutes [who they are].” From these decontextualizing acts, the objects become exoticized and an illusion of ‘Indianness’ is created: “an Indianness rendered powerless by incoherence.” Not surprisingly, the wearers and manipulators of these pastiches of objects consequently become more powerful.

Furthermore, one cannot examine Mr. Reynolds’ elaborate costume and portrait without questioning who he was and how he fit into late 19th century Montreal society.

40 “Mr. Reynolds in costume” McCord Museum, Montreal, Quebec. (date of last access 26 November 2013).
41 “Mr. Reynolds in costume” McCord Museum, Montreal, Quebec. (date of last access 26 November 2013).
44 Fowkes Tobin, “Cultural Cross-Dressing in British America”, p. 85.
Although named in this portrait, there were many “Mr. Reynolds” listed on record as living in Montreal in 1870. However, another photograph taken in William Notman’s studio in 1871 entitled “H. Reynolds & Friends” (Figure 8) features Reynolds with two others on a sleigh in one of Notman’s popular staged winter scenes. This could very well be the same Mr. Reynolds as the Skating Carnival photograph because he is wearing the same leather-fringed jacket. From these sleigh photographs, an initial (“H”) is provided in the title when naming Mr. Reynolds, enabling one to speculate that the costumed Mr. Reynolds in 1870 is the same person as “Master Henry Reynolds”, a teenage boy photographed by Notman four years earlier in 1866. All of these photographs appear amongst many others portraits of the Reynolds family taken by William Notman’s studio, suggesting that young Mr. Reynolds came from a wealthy family occupying the upper-rungs of Montreal society and able to commission a plethora of photographs. Furthermore, the fact that costumed Mr. Reynolds is featured at the very front of William Notman’s 1870 composite picture of the Skating Carnival at Victoria Rink suggests that he was a prominent member of society at this time.

As cited in the McCord description of this photograph, “in the late 19th century, using Native-made objects and clothing to portray stereotypical and romanticized North American Aboriginal people was commonplace at fancy dress balls”. Thus, Mr. Reynolds, a budding member of Montreal’s upper-class society, was most likely exposed to these types of costumes before he put together his own. Other examples of upper-class men – and sometimes women – dressing up as “Indians” can also be found throughout the Notman collection. For instance, one can look to the portrait of Mr. A. A. McCulloch (Figure 9), a wealthy commission merchant, who came to the Notman studio to be photographed in his “Indian” costume for the Chateau de Ramezay Historical Fancy Dress Ball held in Montreal in 1898. Much like Mr. Reynolds, McCulloch is pictured wearing a collection of objects from his many travels – beaded bags, moccasins and a tomahawk. As such, the popular trend of commissioning photographs of appropriated

46 Conversation between author and Nora Hague, McCord Museum.
48 Conversation between author and Nora Hague, McCord Museum.
49 Conversation between author and Nora Hague, McCord Museum.
50 “Mr. Reynolds in costume” McCord Museum, Montreal, Quebec (date of last access 26 November 2013).
51 Conversation between author and Nora Hague, McCord Museum.
52 Conversation between author and Nora Hague, McCord Museum.
‘Indian’ costumes further disseminating these clichéd images in a society that looked up to historically wealthy figures such as Mr. Reynolds and Mr. A. A. McCulloch.

These types of costumes demonstrate a common fascination with Indigenous societies paired with patronizing attitudes and views of Indigenous Peoples as savage or uncivilized. Oftentimes, those who chose to dress as “Indians” also came to play the part, channeling the stereotypically ‘savage Indian’, by chasing other party-goers with tomahawks, letting out loud war cries and scowling for pictures.53 Thus, it was not a rare occurrence for people of Montreal’s upper classes to see white individuals dressed as “Indians,” further propagating stereotypical images of Indigenous peoples as “noble savages” – in contrast to the ‘civilized’ life of the colonizer.54 Due to the widespread beliefs of white racial superiority of time, Indigenous Peoples, like people of colour, were most likely not invited or welcomed to these particular events and thus had no way of demonstrating their own expressions of culture and selfhood. As such, the wearing of these costumes only reinforced the existing “representations of Native Americans as other, as marginalized, and as premodern.”55

As reiterated by Ruth Phillips, “In the Great Lakes region, as elsewhere in North America, dress has traditionally been one of the most important sites for the aestheticized expression of group and individual identities.”56 Considering this, when costumes of a romanticized and stereotyped vision of pan-Indianness are worn by those occupying a powerful place in a society – white, male – it does not leave room for members of these colonized cultural minorities to represent themselves and this important part of their identities. Unfortunately, this trend of ‘playing Indian’ has followed us into the present, where Halloween costumes of ‘PocaHotties’ or ‘Indian Warriors’ continue to be depict Indigenous peoples as exotic, mythical creatures set in a distant past, furthering the power and privilege of White Canadians over diverse cultural groups.57 Furthermore, creating and propagating images of ‘Indianness’ as ‘exotic’ implies a certain distance, an assumption that these peoples are from somewhere else. These acts displace Indigenous

53 Cooper, Magnificent Entertainments, p.35.
People and deny the fact that they are the original inhabitants of the place we call Canada.

In his book “The Imaginary Indian” Daniel Francis notes that “the Indian was a white man’s fantasy, a screen on which non-Natives projected their anxieties and assumptions about their place in the New World.”58 In this sense, the ‘Indian’ constructed in Mr. Reynolds’ costume and in other costumes photographed by William Notman can in fact be viewed as exoticized types, as cut-and-paste fantasies. These are exemplary of the historical romanticization and ‘glossing over’ of the distinctiveness of Indigenous cultures in Canadian art, something which unfortunately continues to manifest itself in contemporary depictions of Indigenous Peoples. In order to move away from this colonial trend of oppression, Indigenous peoples will need to be given more spaces in artistic circles to represent themselves and their uniqueness as defined by their own criteria.

58 Francis, National Dreams, p.10.


Cooper, Cynthia, Magnificent Entertainments: Fancy Dress Balls of Canada’s Governor General, 1876-1898 (Fredericton: Goose Lane Editions, 1997).


Kish, Albert, Notman’s World (1989), National Film Board of Canada., 29 minutes, 7 seconds.


Nelson, Charmaine, “Defining Nation (Canada) and National Belonging (Canadians),” Introduction to Canadian Art (ARTH 300), McGill University, Undergraduate Art History Lecture, 15 October 2013.


Telephone conversation between author and Nora Hague, Senior Cataloguer, Notman Photographic Archives, McCord Museum, Montreal, 19 November 2013.

Fig. 1 William Notman, Mr. Reynolds in costume, Montreal, QC, 1870 (1870),
Photograph: Silver salts on paper mounted on paper – Albumen process, 13.7 x 10 cm, McCord Museum, Montreal, Canada.
Fig. 2 William Notman, *Sitting Bull and Buffalo Bill*, Montreal, QC, 1885 (1885), Photograph: Silver salts on glass - gelatin dry plate process, 17 x 12 cm, McCord Museum, Montreal, Canada.

Fig. 3 William Notman, *Skating Carnival, Victoria Rink*, Montreal, QC, painted composite, 1870 (1870), Photograph: Silver salts, oil on canvas – Albumen process, 137 x 176 cm, McCord Museum, Montreal, Canada.
Fig. 4 William Notman, *Mr. Reynolds in costume, Montreal, QC, 1870 (1870)*, Photograph: Silver salts on paper mounted on paper – Albumen process, 17.8 x 12.7 cm, McCord Museum, Montreal, Canada.

Fig. 5 Caroline Gros-Louis, *Headdress, Huron-Wendat, Quebec* (pre-1911), Felt, cotton, ribbon, feathers and moose hair, Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau, Canada.
Fig. 6 Anonymous, **Comb**, (1000-1700), Ivory, 4.8 X 13.5 cm, McCord Museum, Montreal, Montreal, Canada.

Fig. 7 Anonymous, **Sir John Caldwell** (c.1780), Oil on canvas, Courtesy of the Board of Trustees of the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside In “Picturing Imperial Power: Colonial Subjects in Eighteenth Century British Painting”, Beth Fowkes Tobin, p. 81.
Fig. 8 William Notman, H. Reynolds and friends, Montreal, QC, 1871 (1871), Photograph: Silver salts on paper mounted on paper – Albumen process, 13.7 x 10 cm, McCord Museum, Montreal, Canada.

Fig. 9 William Notman & Son, Mr. McCulloch, costumed for Chateau de Ramezay Ball, Montreal, QC, 1898 (1898), Photograph: Silver salts on glass – gelatin dry plate process, 17 x 12 cm, McCord Museum, Montreal, Canada.
Indigenous Erotic Art in the Process of Decolonization

Juliette Allen
Indigenous Erotic Art in the Process of Decolonization

The ongoing RezErect exhibit at Vancouver’s Bill Reid Gallery is receiving much public attention for its depictions of Native sexuality. The show features works by 27 native artists from the Northwest Coast and central Canada, such as Shawn Hunt, Nicholas Galanin and Kinnie Starr, and the pieces on display include edible panties, a headdress sporting an erect phallus, and stone sculptures of sexual organs. RezErect is co-curated by Haida Artist Gwaai Edenshaw and Curator/Programmer, Kwiaahwah Jones. What is more revealing than the sexual content of the exhibit, is the surprise with which it was publicly received. Norman Vorano, a curator of contemporary Inuit art explains that erotic passion is central to First Nations traditions, and yet dominant settler culture continually desexualizes or infantilizes Indigenous individuals. Vorano remarks that non-Native cultures “think of the Latin lover, the French lover, the Italian lover, and so on. You never hear about the studly Salish lover or witness sly knowing glances when mentioning the Naskapi lover or shudder at breathless sighs brought on by the thought of an Ojibway lover” (2-3).

The erasure or denial of Indigenous sexuality and gender roles is one of the most pervasive ways the Canadian colonial state exerts hetero-patriarchal control over Indigenous bodies and identities. This dismissal began as early as the first moments of settler colonization, as the Church forced Indigenous communities to forsake their traditional beliefs and abide by Judeo-Christian standards of ‘purity’. Vorano explains that “having prevailed upon Inuit to forsake their traditional beliefs and adopt the laws of God, the priests pushed many of the sexually charged or overly salacious (according to Judeo-Christian standards) folk tales underground” (132). The repression of erotic expressions reflects a deeper necessity to control Native configurations of gender and sexuality in order to assure their total domination in the process of colonization. While indigenous traditional understandings of gender and sexuality are as diverse as the nations that populate Canada, they share the fact that they have been oppressed and erased by settler society. In this way, non-heteronormative practices, which we will discuss later, were entirely written out of history because they were at odds with the colonial order. This process becomes visible through the examination of contemporary Native erotic art, which explicitly challenge such forms of denial.

The body is a site of cultural and political power; a battlefield where dominant forces impose their grip, as many Foucauldian gender academics have theorized.
The violence perpetrated against Indigenous women since the first moments of colonial contact is the foundation upon which colonialism operates through division and oppression. Today in Canada, the troubling number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women, and its lack of coverage in mainstream media, reveals that colonization continues to unfold because of and through patriarchy. Indeed, the Native Womens Association of Canada has gathered information about 582 cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, 67% of which are murder cases. (Their website explains that “most of the cases in the database are from the last 10 years, but there are likely older cases”).

Furthermore, Indigenous Two-Spirit individuals who approach gender with more fluidity than the European male/female binaries allow, are also systematically targeted by Settler power. Prior to colonization, many Indigenous communities honored the individuals now referred to as ‘Two-Spirit’ as fully accepted and even sacred members of society. Yet historically, they have been the object of specific genocide and brutal denigration. Today, as objects of violence extending to sexual abuse and extreme police brutality, Two-Spirit individuals are made to be ‘other’ and inferior by a system which relies on the division and oppression of communities through gender roles and binaries. Yet Indigenous individuals have practiced resilience and resistance to the systematic assault on their bodies and identities.

In this essay, I will observe Two-Spirit and Native feminist critiques, which are woven together in seeing sexism, homophobia and transphobia as colonial tools. I will show the ways in which Inuit feminist artist Annie Pootoogook’s erotic drawings and Kent Monkman’s reclamation of Two-Spirit identification through performance, participate in the decolonization of Indigenous bodies. I will be drawing from various sources in gender and postcolonial studies.

The forces of hetero-normativity and patriarchy are intrinsic to the process of colonization. In hir\textsuperscript{1} essay, “Doubleweaving Two-Spirit Critiques: Building Alliances between Native and Queer Studies”, Qwo-Li Driskill (Cherokee) explains that “homophobia, transphobia, and misogyny are part of colonial projects intent on murdering, removing, and marginalizing Native bodies and nations” (84). Indeed, it was necessary for colonial forces to divide solid populations in order to conquer them. This was accomplished, for example, through the implementation of laws and hir\textsuperscript{1} Driskill refers to hirself with the gender-neutral pronoun “hir” in this article. Throughout the essay I have chosen the use of gender neutral pronouns (they/them/their) in order to avoid misgendering authors.
policies such as the Indian Act, as well as through the perpetuation of Christianity’s implicit patriarchy in the residential school system.

The power of women in their own communities had to be repressed and undermined in order for colonialism to be successful on this new continent. In many ways, the cultural power of women posed a bigger threat to colonialism than the male warriors whom it sufficed to kill. A community grounded in mutual respect and inclusivity is much stronger than one where half the population responds to the other. Along with assimilation to European ways of life, “these measures served to transfer political and economic power to Native males, who today comprise the majority of band chiefs and councilors, as well as businessmen and professionals” as explained in the Zig-Zag zine entitled “Colonization and Decolonization”. Indeed, patriarchy was internalized over several generations by Native communities that had traditionally practiced gender complimentarity in the division of responsibility and recognition within the community.

Diversity in the gender spectrum was strongly impacted when the Canadian state alongside the Christian Church institutionalized a male/female binary as the norm. Driskill cites feminist activist Andrea Smith, who explains that the “U.S. [and we could chose to extend the analysis to Canada] empire has always been reified by enforced heterosexuality and binary gender systems. By contrast, Native societies were not necessarily structured through binary gender systems. Rather, some of these societies had multiple genders and people did not fit rigidly into particular gender categories. Thus, it is not surprising that the first peoples targeted for destruction in Native communities were those who did not fit into Western gender categories” (Smith cited in Driskill, 84).

The individuals Smith is speaking of would today be referred to as Two-Spirit individuals. The pan-Indigenous term is practically brand new, coined for the English language in 1990 at the third annual spiritual gathering of gay and lesbian Native people, as an alternative to previously used derogatory terms. Driskill argues that “Two-Spirit” is an umbrella term for the plethora of gender self-identifications used by Native GLBTQ people, “as well as a term for people who use words and concepts from their specific traditions to define themselves” outside of their communities (72). It is indeed important to recognize the heterogeneity of “Two Spirit” identity and its specificity to different communities and individuals. The term operates in a similar way to the term “queer,” which is sometimes criticized for being inclusive to the point that it erases difference. But both terms are intentionally ambiguous and fluid, adaptable to each individual’s experience. Two-Spirit identification today can
hold political importance for individuals and communities who want to reengage with the history of gender of their tradition. Kent Monkman, for example, is an artist of Cree ancestry who explores his Two-Spirit identity in performance as a way to overturn historical erasures and impositions. In doing so, they engage with issues of sexuality and the erotic.

The choice to focus on erotic subjects is a very meaningful and political one. The historical backdrop is of the longstanding oppression of Native women through sexual abuse, sexual trade, and other forms of physical assault. It is a background of psychological abuse endured during or after the residential school era, and the repression of the Native body as inferior to the white one. It is the aforementioned shocking cases of the disappearance or murder of nearly 600 Indigenous women. Furthermore, it is the hyper-sexualization of the Native female body in white iconography which participates in excusing and explaining such sexual exploitation. In this context, Native female eroticism is a vulnerable place but a but powerful one for political and artistic creation.

Before continuing, let us take a moment to define what is meant by “decolonization.” I agree with Driskill that instead of designating any finite or fixed goal, the term can be used to describe an active and ongoing process of radical resistance against colonialism: past, present and future. This includes “struggles for land re-dress, self-determination, healing historical trauma, cultural continuance, and reconciliation” (69). While resistance is crucial to Indigenous struggle, it is possible only when paired with resilience and endurance, with people’s ability to spring back from oppression. As Driskill mentions, healing historical trauma, both on an individual scale and on the level of the community, is an integral part of building such resilience, which we will explore through the art of Annie Pootoogook.

Pootoogook is an Inuit artist who rose to critical recognition in the early 2000s. Their art is very much a part of the Inuit contemporary tradition, and simultaneously very different from it. Inuit art history differs from that of other First Nations, because the history of Arctic colonization unfolded later, more slowly, and in a form that reflected the isolation of Inuit communities. The federal government has been involved in the sponsorship of art co-ops in the North and in the marketing of the products made using these resources. The work encouraged was of “authentic” Inuit art, sold to a primarily non-Inuit audience in the south and overseas. This included drawing, which only required cheap materials to be sent up to an isolated economy. With this background, Pootoogook works with crayons and ink on paper, but challenges the colonial conception of Inuit “authenticity”.

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Pootoogook’s drawings depict moments of pain, pleasure, and the simple banality of daily life in the North. They represent the line-up for the ATM machine at the Co-op store, watching television and other moments of mundane activity, alongside moments of intimacy such as their experience with spousal abuse, or the loss of their mother. Combining the erotic and the banal brings continuity to representations of identity that are often simplified and essentialized in the south. By illustrating a multi-faceted and complex experience that breaks from the mainstream stereotypes of contemporary Inuit life, Pootoogook’s art builds resilience from the ‘inside’ instead of resistance in opposition to something on the ‘outside’. In the representation of erotic scenes, the artist builds resilience in the healing of historical trauma against Native women: the scenes represent intimate moments of pleasure, in which the woman is in control of their sexuality.

In Making Love (fig. 1), Pootoogook focuses on female sexual pleasure. Both characters seem engaged, but the woman is the actant while the man is the receiver/observer: the female character is in movement, while the man is laying down. Both seem to experience pleasure, but the free movement of raising their arms points to the woman’s comfort and sexual fulfillment in the moment. This piece provides a counterpart to the violence inflicted by men on women. While other pieces highlight moments of domestic abuse, this one consists in an affirmation of continuity which includes partnership and female emancipation.

In another piece, Woman Masturbating (fig. 2), female sexual agency is similarly explored, this time without the presence of a man. The drawing is not framed within the walls of a room, in the way that other pieces are. Man Abusing his Partner (fig. 3), for example, shows a woman being cornered into the angle of a room without the possibility of escape from the moment of domestic violence. In Woman Masturbating (fig. 2), there are no walls, no limits framing the character’s experience of pure self-eroticism.

Both of these pieces are preceded in time by Erotic Scene - 4 Figures (fig. 4) in which female pleasure is again made evident and expressive. Within the mundane living room, four characters are making love, foregrounding a woman receiving oral sex. The two female characters are in control, which is a hugely symbolic and an almost revolutionary change in representation of female erotic. These erotic pieces show that while women may have been sexually abused by white colonizers or males of the community having internalized the patriarchal order, Indigenous females also continue to claim great power in their body.

The role erotic art plays in the healing of historical trauma is foregrounded
in the RezErect exhibit mentioned previously. In an interview with the Huffington Post, co-curator Gwaai Edenshaw explains that “when we talk about native sexuality, it’s usually to do with missing women or residential school survivors. I think that those are all important elements of our being, but they’re just not the only element.” In this sense, the works consist in proof of the resilience of Indigenous people in the full ownership of their bodies and sexualities, even through historical trauma and ongoing abuse.

Erotic Indigenous art also plays a great part in active resistance to colonization. Kerry Swanson, in their article “The Noble Savage Was a Drag Queen” explains, as we have seen earlier, that “prior to colonization, queer identity... was widely accepted among many different North American tribes, although this fact has been virtually eliminated from historical renderings of the period” (566). They continue: “through humorous and provoking interventions, [Kent] Monkman reclaims that history and ... insists on the existence and continued survival of queer Native identities” (566).

In their single-channel video entitled Dance to Miss Chief (fig. 5), Kent Monkman interacts with (and disrupts) a 1960s film based on Karl May’s 1893 novel Winnetou. May’s novel features a fictional character, native to the American West (where May had never been), who embodies all the stereotypes created by Europeans regarding Native life. The cast of the film version is entirely German, consisting of white actors dressed in redface. Monkman portrays their alter-ego Miss Chief Eagle Testicle, who enters into an onscreen love affair with Winnetou. In many other examples, she seduces white colonizers or gets them drunk before sexually taking advantage of them. Monkman maintains a remix of dancers moving throughout the film, doing typical ‘war dances’.

Miss Chief exemplifies a practice of parodic performance through the “trickster figure,” central to storytelling and spirituality in many Native cultures. The trickster figure often acts as a revealer of the falsity in assumed truths. Here, Miss Chief indigenizes the narrative recorded by white history. She queers it, making a place for herself, “a place that previously did not exist in the history books” (Swanson 572). She sexualizes it, and creates an erotic atmosphere for the piece, without explicit acts of sex being represented. It is important to remember that within Two-Spirit identity, sexuality and gender are not one and the same. Driskill criticizes the non-Native term “queer” for too often referring to “sexualized practices and identities. Two-Spirit, on the other hand, places gendered identities and experiences at the center of discussion” (73). Here Monkman challenges the colonial constructions of both gender and of sexuality, as well as their recording in ‘history.’ By offering up
an alternative to the colonial imposition of gender binaries, Monkman reclaims an identity that has been erased and oppressed. Furthermore, by engaging in sexual and erotic suggestions, they challenge the denial of Native sexualities.

Indigenous erotic art challenges the historical erasure of Indigenous sexuality and gender roles, which participate in one of the most pervasive forms of colonial control exerted over Indigenous bodies and identities. The interconnectedness of hetero-normativity, patriarchy and colonization is undeniable, and many Native people have found sexuality to be a productive and powerful place to challenge the limits imposed on their bodies and identities. Artists such as Annie Pootoogook and Kent Monkman engage in acts of resilience and resistance to colonial control through empowering explorations of the erotic. While alliances between non-Native feminists or genderqueers and Native women or Two-Spirit individuals is powerful, beautiful and necessary, it is important to recognize the specificity of the Indigenous struggle. Indeed, prior to colonization, most Native communities knew a time where gender equality and fluidity was the norm, whereas European descendants never have. This implies different approaches to the fight against oppression. Furthermore, the struggle for decolonization extends beyond the realm of gender, and therefore queer or feminist partnership must involve a long-term commitment to Indigenous sovereignty over land and water. Without fetishizing a pre-colonial utopian past, non-Natives can (and must) ally with Indigenous communities in the deconstruction of colonial, hetero-normative and patriarchal oppression.


Appendix:

Fig. 1 Annie Pootoogook, *Making Love*, 2003-2004, pencil crayon and ink on paper.

Fig. 2 Annie Pootoogook, *(Composition)* *Woman Masturbating*, 2003-2004, pencil crayon and ink on paper.
Fig. 3 Annie Pootoogook, *Man Abusing his Partner*, 2002, pencil crayon and ink on paper.

Fig. 4 Annie Pootoogook, *Erotic Scene - 4 Figures*, 2001, pencil crayon and ink on paper.
Fig. 5 Kent Monkman, *Dance to Miss Chief*, 2010, single-channel video.
Negotiating Community

Multiculturalism and Intercultural Responsibilities in the Musée des maitres et des artisans du Québec

Jelena Stankovic
The increasingly globalised world has affected every sector of human activity, from economics and politics to culture. With the increasing ease of movement, more and more people are becoming minority citizens and tourists. This rise in multiculturalism, along with the legacy of a colonial past on which museums were formed, has forced museums to reckon with their responsibilities in a multivocal society. The purpose and public perception of museums has undergone many changes and re-conceptualisations. Critics like George F. MacDonald, Stephen Alsford, and Sheila Watson, among others, have commented on the changing attitudes of communities towards museums and vice versa. Indeed, as a consequence of rising multiculturalism and the resulting need for intercultural communication, “a museum is no longer only measured by its internal possessions such as collections, endowments, staff and facilities, but by an external consideration for the benefits it provides to the individuals and communities it seeks to serve” (Watson, “Museums” 1). Museums are increasingly expected to serve the community, not only enforce a totalising narrative or painstakingly preserve artefacts.

The Musée des maitres et artisans du Québec (MMAQ), located in the extremely multicultural Saint-Laurent borough of Montreal, is an example of a contemporary museum which is “attempts to challenge dominant views of the museum as a site of power relations” by invoking and encouraging “new relations between museums and communities” (Witcomb 133). Part of the MMAQ’s mission is to give a “place to the artistic and craft expressions of the different cultural communities that are part of its local population and reflect the image of Canada” (“Our Mission”). The museum displays and preserves artisanal products and materials, such as beds, tools, tables, etc. Although mainly French-Canadian in origin, these artefacts have a practical use, so they are not fundamentally embedded in regional understanding or educational background. The nature of these objects creates the potential for easier cross-cultural identification. Furthermore, the location and venue of the museum allow for a unique community-oriented experience, using educational programs and special exhibitions to facilitate intercultural engagement. Looking at the MMAQ’s multicultural mandate, the actual execution of this mandate (through permanent and temporary exhibitions), and the limitations of this execution provides an illustration of the changing relationship between museums and communities. The MMAQ has
the potential to include many voices; however, it struggles to create a lasting sense of intercultural cohesion and inclusiveness. The efforts to create an intercultural community in the museum remain difficult because the museum professionals and the different ethnic groups in the neighbourhood have varying responsibilities and obligations when it comes to exhibiting in and using the museum space.

The history of the Musée des maîtres et artisans du Québec is crucial to understanding its intercultural mandate. The museum is housed in what was originally an 1867 Scottish Presbyterian church in downtown Montreal. However, in 1930, when the Canadian National railroad company decided to build Bonaventure station, “they expropriated numerous land owners and the St. Paul church was scheduled for demolition” (Desrochers). The church was saved and moved to St. Laurent College by its Fathers of St. Croix, who needed a new chapel for the growing student attendance at mass (Desrochers). The building itself combines elements from Presbyterian and Catholic traditions, symbolically bringing together two cultures within the physical space. After the secularisation of the CÉGEP in 1968, Gérard Lavallée, an art teacher at the college, turned the chapel into the Musée d’art de Saint-Laurent which opened in 1979 (Desrochers). The Musée d’art de Saint-Laurent was meant to be a counterpoint to the McCord, that is, a cultural history museum; however, this re-incarnation of the museum did not last (Museum Guide, Interview). Here, the distinction between “essentialist” and “non-essentialist” identity is a useful way of understanding the subtle way in which the Musée d’art de Saint-Laurent became the Musée des maîtres et artisans du Québec, and how it now attempts to embody a “non-essentialist” function. Sheila Watson defines essentialist identity, which includes most national goals, as “immutable and rooted in a version of an uncontested past” (“Introduction” 269). On the other side of the dichotomy, Watson defines non-essentialist identity as fluid and changing in response to social factors (270). For the MMAQ, the need to engage in a non-essentialist model became necessary due to its new location.

Because it is located far from the downtown core, the MMAQ has a hard time attracting tourists. The bilingualism throughout the museum positions it as a touristic destination, but the vast majority of the patrons are locals (Museum Guide), most of them immigrants or first generation citizens. The Director rightly remarks that if the museum were located in the city centre, 70% of the clientele would be tourists and the local community would not have the same importance. The population in the Saint-Laurent borough is, at last count, more than 51% New Immigrant based. In addition to the Canadian-born children, between 85-90% of the
population is not Quebecois (Director, Interview). As the Director and Conservator say, diversity is ultimately not a choice, but an everyday reality.¹

Although the example of Saint-Laurent is extreme, the museological challenges of multiculturalism are ubiquitous in Canada. In their article, “Canadian Museums and the Representation of Culture in a Multicultural Nation,” MacDonald and Alsford note that postmodernism places the museum’s authority “under challenge, as is the whole issue of who defines culture,” because cultural pluralism makes it difficult to define culture as a coherent whole (276). Moreover, Susan Ashley observes that the Canadian Museums Association encourages its members to “fundamentally question their values, assumptions and purpose in society, and to consider the inclusion of more diverse voices in all aspects of museum practice” (497). Thus, many museums have moved away from the conception of all-encompassing identity into a more inclusive model which strives to find “a workable expression of multiculturalism while at the same time preserving national unity” (MacDonald 287). In this aspect, the MMAQ is no exception. the Director notes that “selon notre mission et qu’en matière d’objets faits main (artisanat et métiers d’art) notre prétention est nationale et que cette prétention induit un certain espoir de voir les touristes (internes comme externes) affluer ici” (Interview). The struggle between maintaining an essentialist narrative that appeals to tourists and introducing a non-essentialist model is inherently connected to how the museum engages with and responds to the community.

One of the more important issues that museums face today is the question of engaging in intercultural discourse with the community; therefore, it is vital to consider the idea of community at greater length. According to Watson, the concept of community is “the sense of belonging that comes to those who are part of it” and is thus relational and necessarily self-determined (3). Watson presents Rhiannon Mason’s six ways that communities are defined: shared historical or cultural experiences; their specialist knowledge; demographic and socio-economic factors; identities (e.g., national, regional, local, sexuality, age.); their visiting practices; and exclusion from other communities (“Museums” 4).² This wide-ranging definition consciously problematises the idea of a grand narrative by showing the variety

¹ All interview citations have been cited directly from the Director and Conservator, or paraphrased by me from the French. The citations from a Museum Guide have all been paraphrased from a personal interview, which I noted. All following quotations are from the interviews which I have conducted. Please see Appendix 2.

of distinctions among people in the interpretive community. In a community as multicultural as Saint-Laurent, it is not far-fetched to assume that many people see their community as a hybrid, which can create a disinclination towards totalising narratives. One way for museums to navigate multicultural identity is through MacDonald and Alsford’s idea of intercultural understanding, defined as “the ability to entertain diverse alternate viewpoints, to tolerate difference and dissonance, [and] to accept that all cultures are valid expressions of their temporal and spatial contexts” (287). MacDonald and Alsford hold a very optimistic view of the problem of representing culture in Canada by suggesting three “models of cooperation” for museums and cultural minorities: a project-by-project approach for creating special events; community consultation during the “curating” process; and, finally, co-curatorship (285). While these models of cooperation are easily theorised, it is less certain whether these museum/minority interactions translate to wider intercultural engagement. Intercultural understanding at the MMAQ depends largely on how effective the museum is at moving from a monolithic definition of cultural community to a more diverse sense of community based on shared specialised knowledge, identity categories, and visitor patterns. The first task is to look at how the museum navigates through these various identities and how it fulfils its multicultural mandate. After that, I will examine exclusion from other communities as a problematic point in the MMAQ.

As previously mentioned, the Musée des maîtres et artisans du Québec presents a homogenous Québécois narrative, due mainly to the nature of the collection, which is made up almost entirely of French-Canadian artefacts (Museum Guide). Yet the museum’s patronage includes, among many others, Haitians, Armenians, Lebanese, Iraqis, Chinese, Japanese, Ukrainians, and Bulgarians (Director). The permanent collection in itself does not showcase this multiculturalism. Museum professionals instead work to fulfil their multicultural mandate through the placement of artefacts in the museum. The artefacts are arranged according to trade and not embedded within a progressive narrative as artisanal crafts typically are in a historical museum. Along with the finished products, there are also tools and raw materials, whose uses are explained in pamphlets. Furthermore, the religious artefacts are decentralised and kept to the sides of the building. The religious works are juxtaposed with tools (See Appendix 1) which presents them as man-made

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3 The idea of interpretive community is put forth by Watson, in light of Witcomb’s article. Different interpretive communities are groups of people who approach the museum with “different conceptual frameworks” from others, especially museum professionals (Watson 4).
crafts, not divine objects. Thus the logic of the exposition privileges the process of creating cultural objects and helps dismantle the feeling of an essentialist French-Canadian identity to some degree.

The decentralisation of a grand narrative continues in the tours and workshops that are based on themes (Museum Guide). In addition to more typical tours such as “Life in New France,” there is a series of workshop tours called “Science of the Artisans,” offered for ceramics, metals, textile, and wood (“Cultural and Educational Programs”). These programs encourage thinking about objects in terms of their composition and purpose, not their nationalistic symbolism. This approach to understanding the artefacts encourages visitors to figure out how objects were made and used. Tours allow visitors to experience the museum, not as outsiders to the Quebecois identity, but as craftsmen or specialists, for example. The subversion of a grand narrative creates a less patronising exhibition: a goldsmith is an authority on precious metals whether s/he is French-Canadian or Iranian.

The MMAQ further fulfils its multicultural responsibility through the Francisation program, immigrant support programs, and temporary exhibitions. The museum’s successes in engaging its community come primarily from the Director’s personal efforts (Museum Guide). Being part of the Comité des organismes sociaux de Saint-Laurent, the Director stays informed about, and proposes, projects and cultural activities in the community. He meets with community members through the context of art first and foremost, which allows for people of different cultures to meet on an equal footing, especially with artisanal work. One of these partnerships is with the Saint-Laurent College’s Francisation program, which helps new immigrants integrate into Quebec culture. The college uses the museum’s collection to explain French expressions, such as using the religious artefacts to explain the unique nature of Quebec swearing (Museum Guide). This allows people to create links between tangible objects and expressions, which can help create solid links between their own culture and Quebec culture. However, these interactions are not just a one-way conversation. The immigrant-assistance organisation CARI St-Laurent partners with the MMAQ through a program designed to help immigrant artists navigate through their new society. The immigrant artist is paired, through the museum, with a Quebec born, but not necessarily French-Canadian, artist who works with

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4 Offered by Saint-Laurent College: «Les cours de français langue seconde à temps plein s’adressent aux immigrants admis au Canada depuis moins de cinq ans» («Francisation»)

5 The director of CARI Saint-Laurent describes the program: «CARI St-Laurent vous propose une grande gamme d’activités pour vous aider à créer de nouveaux réseaux et à participer pleinement à une société québécoise pluraliste» (Guendafa).
the same medium to help them make contacts in the community (Museum Guide). During these interactions, there is a two-way flow of influence. The immigrant artists are able to learn about the culture they are entering, while the local artists get exposure to their increasingly multicultural community. In this way, the MMAQ succeeds in two areas that Witcomb identifies as essential to the relations between museums and communities: giving communities “an opportunity to promote themselves,” and engaging with “cultural production as well as representation” (133-136). The MMAQ creates many opportunities for communities through accessible workshops and physical space.

The MMAQ also fulfils some of its responsibilities to encourage self-representation by providing accessible space for exhibitions. Though it prioritizes arts and craft exhibitions, the MMAQ is open to all proposals, and works with the community to create exhibitions through a bottom-up method (Director). The Director states: “Nous acceptons les projets tels qu’ils sont, en ne faisant aucune censure et en les aidant à résoudre les problèmes techniques associés à la préparation d’une exposition. Nous tenons à être des facilitateurs.” The MMAQ goes beyond MacDonald and Alsford’s models of cooperation (project-by-project events, community consultation, co-curatorship), by allowing communities free-reign to represent themselves. The museum facilitates this self-representation by providing free exhibition space and a technical crew (Director). There are, however, some drawbacks to this method of engagement.

One of the main issues is that the exhibitions remain temporary. In this way the MMAQ, perhaps inadvertently, excludes certain communities from one another. The Director has an optimistic view of the intercultural engagement in the museum, saying, “Nous avons au fil des ans bâti un réseau de contacts diversifiés et plusieurs personnes assistent à presque tous nos vernissages, peu importe la communauté mise en vedette.” While positive, these connections are not extensive. Both the Director and Museum Guide note that there are few new visitors to the special exhibits. This limits intercultural engagement to those patrons who seek out information about other cultures and does not create more widespread intercultural dialogue. One major factor contributing to this cultural exclusion is the lack of a communications department. The individual communities (for example ethnic groups or CEGEP groups) have the responsibility of advertising the event (Museum Guide); thus, the publicity tends to remain within the community organising the event. On one hand, the groups have access to a free space, and free reign in terms of content. On the other hand, the lack of a communications budget creates somewhat
insular special events. In a way, the museum passes off its responsibility to represent multiculturalism to the patrons themselves.

Despite efforts to engage its multicultural community, Musée des maîtres et artisans du Québec does not redefine culture in its permanent collection. The museum is fundamentally divided in how the museum professionals view their intercultural engagement and how a tourist or other outsider experiences intercultural engagement at the museum. This experience is vital because it indicates the depth and acknowledgement of inclusion in the museum. It is impossible to determine the museum’s success level in fostering intercultural understanding between specific groups without speaking with the communities who use the space; however, as this is beyond the scope of this paper, I will turn to an equally important question of how a community outsider perceives the level of multiculturalism in the museum. During my visits, I was only able to learn about the museum’s intercultural objectives through interviews with museum staff. This was mainly due to the essentialist narrative that is still present in the permanent collection, as previously mentioned. In order to establish a more stable intercultural experience in a museum it is important to move past workshop-like engagement towards more institutionalised engagement, such as including members of minority communities in permanent exhibits and the staff. Through observations and discussions with museum insiders, I have identified several key reasons for the pervading essentialist narrative in the institution: funding obligations, low institutionalisation of intercultural dialogue, and the limitations of the mission statement. These issues show the limitations of the MMAQ as an intercultural institution.

While the MMAQ does a lot to establish a sense of inclusion, it invariably contends with various limitations as an institution, including its obligations to funders. Witcomb observes that local museums need to be wary of accepting grants because they also make the choice to reform and “become part of a governmentalized public culture” (153), meaning that their responsibilities for creating or presenting a public culture become informed by government bodies and usually for a specific political effect. The MMAQ runs this risk as well, as the Director notes:

près de la moitié de notre budget vient de subventions gouvernementales, il est certain que nous avons donc des responsabilités envers la population qui fournit ces fonds par les impôts et les taxes. Généralement, ces responsabilités sont... le collectionnement et la préservation des marqueurs patrimoniaux, la recherche et la diffusion (expositions et catalogues) et
l'éducation (programmes scolaires).

This form of “funder fidelity” to the government makes it difficult for museums to engage at the level of humanist activism in the local community because it becomes difficult to put this form of engagement in the mission statement (Director). The government’s priority of preserving “des marqueurs patrimoniaux” raises the question of whether the MMAQ sees more responsibility towards the government or the community. Indeed, the educational side of the museum that focuses on multiculturalism consists mainly of the tours and workshops that focus on “integrating immigrants” into the Quebec culture. While allowing communities to create their own special events is positive, it also dismisses the museum’s responsibility for fostering a lasting, more institutionalised intercultural dialogue.

It is apparent that interculturalism is not institutionalised in the MMAQ. The Director claims that it is up to each museum and its professional staff to define “comment eux perçoivent leur engagement, comment ils définissent ce qu’ils veulent apporter à la société.” The responsibility of intercultural community engagement at the discretion of the individual directors and curators threatens long-term intercultural engagement and acknowledgement. The MMAQ lacks a detailed mandate on how the museum should interact with the community and how it should grow to include more voices in the permanent exhibit. Neither the Director nor the Museum Guide see a problem in the way that intercultural engagement occurs in the museum; therefore, it is vital to consider how outsiders view the collection and exhibitions. Multiculturalism remains unapparent if the outsider does not happen to enter during a particular function. In fact, the two temporary exhibitions that I saw were the Projets carré rouge, which showed a univocal and mainly French-Canadian perspective on the student protests, and The New Art of the Loom, an international exhibition. Temporary exhibitions are limited in that they do not present a complete picture of how the museum functions; however, this does not excuse the lack of overt multicultural acknowledgement (See Appendix 2 for Projets carré rouge exhibition review).

Watson highlights several involvement principles that should be followed when engaging with diverse communities, the most pertinent here being: the need for “a wider range of ways in which people can participate... creating some

6 Note: The upcoming exhibition, Qui sommes-nous, would be an interesting counter-point to the two mentioned exhibitions and a point for further study on the success of the MMAQ’s intercultural mandate. It is an exhibit exploring the question of identity, specifically through engaging with multiple ethnic groups.
community ownership and control;” the need for “partnership working and resourcing participation at all stages of the process and the need for recognition of long-term involvement;” and “the need for clarity and recognition of influence” (17). In terms of policy and the personnel’s goals, the MMAQ fulfils the first principle through hands-on workshops, temporary exhibits, tours, school visits, etc. However, the MMAQ needs to improve the latter two principles in order to establish a truly multicultural museum. The entire museum staff is French-Canadian (Museum Guide) and the permanent exhibit is composed almost entirely of French-Canadian artefacts, which in a way undermines some of the efforts that the museum personnel puts into creating a space for multiculturalism.

Navigating multicultural identity is no easy task for an institution like the museum, which must work to please its funders, its community, and museum professionals, all the while contending with tight budgets and the physical limitations of space. Indeed, for a museum to change, the notion of what role museums play in society must change as well. Furthermore, society must embrace wider definitions of community. The Musée des maîtres et artisans du Québec is faced with a difficult task when it comes to intercultural dialogue because of its location, which is so diverse that it becomes difficult to represent all groups equally. One possible solution is to acknowledge multiculturalism by inserting more voices into the exhibits. This could be achieved by including examples of similarities and differences that people in other local cultural communities perceive between the objects in the museum and comparable ones in their cultures. Another change would be for the MMAQ to become more involved with the publicity for special events and to consciously bring together multiple groups, both as patrons and as staff. There is evidence of the museum moving in this direction with exhibitions such as Our Cultures, Our Wealth during the Montreal Museums Day and the launch of the “Action Week Against Racism,” both of which included several communities coming together on the basis of culture and art (Director). These changes are slow and difficult, however, because of the government funding, the tradition of the museum, and the artefacts that are available. The MMAQ is an example of a museum that succeeds in engaging a multicultural community but faces the struggles that come with re-thinking the responsibilities they have towards, not just a local, but a multivocal community.

7 Watson takes these principles from the Yorkshire Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (Watson 17).
The juxtaposition of the tools and religious sculptures emphasises the human craft behind typically scared items. This choice of display shows the process of creating cultural items, which is furthered by the explanatory booklets that accompany the majority of exhibitions.
Appendix 2
Politics Just Might Be Woven From Fabric:

Projets carré rouge Exhibition Review

The Projets carré rouge exhibition at the Musée des maîtres et artisans du Québec is an exhibition which, as the Director writes in the introduction, “veut rendre hommage à la créativité, à l’engagement et au travail de centaines de jeunes.” The visiting curator, Eveline Martin-Archambault says that the “Printemps érable” movement “a suscité un fort élan créatif,” whose trace should be preserved (57). These claims fit with the museum’s mission which “is to promote the ingenuity of creators of hand-made objects in Quebec.” The MMAQ is also concerned with “the accessibility of information” and acting as “an important educational institution that reaches schools and students” (“Our Mission”). The tone presented by the exposition coordinators suggests that the documentation and contextualisation of the artefacts from the student movement is the main priority. However, the singular narrative thread in the Projets carré rouge and the uni-lingual French material sacrifices a unique opportunity to educate a wider public; instead, the curator opts for a somewhat celebratory tone which only re-enforces the sentiments of the exhibit for a limited group of people.

The exhibition is interactive in a literal and symbolic way. Walking into the MMAQ, the visitor finds a trail of red squares leading them to the exhibition hall. There is an area designated for sitting and reading material and pamphlets related to the student movement and the politics behind the demonstrations. There is also an exhibit which features a television playing an instructional video for a protest dance, with a red square on the ground from which people follow the video. The symbolic interaction in the exhibition comes from the curatorial choice to use imperative verbs throughout: Concrétisez, Participez, Circulez, Préformez, Détournez, Casserolez! These choices create an interesting exhibition, emphasising the sense of action and urgency around the student demonstrations, as well as the idea of self- and peer-education. The motif of “cut and paste” is carried through the whole exhibition, suggesting the importance of involvement; however, it also implies a formula that is to be followed. Each part of the exhibit is introduced with step-by-step “instructions,” explaining how to make the artefacts. This playful display re-instates the MMAQ’s “artistic objectives [which] are to increase awareness of traditional crafts and crafting practices, as well as contemporary crafts and contemporary art” (“Our Mission”) by

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8Exhibition runs from June 27 to October 13, 2013. Musée des maîtres et artisans du Québec will henceforth be referred to as MMAQ.
emphasising the “hand-made” qualities. While the choice of motif is and engaging, the exhibition runs into several problems regarding accessibility. The major obstacle is Martin-Archambault’s decision to make all of the labels and available texts only in French.

The labels at the Musée des Maîtres et Artisans du Québec are bilingual, as is the website – including the description of the Projets Carré Rouge exhibition. I was expecting, therefore, that the exhibition would be in both French and English. The exhibition was only in French; while this did not surprise me, it was a frustrating reality. While the MMAQ’s mission claims a strong educative component, this particular exhibition passes up a viable opportunity to educate a wider public about the reality of the student protests. The “pamphlet exhibit” (Appendix 1) was only in French, thus limiting the type of people who could read the details. Another major part of the MMAQ’s mission is to give “a large place to the artistic and craft expressions of the different cultural communities that are a part of its local population and reflect the image of Canada” (“Our Mission”). This is tied closely to the idea of a locally- and educationally-oriented museum. While the Projets Carré Rouge fits into this scheme, it does so in a shallow way. Through the choice of language and the exclusion of varying stances on the student movement, the exhibition aims to satisfy an audience that is already aware of what the student movement entailed. The tone of the exhibition begins to feel celebratory.

The location of the exhibition also contributes to the somewhat celebratory tone of the exhibition. The Director writes in the catalogue, “Il faut savoir que le musée se situe dans l’ancienne chapelle du Cégep de St-Laurent et que nous étions donc aux premières loges pour suivre l’évolution du mouvement, les étudiants de Saint-Laurent étant toujours dans les premiers a se jeter dans l’action” (6). The Director’s justification for placing the exhibition in Saint-Laurent makes sense due to the nature of the MMAQ and the Cégep’s involvement. Yet this same choice limits the exhibition’s ability to reach out to the larger community. The neighbourhood of Saint-Laurent is quite far out of the core of Montreal, which in and of itself limits the diversity of people who come to the museum – very few people outside of the area or who are unfamiliar with the museum will be walking into the exhibition. The symbolism behind the placement of Projets carré rouge in a museum that is set in a church is also difficult to ignore. The church as a symbol of authority as well as civil disobedience in Quebec makes it an interesting choice for an exhibition which is focused on civil disobedience towards an authority.

The Projets carré rouge exhibition is an interesting and engaging look at a very
local, specific aspect of contemporaneous history. The exhibition puts a different face on the student movement than the news reports and sometimes aggressive “boycott” tactics of last year; however, it shies away from being critical and objective, and edges towards the celebratory. As the curator writes in the catalogue, the objects in the exposition “témoignent des moments de solidarité citoyenne et elles saluent l’investissement des manifestants grâce auxquels... la rue et les places publiques du Québec sont devenues des lieux où se pense et se transforme la société” (Martin-Archambault 57). The solidarity and social change that Martin-Archambault refers to was met by opposition, dissent, and critique. These points of view are not acknowledged and this severely limits the educational side of the exhibition. Even though I believe that the exhibition is interesting and valuable, it was a missed opportunity to include those who might have felt excluded during the demonstrations.

NOTE: I contacted the curator of Projets carré rouge exposition, but unfortunately she only answered my email after I finished my review. I asked her why she chose to only include French in the exhibition. Her reply was that it had to do with budget concerns and the fact that it was only a temporary exhibition at the MMAQ. She claims that the clientèle of the MMAQ is mainly Francophone and so is the college around which the exhibition was created. She agreed that the movement was not solely Francophone. I believe that my critique is still valid, as the lack of acknowledgement of other groups and opposing views is not limited by the language of the labels in the exposition. The opportunity for a critical view is still wasted by the use of an overly-celebratory tone.
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