

GOOD MOURNING CANADA?
CANADIAN MILITARY COMMEMORATION AND ITS LOST SUBJECTS

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ABSTRACT

Using the Highway of Heroes as my point of departure, in “Good Mourning Canada? Canadian Military Commemoration and its Lost Subjects” I interrogate the role of Canadian military commemoration in the production of hierarchies of grievability and the construction of nationalist narratives. I argue that military commemoration plays a critical role in the performative constitution of the privileged—and the “lost”—subjects of Canadian nationalism. My investigation looks first at how Canadian military memorial projects operate as a means of interpellating Canada’s citizen populations into a particular kind of settler-nationalism, and second, at how performance might serve as a methodology towards the production of counter-memorials that resist the forgetful narratives of Canadian nationalism.

My methodological approach weaves historical, theoretical, and performance analyses with first-person reflections on three counter-memorial meditations I performed as a method of embodied inquiry and critical engagement. While the reflective remains of *Impact Afghanistan War* are scattered throughout this dissertation, and *Unravel: A meditation on the warp and weft of militarism* and *Flag of Tears* are discussed explicitly in the final chapters, all three counter-memorial meditations inform—and are informed by—the entire project.

Throughout this dissertation I deliberately posit both Canadian military commemoration, and performance, as broadly construed. I investigate repertorial performances of commemoration—like the Highway of Heroes, Remembrance Day ceremonies, and *Impact*—in addition to the archival performances of institutions and objects—like the Canadian War Museum, military fatigues, and *Unravel*’s threaded remains. I also intentionally wander outside the constructed borders of Canadian military commemoration to consider how these memorials disappear the violence of settler-colonialism. I bring popular culture performances of nationalist and counter-nationalist narratives—like the Winter Olympics and Jeff Barnaby’s film, *Rhymes for Young Ghouls*—into conversation with performances overtly linked to the contested terrains of Canadian social memory, like the World War I and II documentary, *The Valour and the Horror*, and Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In bringing this range of performances together under the umbrella of Canadian military commemoration I make visible the larger scenario of Canadian settler nationalism and its sticky “inter(in)animations” with militarism and colonialism.

DEDICATION

To all those whose names I don't know to speak.

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FEELING LUCKY, BEARING WITNESS, AND COLLECTIVE RECKONING



Figure 1. Informational postcard from *Impact Afghanistan War*, a public memorial project I performed from July 1, 2010 through July 1 2011.¹

19 September 2010

Christie Pits Park, Toronto

falls 8,000-8,100

After a couple of days of feeling sorry for myself (because I've been sick), in the middle of today's falls, I was overcome with a feeling of good fortune. The sky was blue. The sun was warm. The day was peaceful. First I thought—I am so lucky to live in peace. Then I wondered—What does luck have to do with peace? Or with war? What does luck have to do with the innumerable, and differentially distributed, acts of violence that haunt our geopolitical landscapes?

¹ I will discuss *Impact Afghanistan War* at greater length in the latter part of my Introduction. The italicized sections of this preface are excerpts of *Impact* blog entries.

*Is the absence of a war being fought here in Canada—or in a broader sense, in North America—a question of luck? How is it even possible that we can simultaneously be "at war" and living in peace? In the context of Canada, this juxtaposition is made plausible by the popular notion that our military engagement in Afghanistan is—if not exactly a “peacekeeping mission”—an act of humanitarian militarism. In the U.S., on the other hand, the rationale for military engagement is framed in terms of a righteous “war on terror.”*²

I'm all for gratitude. I worry, however, about the flip-side of framing good-fortune as "luck." It risks depoliticizing suffering—be it of those living and dying in Afghanistan, or those living and dying as a result of other acts of structurally institutionalized violence—by reducing them to "unlucky" populations. Even more troubling, it contributes to a denial of accountability for both contemporary actions and historic legacies. Indulging the notion of “feeling lucky” depoliticizes privilege—as though it is by the roll of the dice that blessings are bestowed on particular geopolitical constituencies, and denied to others.

Twenty years ago my mother—Antonia—was diagnosed with a heart condition. As I’m sure is true of most people who love someone who has a serious illness, my Mom’s precarious health has instilled a palpable fear of loss into my day-to-day life. When the phone rings late at night, my heart jumps. Mom’s and my partings, as well as my dreams, are often haunted by a kind of anticipatory grief. Ten years after my mom’s diagnosis, my partner’s mother died. Maylie’s

² When I first wrote this, Canada had been at war in Afghanistan for almost a decade. Since then, Canada has joined the U.S. in its air campaign against Libya, and is today once again allied with the U.S. in its military campaign against ISIS (in Iraq and Syria). This ongoing alliance with the U.S. corresponds to a shift in Canadian foreign and military policy away from “peacekeeping” and towards a discourse of justification that relies more on notions of fighting terror than those that foreground humanitarian militarism. Despite this shift however, throughout this dissertation I assert that Canada continues to draw upon its long practice of public military commemoration as an affective smokescreen that shields Canadians from our increasingly aggressive military agenda, and, in a broader sense, supports notions of Canadian national exceptionalism.

death within weeks of being diagnosed with colon cancer came as a shock. At sixty-five, Maylie was a strong healthy woman whose own mother had lived to be ninety-six and had died less than a year earlier. In the weeks following Maylie's death I experienced my grief as a visceral pain combined with an incredulous sense of the impossibility of her non-negotiable absence, and a rage at the audacity of a world that went on obliviously without her.

Prior to my mom's illness and Maylie's death, I had had no intimate experience of either the fear of loss, or of death. Few people in my social sphere of family and friends had died. Those who had were either older—like my grandparents—and their deaths felt a part of an organic cycle, or they were further removed from my life. While it would be convenient to attribute my lack of exposure to death to good fortune, proximity to violence, death, and fear of loss, has a lot less to do with luck than the “lucky” among us might like to think.

12 August 2010

Queen's Park, Toronto

falls 4,100-4,200

Queen's Park was teeming with people and sound—construction, traffic, conversation, laughter, insects, birds. The constancy of my falling was echoed by the constancy of people walking by. Thinking that one reason people haven't stopped to inquire about Impact might be that they are too shy or too polite to approach, I decided to place my informational postcards (fig. 1) on the sidewalk where passersby could easily pick one up without having to either interfere or engage.

No one stopped. No one picked up a postcard. People barely glanced.

I feel shaken. Perhaps more so because a United Nations report released two days ago chronicled a 31% rise in Afghan civilian deaths and injuries in the first half of 2010. The emphasis of Canada's mainstream media coverage of the report was that insurgents are

responsible for the increase in casualties, that despite the rising death toll there was an overall decline in civilian casualties that could be attributed to U.S./NATO forces. Non-western and non-mainstream media sources, as well as Afghan civilian advocacy groups like the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, offer a different perspective. They note that regardless of whom the killings are attributed to, the overall increase in civilian deaths (which includes a disproportionately large rise in the number of child war casualties) corresponds to an increase in the U.S./NATO military presence. Whether intended or not, the message delivered through the mainstream media's coverage of the report seems to be that what matters most are not the dead, but that "we" don't incur blame for their deaths.

Though I'm reluctant to speculate as to the reasons for the (apparent) lack of response from passersby, its resonance with Impact's inquiry has been profound. As I fall over-and-over again and watch people pass by as though nothing is happening, I can't help but imagine how it must be for those who are "falling" in Afghanistan, or for those who are watching as family, friends, and community members "fall." How must it be to witness the unabated death and destruction of people you know and love while simultaneously watching as the world obliviously moves on?

As people walk by, I also see myself. How I too walk by, how I avert my eyes, and the countless rationalizations I have for doing so.

Maylie died just months before 9/11. I was living in the U.S. at the time, and my grief over her death was with me as I joined others in the streets of San Francisco who took part in the massive global struggle to halt the U.S. invasions of first Afghanistan, and then Iraq. When our efforts failed and life returned, for the most part, to business as usual, I fell into a death-obsessed

state of depression. At the core of my visceral encounter with nihilism was despair over the impossible juxtaposition of death experienced intimately, and the abstracted and two-dimensional deaths delivered to us daily through ever farther-reaching, yet more distancing, media.

As a child I don't recall hearing my parents talk about the horrors they witnessed or the losses they experienced growing up in Holland during the Second World War. I later discovered that this was deliberate on their part. They chose to protect us from their memories. I do, however, remember the panic I felt when I saw war movies on television. Today, it is not my aversion to fictionalized portrayals of war that concerns me—it is my (our) inability to feel and express real grief for the millions who die in wars each year. Or for the families of those who are dying in wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, the Congo, Mexico, Syria ... the list goes on and on and on... Or for those who die in the intersecting wars of poverty, racism, and sexual violence that rage within and beyond the constructed borders of privileged nation states like Canada and the U.S.

It is not personal grief that haunts me. It's the absence of collective grieving for the hundreds and thousands of dead we learn of through mainstream and social media accounts. Why don't we pour en masse into the streets? Why don't we wail, tear at our hair, beat at our bared breasts? Have we forgotten the social art of grieving? And have we forgotten that rage is as critical to grief than sorrow? How is it possible that we privilege the fallen few—the named and the recognizable—over the fallen many—the unnamed, the Othered?

These were among the questions that prompted *Impact Afghanistan War*, the public memorial I performed in which I fell one-hundred times a day—each fall in recognition of an Afghan death. *Impact* was my mourning cry, my attempt to reach beyond the numbness

produced by abstract numbers, political debates, and media spectacle. It was also a dialogue with the Highway of Heroes memorials, the highly popular and affectively moving roadside gatherings in honour of Canada's Afghanistan war military casualties. As a public ritual of counter memorialization, *Impact* was a call out to the collective body, an invitation to register the impact of Canada's engagement for those living *in Afghanistan*. In a broader sense, it was an invitation to remember all those whose lives and deaths are cast outside of dominant narratives of Canadian nationalism.

When I started *Impact*, I imagined (or hoped) it would evoke a chorus of grief. But as time went on I began to wonder if the notion of feeling grief might be both improbable and counterproductive. Improbable, because the deaths I sought to bring attention to with *Impact* were not those of people I (or most Canadians) had intimate bonds with. Theirs were deaths for which we had no names, no faces, no personalized narratives. Counterproductive because, as Sherene Razack proposes with her notion of "stealing the pain of others," and Dylan Robinson with his concept of "feeling reconciliation," the grief I sought to evoke was neither "mine" (ours) to feel, nor mine (ours) to "reconcile."

Both my Mom's illness and Maylie's death have compelled me to grieve. This grief is not something I had to learn how to do, or work at. It just was. It afflicted me. It was in my belly. It was in my heart. It was in my tears. It was in my thoughts. It was in my dreams. So I cannot say that either Mom or Maylie—my mothers—taught me how to grieve. What they did teach me, however, may be far more significant. Both women were passionate social justice and anti-war advocates. Each in their own steady ways showed me how to turn toward suffering, how to bear witness, and how to engage—despite ambiguity and regardless of outcome—in the ongoing, and

often aggravating, labour of caring for a world beyond the limiting social horizons of family, identity, or nation.

3 September 2010

Christie Pits Park, Toronto

falls 6,400-6,500

Today, a man took a postcard and read it as he continued on his way. After a moment he stopped, turned and walked purposefully towards me. He stood and witnessed for about twenty falls before offering a small bow and carrying on with his day. His lack of hesitation or embarrassment, his willingness to approach, to see, to bear witness reminded me of an experience I had riding the bus with my mom when I was twelve. A girl, about my age and sitting a few seats away, vomited. My mom's immediate response was to help her. Mine—fueled by embarrassment and a child-like self-consciousness—was less noble. Gazing out of the bus window, I distanced myself from both the girl and my mother.

I wonder, what would happen if more of us responded with unhesitating compassion towards the sick, the falling, and the fallen. If we let it stop us in our tracks, let it have our full attention, even if only for a breath or two or three. As a kid, I assumed my mom's courage to act was something innate to her and my fear innate to me. But several years ago I read a book by Eva Fogelman—Conscience and Courage: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust. In her inquiry into what it was that enabled some people to act on their conscience during the Holocaust, Fogelman identified a willingness to break rules and take risks as a common quality that rescuers shared. She suggests that this explains why there were a disproportionate number of "sneaks, thieves, smugglers, hijackers, blackmailers, and killers" among the rescuers (3). It also explains why so many "moral" citizens did nothing. It seems, it's not enough to feel a sense

of conscience, we need to act on it, and in order to act on our conscience we need to engage in practices that help us develop courage in the face of risk, especially, the courage to act against the status quo, against authority. Impact has become my practice, a way to meet, again, and again, and again my fear of breaking the rules, of disturbing the peace, of evoking people's anger. Through this daily encounter, my courage is being given a chance to catch up to my convictions.

In concert with capitalism's stupefying capacity to spectacularize and commodify suffering, dominant practices of commemoration have made forgetfulness our collective default mode. In the weeks following *Impact's* culminating falls on Canada Day 2011, the absence of falling took on an eerie presence for me. As I walked through parks and public spaces where I'd fallen, I encountered ghostly echoes. Falling haunted my dreams. I grieved *Impact's* passing. Then, after about three weeks, I realized that days had passed without thinking about falling and without reflecting, even in passing, on war and the differential distribution of violence and grievability. As in the aftermath of 9/11, and in the wake of the protests against the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, I was startled at how quickly life could return to its routine of non-attention.

Unlike grief's visceral grip, or the cathartic affect of feeling reconciliation, bearing witness requires a labour of intention and attention. Similarly, social movements that resist geopolitical violence and the power structures through which it operates are rarely

spontaneous—or the result of an individual’s efforts.³ For some who lose loved ones in acts of geopolitical violence—like Argentina’s Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo—their individual grief becomes the impetus for collective political action and resistance. But perhaps the more privileged among us—those who have not lost family, friends, or community members to violence—need to nurture practices that enable us to challenge the limitations in our collective capacity to feel grief for those who are cast outside of dominant frames of memorialization. Perhaps we need to commit to practices with the potential to facilitate sustained critical engagement. Perhaps this is another kind of grief. Unlike the grief that afflicts those who have lost a loved one, or the conclusive catharsis of feeling reconciliation, this is a grief that calls upon a chorus committed to the ongoing labour of resisting narratives of national forgetfulness. A chorus committed to the unsettling labour of collective reckoning.

³ Popular mythology has a tendency to reify the notion of heroic individuals whose spontaneous actions become the catalyst for political movements. The Rosa Parks story is a classic example. Parks is remembered (via narratives taught in school curricula) as an African American woman in Montgomery, Alabama who—tired after a long day of work—refused to give up her bus seat to a white rider. Parks was jailed for her defiance and the Montgomery bus boycott was launched. What’s left out of the story is that in addition to her undeniable courage, Parks was a committed activist who was part of a movement. She was a member of the NAACP and had attended organizer training sessions at the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee. Parks’ actions were part of a larger strategy of resistance. (See Cynthia Kaufman, *Ideas for Action: Relevant Theory for Radical Change*.)

INTRODUCTION

HAUNTINGS



Figure 2. People gathered at a Highway of Heroes memorial, on one of the 26 bridges that line the repatriation route from Trenton to Toronto. Photo from the “True Patriot Love” website.

With the return of Canada’s first Afghanistan War combat fatalities in spring 2002, Canadians began to gather along the 172-kilometre repatriation route between the military base in Trenton, Ontario and Toronto’s coroner’s office.⁴ As each new casualty returned home, the crowds on the roadsides and freeway overpasses of Ontario’s Highway 401 grew. Veterans, police officers, fire fighters, and residents waited—sometimes for hours—in heat and rain, in snow and cold, to pay tribute to the soldiers whose bodies were being transported in the passing motorcades. The Highway of Heroes memorial phenomena garnered extensive positive media

⁴ The Highway of Heroes memorial began in April 2002 when Canada’s first four Afghanistan war fatalities—Sergeant Marc Leger, Corporal Ainsworth Dyer, Private Richard Green, and Private Nathan Smith—were repatriated. Not only were the four soldiers the first Canadian military casualties of the Afghanistan War, their deaths were also attributed to “friendly fire.” While the Canadian soldiers were engaged in a training exercise near Kandahar Air Base in Afghanistan a U.S. fighter jet mistook them for enemy soldiers and dropped a bomb on the area. In addition to the four casualties, eight Canadian soldiers were seriously injured.

attention across Canada (as well as in the U.S.),⁵ led to the official renaming of sections of the repatriation route to the “Highway of Heroes” (2007) and “Route of Heroes” (2010), and has inspired a host of songs, YouTube video tributes, books, and other institutional and popular cultural representations.⁶

I first learned of the Highway of Heroes memorials in 2009 when I returned to Canada after living for twenty-five years in the United States. I was immediately struck by the contrast between Canada’s popular and highly publicized roadside mourning rituals and the U.S.’s ban on media coverage displaying images of the caskets of repatriated U.S. soldiers. Though often attributed to G. W. Bush, the U.S. ban was initiated in 1991 during the Gulf War by the G. H. Bush administration. Rather than actually prohibiting the media from broadcasting or printing images of the flag-draped coffins of U.S. military casualties, the ban provided a mechanism through which Pentagon and U.S. government officials were able to manage the dissemination of such images. On select occasions since the ban’s inception, under both the Clinton and G. W. Bush administrations, media coverage of ceremonies marking the return of U.S. military casualties was not only permitted, but also orchestrated by the Defense Department through the

⁵ An example of U.S. news coverage is the 11 November 2008—Remembrance Day in Canada and Veterans Day in the U.S.—prime time MSNBC news feature story that described the Highway of Heroes as a “grassroots phenomena that arose out of a nation’s grief” (NBC Nightly News).

⁶ Any Google search will garner a plethora of Highway of Heroes YouTube video montages some of which are accompanied by original songs written as tributes. The most successful of the Highway of Heroes inspired songs is by Canadian rock band, The Trews, who wrote their hit single, “Highway of Heroes,” after the 2006 death of Captain Nichola Goddard who was from their hometown of Antigonish, NS. The band donates proceeds from sales of the song to the Canadian Heroes Fund. Books about the popular memorial include *Highway of Heroes*, a children’s book by Kathy Stinson, and *Highway of Heroes: True Patriot Love* by Pete Fisher a photojournalist from Cobourg, Ontario who was the driving force behind getting a stretch of the 401 officially named the “Highway of Heroes.” An example of a visual arts representation of the Highway of Heroes is Scott McFarland’s mural-sized (5ft. x 14 ft.) photo, “Corner of the Courageous, Repatriation Ceremony for Private Tyler William Todd” which is part of the Art Gallery of Ontario’s permanent collection.

distribution of photographs and video footage.⁷

Initially, I was deeply moved by Canadians' public display of mourning for their military casualties. But the more I witnessed the Highway of Heroes memorials through their prolific reiteration via Canadian mainstream and social media venues, two things struck me: (1) The absence of any acknowledgement of Afghan deaths; and (2) The extent to which the Highway of Heroes—though framed as a “spontaneous” and “grassroots” movement—resembled a host of other Canadian military commemoration ceremonies.⁸ Like Remembrance Day and other government sponsored ceremonies of military mourning, the Highways of Heroes embraces a militaristic and nationalist poetics of mourning that contributes to the production and dissemination of a very distinct narratives of Canadian militarism and Canadian nationalism. These ceremonies act as the public stages onto which Canada's military dead are cast as “just warriors” who heroically sacrifice their lives in acts of enlightened military intervention and selfless national loyalty. The ongoing—post-Afghanistan war—nationalist value of the Highway

⁷ Examples of U.S. government sanctioned media releases include: the 2000 distribution of photos of the caskets of U.S. military personal killed in the bombing of the USS Cole; the arrival and ceremony marking the return of the U.S.'s first Afghanistan War Casualty, Johnny Michael Spann; and, what has come to be known as one of the most egregious examples of misrepresentation in a state sanctioned military memorial, the nationally broadcast military memorial ceremony in honour of Corporal Patrick “Pat” Tillman. In 2002, when Tillman left a multi-million dollar career as an NFL linebacker to join the U.S. Army Rangers, he immediately became mythologized by the G. W. Bush administration as a symbol of patriotism. Killed in action in Afghanistan on 22 April 2004, Tillman was posthumously promoted to the rank of Corporal, awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart, and had a eulogy delivered by Senator John McCain at a nationally televised memorial on 4 May 2004. And then the myth began to crumble: Tillman's heroic death by “enemy fire” was a lie—Tillman was, in fact, killed by “friendly fire” and the army was later found to have deliberately withheld details about Tillman's death from his family and the nation. The documentary feature film—*The Tillman Story* (2010)—follows Pat Tillman's mother, Diane in her heroic quest for the truth about her son's death and the U.S. government's cover-up.

⁸ The centrality of the narrative of the Highway of Heroes emergence as a spontaneous grassroots outpouring is evident in the throughout the news, popular, and social media reports and books about the memorial. For example, in a press release announcing the unveiling of the Highway of Heroes Silver Commemorative Coin, the Royal Canadian Mint uses both “spontaneous” and “grassroots” to describe the Highway of Heroes. While the Highway of Heroes was (and continues to be) undeniably a highly popular memorial phenomenon I propose that the narrative of grassroots spontaneity masks other significant factors that contributed to both the Highway of Heroes emergence and to its development. These factors include (among others) Canada's longstanding institutional investments in public performances of military commemoration; the disproportionate representation of military, veteran, police, firefighter and other members of state sponsored institutions among the Highway of Heroes participants; and the role of the media in popularizing the memorials.

of Heroes was dramatically illustrated when thousands gathered along the highway to honour Corporal Nathan Cirillo who was shot and killed on 22 October 2014 while he stood sentry at Ottawa's National War Memorial.

"Good Mourning Canada? Canadian Military Commemoration and its Lost Subjects" is about the politics of social memory. It is about the power of performances of public mourning in the production of dominant—and counter—nationalist narratives. Sociologist Avery Gordon suggests that we live in a world in which the presence of the past lingers and seethes—a world that is ghosted by the "lost subjects of history" (195). Haunting, Gordon explains, is "the way of the ghost" (8), the means through which the "not there" of an "occluded and forgotten past" is collectively and cross-temporally animated (195). Grounded in a Canadian context, this dissertation examines the relationship between nationalistic politics of military commemoration and the forgotten dead of our canonized, monumentalized, and commemorated history of privileged memory and deliberate erasure.

Who do we remember, who do we mourn, in a world in which grief is hierarchically constituted, and lives differentially valued along hemispheric, geopolitical, racial, and gendered fault lines? Who do we forget? What is the relationship between the privileged subjects of military commemoration and the haunting ghosts of white settler-Canadian nationalism?⁹ Like Gordon, I believe in ghosts. I believe in their lingering seething presence, and I believe in their cause—to animate the *not there* of *occluded and forgotten pasts*. Using the Highway of Heroes as a point of departure, this research interrogates the role of Canadian military commemoration

⁹ I am using the term "white-settler Canadian nationalism" to explicitly mark Canada's settler-colonial origins—with its ongoing differential distribution of both privileges and violent effects—and the continuing primacy of whiteness within dominant constructions of the Canada nation. Throughout this dissertation I will switch terms—Canada, Canadian nationalism, white-settler colonial Canadian nationalism, and so on. Regardless of my use of term, however, unless otherwise indicated when I write of Canada or Canadian nationalism the reader should assume I am speaking of Canada as a settler colonial nation that continues to operate through a myriad of institutionalized mechanisms of white privilege.

in the production of hierarchies of grievability wherein “grievable humans” are allotted institutionally supported venues for “celebrated public grieving” while there is a corresponding “prohibition on the public grieving of others’ lives” (Butler, *Precarious* 37). Throughout this dissertation I bring commemorative performances that are part of Canada’s institutionalized collective memory into dialogue with an array of counter-memorial performances that resist dominant national narratives. I argue that military commemoration plays a critical role in the performative constitution of both the privileged—and the lost—subjects of Canadian nationalism. I also argue that performances of grief and loss that engage counter memory have the productive potential to unsettle the forgetful narratives of dominant Canadian nationalism.

In concert with its central inquiry into the role of Canadian military commemoration in the production of hierarchies of grievability and narratives of nationalism, “Good Mourning Canada?” engages a series of integral sub-questions: How has the grief associated with military commemoration come to be such a powerful affective force in the construction of popularized myths of Canadian nationalism? What omissions and foreclosures are produced through the neglect of an integrated gendered and racialized analysis of commemoration in relationship to discourses of nationalism, militarism, and war? What is the relationship between how we remember and what we are able to apprehend—between what we are able to imagine, and how we are able to act? What are the stakes of memory and grief beyond the confines of individual subjectivities and how might the performance of counter-memorials be mobilized to extend the horizon of our collectivist accounting of historical violence?

To answer these questions this dissertation combines a historical, theoretical, and embodied inquiry into the role of affective expressions of memorialization in constructing narratives of death related to nationalism, militarism and war. Using performance as a lens, I

bring readings of institutional, aesthetic, and activist performances of Canadian commemoration into conversation with literature that examines the relationship between memory, violence, and nationalism from the disciplinary arenas of Canadian studies, feminist historicism, critical memory studies, and critical race and anti-colonial studies. Critically for this dissertation, performance provides both a theoretical framework and a methodological approach through which to understand Canadian commemorative practices not simply as ontological events, but also as epistemological devises (Taylor *Archive*). My investigation into the epistemological role of Canadian military commemoration looks first at how memorial projects operate as a means of interpellating Canada's citizen populations into a particular kind of settler-nationalism—with tangible and violent affects—and second, at how performance might serve as a methodology towards the production of counter-memorials that resist nationalism's forgetful and essentializing narratives.

In this introductory chapter I map the terrain that underpins this project. I begin with an examination of Canada's relationship with military commemoration. I follow this with a discussion of the role of militarism, colonialism and imperialism in the production and maintenance of nationalisms that are rooted in ideologies of hegemonic (white) masculinities. In the second section of this Introduction I provide a brief literature review of performance studies scholars whose work endow this dissertation with a rich and critical range of theoretical lenses through which to render apprehensible the ghosts that haunt military commemoration's repertorial and archival performances of social memory. The Introduction's third section shifts to a discussion of my methodological approach, which weaves historical, theoretical, and performance analyses with first-person reflections on three public memorial meditations I have performed as method of embodied inquiry and engagement. This is followed by an overview of

the chapters to come.

The ghosts of Canadian nationalism, militarism, and hegemonic masculinity

Whereas the return of each of Canada's 158 Afghanistan War casualties received highly visible, public, and mediatized memorials, only a select few of the over 2000 U.S. military casualties of "Operation Enduring Freedom" were allotted public memorials. This difference can be understood in several ways. Most obviously, it can be attributed to the ban that was in effect for the first eight years of the Afghanistan War prohibiting the media from showing images of caskets bearing the remains of U.S. military personnel. But formal censure is not the sole reason. Despite President Obama's 2009 lifting of the ban there was no significant increase in public displays of mourning of military casualties in the U.S.¹⁰ Another, less top-down, explanation can be attributed to how the rising numbers of U.S. military casualties during the Vietnam War—in concert with the U.S. military's reporting of "enemy" body-counts—helped fuel the country's growing anti-war movement. The relationship between the visibility of war's dead that was established during the Vietnam War has continued to undermine the value of military commemoration as a pro-military or pro-nationalist strategy in the U.S.¹¹

Despite the complexity of reasons that underpin the relatively limited number of public performances of military commemoration in the U.S., within Canadian popular discourse the

¹⁰ When he lifted the blanket ban President Obama did not grant the media access to military repatriation ceremonies. Instead, he placed the decision of whether or not images of a soldier's funeral or memorial could be released to the media directly in the hands of the dead soldier's family members.

¹¹ The U.S.'s media ban during the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, like its no body count policy, has its roots in U.S. Government and Pentagon response to perceived failures in the management of domestic attitudes regarding the Vietnam War: In 2006, then Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld explained that the policy is a reversal of the U.S. practices during the Vietnam War: "If you'll recall the Vietnam War, they had body counts that went on day after day after day [...] The implication of that was that you were winning if the body count went up and losing if the body count went down" (Thompson, Time U.S.). Also see Sara Brady's *Performance, Politics, and the War on Terror: "Whatever it Takes"* for twentieth century examples of how U.S. anti-war veterans have used symbols of national military reverentiality in their anti-war struggles.

absence of Highway of Heroes-like rituals is often reductively associated with the “Bush ban.” In contrast—and like many a Canadian identity tale—the Highway of Heroes, has become yet another example of Canadians altruistic moral superiority compared to that of our less caring southern neighbours.¹² Pete Fisher, a photojournalist from Cobourg, Ontario, who spearheaded the drive to rename a section of the Highway 401 to the Highway of Heroes writes,

It’s been called a “grassroots phenomenon,” and it truly is. No organization started it; certainly no town or city started it. It’s something distinctly Canadian, something we as a large family from coast to coast do, to show our collective grief. It’s about patriotism, and about honouring the great sacrifice made on our behalf by the fallen soldiers and their families. (*Highway 20*)

Lest his celebration of the Highway of Heroes be seen as reflecting a purely Canadian-bias, in his book *Highway of Heroes: True Patriot Love*, Fisher includes a number of U.S. voices in praise of Canada’s roadside memorials. Of an interview with a *Los Angeles Times* journalist, Fisher writes: “I’ll never forget his words to me that day: ‘You guys do it right up there.’ My answer: ‘It’s not that we do it right, it’s just the right thing to do’” (27). The message is clear: Canadians know the “right” way to honour their military dead, and it is a way that is morally superior way to that of the U.S.¹³

As the question mark that punctuates this project’s short title—“Good Mourning Canada?”—suggests, my inquiry into Canadian military commemoration is more than an investigation of what or how. It is also an investigation of value and stakes. Does gathering on

¹² Prime Minister Steven Harper’s failed 2006 attempt to emulate the Bush administration’s prohibition only added to the story of difference by demonstrating Canadians’ superior capacity to resist government censure.

¹³ While beyond the scope of this dissertation, an under-analyzed aspect of the Highway of Heroes origin story is the fact that Canada’s first four Afghanistan casualties were killed by U.S. “friendly fire.” Though most reports about the Highway of Heroes (including Fisher’s) briefly outline the facts surrounding the Canadian soldier’s deaths, few explore the possibility that there might be a connection between how these soldier’s died and the “spontaneous” public display of patriotic memorialization in response to their deaths.

roadsides and overpasses—in cold, heat, rain, and snow—to commemorate military casualties constitute an act of national “goodness”? Do Canadians’ participation in the Highway of Heroes memorials and other public displays of military commemoration elevate us to a higher standard of national humanitarianism than our neighbours to the south? Is it possible, as Fisher suggests, for the Highway of Heroes to be simultaneously an expression of “true patriot love,” and non-political? How does the oft-repeated narrative of the Highway of Heroes spontaneous and grassroots emergence add to its moral value as a memorial phenomenon? What is the work of the Highway of Heroes, and what are the stakes in its ongoing celebration as a spatialized performance of memorialization?

It is not my desire to question the motives of individuals who have attended Highway of Heroes memorials, or the value these memorials might have for friends and families of the fallen. My interest in the Highway of Heroes—and in military commemoration more broadly—is on the overarching narrative it produces and on how that narrative is used. As Sherene Razack suggests of popular media stories about traumatized Canadian peacekeepers, individual narratives are assembled to produce an overarching codified narrative about Canada as a (white) nation guided by the logics of rationality and compassion (*Dark Threats* 18). Encoded into the Highway of Heroes narrative is the story of pluralistic assemblage of citizens who, without outside (state) direction, know how and when to set aside differences in the performance of patriotic commemoration. A closer look at the Highway of Heroes memorial phenomena troubles the degree to which this narrative relies on the notion of its spontaneous grassroots emergence and the absence of state influence in its performance.

I propose that the popular appeal of the Highway of Heroes has its roots in Canada’s long history of popularized military commemoration rituals. The Canadian government’s sustained

commitment to public military commemoration began with World War I, a conflict in which Canada suffered especially heavy losses: Out of a population of 7.5 million, close to 70,000 died on the battlefield and another 140,000 were wounded (Royal Canadian Legion, “Teachers Guide”). Over time, within the Canadian imaginary outrage over the war’s devastating effects have become overshadowed by narratives of national pride. As Ian McKay and Jamie Swift argue, the First World War is largely remembered as the war “in which individual soldiers proved their mettle and Canada somehow became a nation” (*Warrior* 69). The reiterated performance of Remembrance Day ceremonies has been instrumental in the production and maintenance of Canada’s World War I foundational mythology of national “self sacrificial chivalry” (73).

In addition to telling us who and what to remember—and through omission, who and what to forget—Canadian military commemoration also trains us in the proper protocols of remembrance. Generations of Canadian schoolchildren have been instructed in how to perform the obligatory reverentiality that military commemoration demands. They have learned to stand silently at attention, to wave the Canadian flag, and to don a poppy during what, in Canada, has become an extended season of remembrance.¹⁴ The memorization and recitation of “In Flanders Fields” has been standard fare for generations of children in Canadian schools. Today, curriculum about Canadian military history, the meaning of the poppy, and other aspects of military commemoration ceremonies, is widely disseminated through “Teachers Guides” produced by both the Royal Canadian Legion and Veterans Affairs Canada. Whether or not one chooses to actively participate in Canada’s seasonal rites of remembrance, its symbols

¹⁴ A symbol of remembrance throughout the Commonwealth nations, the poppy has a particularly poignant meaning for Canadians. Canadian Medical Officer, John McCrae’s poem to commemorate the huge loss of soldiers lives during the First World War opens with the words “In Flanders fields the poppies blow.”

effectively signal remembrance's protocol of silent reverentiality. With the Highway of Heroes, these symbols are no longer constrained by season or ceremony. They have become part of the landscape. Highway 401—the nation's busiest traffic corridor has become a permanent site of commemoration. Lest freeway travelers forget, the renamed sections of Highway 401 and the MacDonald-Cartier Freeway are lined with signs bearing the highway's new title together with images of the familiar poppy—a reminder of not only of who, what, and how to remember, but also of military commemoration's expanding territorial claims.

Canadians' almost century-long inculcation in rituals of military commemoration complicates the notion of the Highway of Heroes memorial phenomena as a spontaneous manifestation. Despite its origins as a non-governmentally sanctioned memorial ritual, the Highway of Heroes, with its militarized gestures of commemoration, can also be seen as evidence of the degree to which Canadians have internalized the lesson of channeling the grief associated with war losses into pro-nationalist narratives. And for many of those who choose not to participate in Canada's national rituals of remembrance, an equally important lesson has been gleaned—silent acquiescence. If remembrance of our nation's "fallen heroes" who died in acts of benevolent militarism is the primary message of Canadian rituals of military commemoration, a key subtext is silence. Performances and sites of commemoration demarcate spaces in which debate is construed firstly, as disrespectful of the dead, and secondly, as anti-nationalist. In our era of prolific media reiteration, these sites of social-censure multiply as they are transported across temporal, corporeal, digital, and spatial geographies. One of the powerful effects of Canadian military commemoration is that its silencing demands can be issued through such varied venues—official and unofficial public rituals; mainstream and social media; military and government ad campaigns; monuments and road signs. Whether delivered literally through

coercive “moments of silence” at one of Canada’s proliferating array of public military commemoration ceremonies—or signaled more subtly through the presence of a poppy, a flag, a uniform, or a monument, or a commemorative sign—the call to silence rings resoundingly clear.

But to answer how military commemoration has come to be such an effective vehicle for the production of narratives of Canadian nationalism requires not only an understanding of the history of Canadian military memorialization, but also an understanding of the historical trajectory of dominant mourning practices in “the West.”¹⁵ I will explore this question in some depth in Chapter One through a survey of investigations by feminist historians into the historical role women’s lament once played throughout the dominant West. For the moment, however, I want to flag a salient aspect of their findings—all note that in concert with interdictions placed on women’s lament, practices of public mourning moved away from polyvocal expressions of the complex emotions and narratives associated with grief, and toward univocal and homogenizing narratives of praise. The foregrounding of praise for the dead conveniently rids commemoration of its complexity and critique. Those subjects whose presence would interfere with nationalism’s elegiac narratives are necessarily disavowed; war’s blood-soaked bodies are shrouded beneath the flag; and the nation’s mourners are hailed as silent citizen soldiers. Purged of war’s brutality and the anger associated with loss, commemoration’s elegiac pronouncements have proved well suited to the production of Canada-the-good-nationalism. After all, in Canada it’s not the drumbeat of war that enlists the necessary support for the nation’s military actions. Canada’s “reluctant militarists” are rallied through narratives of peacekeeping and benevolent

¹⁵ The notion of “the West” is problematic in many ways including (1) its historical (and biased) function as the signifier of “culture” and “western civilization” as positioned against the “Orient” and the “uncivilized other” and, (2) its homogenization of the plurality of identity within and throughout “the West.” My use of the term in this dissertation is not intended to deny these problematics. Rather, by focusing on how the dominant (and dominating) culture has constructed public mourning practices, my intent is to examine how (and why) some practices of public mourning have come to be normalized while “others” have become marginalized or altogether disappeared.

militarism (Ruddick “Rationality” 242).

Canadians’ notion of ourselves as benevolent global peacekeepers is grounded historically in the instrumental role played by Canada’s (then) Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lester B. Pearson, in founding the first United Nations peacekeeping force.¹⁶ While in the past Canada’s foreign policy has been rooted in an officially mandated commitment to UN peacekeeping agendas, Canadian Studies (Berland and Fitzpatrick; Fremeth) and Canadian Defense and Foreign Affairs scholars (Coulon and Liégeois) concur that Canada’s contemporary military agenda and missions are no longer in keeping with its historical “peacekeeping” mandate. The UN peacekeeping operation prerequisites that Pearson helped shape included such conditions as a “cease-fire agreement; consent of the parties; impartiality of the Force; use of force strictly limited to self-defense; and executive responsibility of the Security General” (Coulon and Liégeois, *Whatever* 3). However, as McKay and Swift (among others) note, in the past several decades Canada’s government and military leadership has moved away from peacekeeping narratives (and practices) and toward the rebranding of Canada as a “warrior nation” (*Warrior*). Notwithstanding Canada’s official move away from peacekeeping, and towards “peace enforcement,” I contend that *the idea* of Canada as an “imagined community” committed to humanitarian militarism continues to reign supreme in the popular Canadian imaginary.¹⁷ Moreover, I propose that Canada’s long practice of public military commemoration provides Canadians with an affective smokescreen that both shields us from our increasingly

¹⁶ Pearson was awarded the Nobel Peace prize in 1957 for his role in the “creation of a ‘Blue Helmet’ force to follow through with the settlement of the Suez Canal” (Coulon and Liégeois, *Whatever* v). Pearson later went on to serve as Canada’s 14th Prime Minister, from 1963 to 1968.

¹⁷ In *Imagined Communities* Benedict Anderson argues that nations are a social creation wherein imagined national identities are constructed and performed. Since members of the nation are not able to know one another in a face-to-face context they must imagine affinities in order to create a sense of national belonging and affiliation. Anderson argues that nationalism and its construction of imagined communities was integral to colonial expansion and contributed to the naturalization of European colonial rule and settler-colonialism.

aggressive military agenda, and in a broader sense, supports notions of Canadian national exceptionalism.¹⁸

If peacekeeping is the ideological ground on which Canadians sense of benevolent militarism is founded, it is Canadians notion of multicultural inclusivity that shores up our internal exceptionalist identity. Similar to the illusory power of Canada's peacekeeping mythology, Canada's highly popularized narrative of multiculturalism projects a (fictively) unified national identity that glosses over internal difference, "de-race[s] violence," and supports a notion of national innocence (Razack, *Dark Threats* 7). Canada's promotion of itself as a nation of equitable multiculturalism simultaneously depends upon, and produces, the settler-Canadian mythology of Canada as a nation born of collaboration, not violence.

In the past decade, the mythology of Canada as a nation unstained by a colonial past has gained international traction. In 2009 at the G20 summit Prime Minister Stephen Harper declared that Canada has no history of colonialism. Since then, under the Harper administration, the federal government invested 30 million dollars in resurrecting the war of 1812 and positioning it as a new military origin story in which Canada is presented as a nation born of a multicultural alliance between Canada's British, French and First Peoples populations against our racist and imperialist Southern neighbours.¹⁹ In addition to disappearing both the enemy Other, and war's legions of "regrettable" civilian casualties—Canada's spectacularized pageants of

¹⁸ Launched in January 2015, the Canadian Department of National Defence's new recruitment ad campaign—"Ready when you are"—is a spectacular display of how the Canadian Forces have integrated historical notions of Canadian military humanitarianism, with that of a more aggressive warrior ethic and aesthetic (24-Seven).

¹⁹ Chapter Three's case study of the Canadian War Museum will illuminate some of the ways this origin story has been integrated into Canada's military history narrative. In its gallery dedicated to "First Peoples" the museum paints a positively rosy picture of a reciprocal relationship between Canada's French and First Peoples populations. The erasure of Canada's violent colonial roots is, in part, made possible by an understanding of war as a both a contained historical event, and as a conflict between nation states. As the Canadian government does not recognize First Peoples as nations, the violent colonial occupation of this land, now called Canada, and the ongoing struggles of sovereignty over Indigenous land and treaty issues, are conveniently disappeared.

memorialization effectively reaffirm essentialized notions of settler-Canadian nationalism through the assimilation of difference under the discursive umbrella of multiculturalism's pseudo-inclusivity.

Just as the altruistic glow of benevolent militarism helps purge settler-Canadian nationalism of its history of colonial violence, it also masks the extent to which Canadian militarism is steeped in a hegemonic masculinity that relies on the systemic perpetration of gendered, as well as raced, violence. Regardless of the biologically-assigned sex of the bodies being mourned—or of those performing their prescribed roles in the rituals of national commemoration—Canada's prolific spectacles of military mourning reproduce essentialized (and given) gender binaries. In many ways, the inclusion of women within the hyper-masculine culture of Canada's military serves a similar absolving function as discourses of multiculturalism do for settler-Canadian nationalism.

Though over the past decades the number of women in the Canadian Armed Forces has risen to 10,000, and women soldiers are highly visible in military public relations and recruitment publications,²⁰ the media has paid relatively limited attention to the prevalence of sexual violence within the Canadian Forces.²¹ In contrast, in a report released on 30 April 2015, former Supreme Court of Canada judge Marie Deschamps charges that sexual misconduct is "endemic" in the Canadian military (CBC "Harassment"). The report, "External Review into

²⁰ For examples of the Canadian Forces recruitment campaigns directed at women see the online jobs page (<http://www.forces.ca/en/page/women-92>). The overarching narrative is one in which women and men of all races and cultures work shoulder-to-shoulder in Canadian Forces humanitarian military operations. In a sense, the Canadian Armed Forces can be seen as deploying its soldiers who are women of colour in three ways—militarily, and in a public relations ambassadorial capacity as both women and as people of colour. The women, on the other hand, must contend with the intersecting oppressions of gender, race, class, and rank within an institution that is based in a hegemonic (white) masculinist ideology and power structure.

²¹ While there has been some media attention to the issue of sexual violence in the Canadian Forces, it has been limited. In 1998 McClean's Magazine ran a cover story under the headline "Rape in the Military." Sixteen years later, in 2014, the published an alarmingly similar story, "Our Military's Disgrace" which investigates the ongoing issue of sexual violence and its cover-up within the Canadian Forces.

Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces,” asserts that the Canadian Forces has an “underlying sexual culture that if unchecked is conducive to sexual misconduct” and went so far as to condemn the frequent “use of sex to enforce power relationships and to punish and ostracize a member of a unit” within the Forces (“Harassment”).

The Canadian Armed Forces discussed in the report bears little resemblance to the gender inclusive military depicted in either Canadian Forces recruitment ads or in CBC’s popular and award-winning radio drama *Afghanada*, which spanned six seasons (2006-2011). The gritty fictive world of *Afghanada* is one in which men and women not only work shoulder-to-shoulder, but also one in which the men hold their female commander—the series lead character, Sergeant Pat Kinsella—in the highest regard. Taken together, the overarching lack of media attention to the Canadian Forces’ “underlying sexual culture”; military recruitment ads and public relations publications; and popularized cultural representations of women in the military like that of *Afghanada*, all contribute to the image of the Canadian military as a place that is welcoming and respectful of women.²²

Militarism’s reliance on dominant hegemonic masculinity is not unique to the Canadian Forces. Wars and the spectacles associated with them simultaneously rely on, and produce, essentializing binaries of “Us” and “Other.” As performance studies scholar Diana Taylor argues of the state-sponsored violence of Argentina’s Dirty War: “Under siege, spectacles tend to essentialize, visually reaffirming the ‘given’ and seemingly obvious differences within and between the sexes or the races or the classes, even as they ‘disappear’ the traces of the performativity of that construction” (*Disappearing* 24-5). And, as masculinity studies scholar R. W. Connell asserts, militarism and nationalism (with their roots in the historical processes of

²² The ads also depict a culturally and racially inclusive Canadian Forces that is reflective of the dominant settler-Canadian mythology of a happy multicultural national identity.

colonialism and Imperialism) are inextricably linked to the production of our contemporary “world gender order” (“Globalization” 72). What does seem particularly Canadian is the degree to which the combined narratives of multicultural nationalism and benevolent militarism mask the institutionalized gendered and racialized violence that exists within, and is perpetrated by, the Canadian Armed Forces. Despite exceptionalist discourses that situate Canada as a nation of equitable (racial and gender) relations, Canadian nationalism is simultaneously a product of, and a contributor to, the construction of a hierarchical and racialized world gender order.

Connell defines the world gender order as “the structure of relationships that interconnect the gender regimes of institutions, and the gender orders of local societies on a world scale,” and asserts that it functions as a hegemonic force in its production of hierarchical scales of not only gendered, but also raced, and culturally situated bodies (72). Connell is not suggesting that this gendered global order is based in either biologically essentialized or universalized notions of masculinity and femininity. Rather than looking to such originary and fixed *roots* Connell proposes that in order to understand our contemporary global gender order we must trace its geopolitical *routes* to the gendered processes of Imperialism and colonialism;²³ processes, Connell argues, that continue today through networks of economic neo-liberalism interwoven with military and paramilitary expansionism:

The historical processes that produced global society were, from the start, gendered. Colonial conquest and settlement were carried out by gender-segregated forces. In the stabilization of colonial societies, new gender divisions of labor were produced in plantation economies and colonial cities, and gender

²³ For this distinction between roots and routes I’m borrowing from Joseph Roach’s in *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (1996). I will return to Roach’s conceptualization in the coming section of this Introduction.

ideologies were linked with racial hierarchies and the cultural defense of empire.

(73)

What I find most productive about the notion of a world gender order is the way Connell clearly links it to processes of imperialism and colonialism. With this move Connell distinguishes contemporary hegemonic gender regimes from notions of fixed and binary gender identities as well as from the idea of historically universalized (pre-colonial) patriarchy. In the process Connell implicates hegemonic masculinities in both historical and ongoing geopolitical processes of military and economic expansionism. Connell's notion of a world gender order is a particularly useful concept for this dissertation because it draws attention to the critical role of institutionalized gender regimes and hegemonic masculinities in performances of militarism, nationalism, and military commemoration. A less productive aspect of Connell's foregrounding of the term gender is that it risks colluding with white feminist discourses that do not take into account the intersections of race, indigeneity, class, and other cultural locations.

The works of women of colour activist-scholar-artists—like Audre Lorde, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Cherrie L. Moraga (among others)—have been instrumental in disrupting the simplistic binary oppositionalities that were endemic to a range of late twentieth century progressive (feminist, nationalist, and class-based) movements. These scholar-activists insisted on an analysis that was organized around the notion of “identities-in-difference.” Feminist theorist Chela Sandoval academically theorized the practices of these U.S. feminists of colour as a “differential consciousness” which understands political and identitarian locations as tactics, practices, or modes of consciousness rather than fixed and exclusive claims (*Methodologies*). And critical race and legal theorist Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw later coined the term

“intersectionality” to help facilitate an understanding of the ways in which racism and sexism functioned in relation to one another (“Beyond”).

Intersectionality is critical to an investigation of the role that Canadian commemoration plays in the production of the false purities (and the fictive pluralities) associated with the categories of militarism, and white settler nationalism. Throughout this dissertation my approach to an intersectional analysis will be less focused on the articulation of a language of inclusion than on a strategy of invoking the ghosts that haunt the essentializing narratives of Canadian military commemoration, militarism and nationalism. My aim is, first, to interrogate the normalizing collective memory that is produced through Canadian military commemoration, and second, to bring attention to what (and who) these dominant performances of memorialization cast outside of the realm of grievability and national memory.

To aid me in navigating the essentializing narratives of military commemoration and nationalism, I will employ a “disidentificatory” feminist framework that seeks to both draw upon, and resist, Canadian nationalism’s toxic representations (Muñoz). Like differential consciousness, disidentification is a means of critically negotiating identities within the context of a majoritarian public. “Disidentification,” writes queer and performance studies theorist José Esteban Muñoz, “is a mode of performance whereby a toxic identity is remade and infiltrated by subjects who have been hailed by such identity categories but have not been able to own such a label” (185). As a strategic approach to resisting dominant ideologies, disidentification departs from assimilationist and anti-assimilationist approaches and instead remarks the unmarked dominant through a creatively queer array of performative infiltrations, subversions, amplifications, and distortions. While Muñoz developed the notion of disidentification to theorize performances by queers of color as “a minority population whose identities are formed

in response to the cultural logics of heteronormativity, white supremacy, and misogyny,” (5) I will be using disidentification as a strategy of “working on and against” nationalism’s and militarism’s damaged and essentializing stereotypes (11).

Not only are the categories of “race, gender, and class not distinct realms of experience [they also] came into existence *in and through* each other” (McClintock *Imperial* 5).²⁴ Anne McClintock links Western nationalist modernity and Imperialism with the invention of both race and hegemonic notions of femininity and masculinity. Like Connell, she argues that the imposition of Western modernist gender dynamics were “fundamental to securing the maintenance of the imperial enterprise” (7). Nationalist modernity is violently asserted through the forces of hegemonic masculinity that symbolically position women, the colonized, and working class peoples in what McClintock calls a pre-modern or “anachronistic space” (30). Within this space, both women and colonized populations “do not inhabit history proper but exist within a permanently anterior time within the geographic space of the modern empire” (30). This combined temporal and spatial dislocation facilitates the disavowal of both the fact and the means of colonialism’s violence against indigenous populations.

As Andrea Smith argues, indigenous people must be seen as disappeared and always disappearing “in order to allow non-indigenous peoples their rightful claim over the land” (“Heteropatriarchy” 68). This overarching disavowal also serves to mask the role of hegemonic and heteronormative masculinity in processes of colonization. As Smith (among others) points out, colonization’s genocidal policies against indigenous communities have always been asserted “through sexual violence and through the imposition of European gender relationships on native communities” (*Conquest* 139). In this way Canadian Aboriginal women, and the violence

²⁴ Emphasis in the original.

perpetrated against them, are doubly disavowed through Canadian white-settler nationalism's disclaiming of colonialism. Since the disappearance of indigenous peoples is integral to settler-colonialism, the disappearance and murder of Aboriginal women in Canada (and throughout the Americas) also needs to be recognized as part of the ongoing violent effects of settler-colonialism.

But the gendered violence of military nationalism's hegemonic masculinity does not only affect women. Whereas, nationalism emphasizes and reflects culturally produced themes of manhood—patriotism, bravery, courage, duty, heroism, “women are,” Joanne Nagel suggests, “the foils against which men are defined and made” (“Nation” 402). Masculinity *is* what femininity *is not*. This is evidenced not only at the macro level of the states' predominantly masculine institutions, like the Armed Forces, but also at the micro level of the day-to-day cultural milieus where the most insulting taunts that can be launched against boys and men are those that affiliate them with (hegemonic notions of) femininity and (receptive) homosexuality.²⁵ Thus the production of a global gender hierarchy relies not only on the domination and oppression of women as an external other, but on masculinity's disavowal of the feminine within.

Political psychology scholar Stephen Ducat uses the term femiphobia to describe a pervasive male fear of being feminine or feminized. Like Nagel, Ducat's premise is that the most significant thing about being a man is *not* being a woman. Because manhood (or hegemonic masculinity) is predicated on an ideology of domination, Ducat proposes that it is necessarily brittle and precarious. If one is not actively dominating, one is at risk of being dominated.

²⁵ The targeting of homosexuals is almost exclusively focused on boys and men who are perceived as feminized. In many cultural contexts, (male) homosexuality is not determined by the gender of the person(s) one has sex with but by the position one occupies. He who penetrates, maintains his masculinity, while “he” who is penetrated embodies the position of the disavowed and debased feminine.

Shifting the focus from misogyny (hatred, dislike, or distrust of women), or gynophobia (morbid fear of women), to the fear of *being* feminine or *becoming* feminized Ducat analyzes the ways in which this fear is used as a political tool to compel men (especially working class men) to act against their own social interests. On the domestic front this can include framing social programs (health care, welfare, workers compensation) as reflective of weakness and therefore an indication of an imperiled and feminized masculinity.²⁶ On the global scale, femiphobia and its corresponding production of masculinities, is evident at all levels of Connell's world gender order—"international relations, international trade, and global markets" ("Globalization" 72). But perhaps nowhere is it more starkly apparent than in the promotion of military aggression and war as a site where poor and working-class men (among whom men of colour are over represented) are impelled to prove their precarious manhood. Within the militarized nation-state, masculinity places those serving in the military in a paradoxical relationship to vulnerability—one of the most feared of the hegemonically feminized attributes. On one hand, it offers the promise of annihilating vulnerability—one's own, and that of the enemy Other—while on the other, it places one in harm's way, at risk of injury and annihilation.

The rise of women in the military adds to the need for a nuanced and critical gender analysis. For example, as Coco Fusco argues, U.S. feminists have tended to focus "exclusively on women's experience of hardship"—most notably, sexual harassment and abuse perpetrated by their male comrades—while turning a blind-eye to the increased deployment of female sexuality as an interrogation weapon deployed against a racialized enemy Other. "The stereotype of Arab masculinity as fragile," Fusco asserts, "[has led] to treating it as a point of vulnerability, while

²⁶ Former Governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger, offered a particular glaring example of the symbiotic relationship between the macro (state institutional) and micro level of the political use of femiphobia when he referred to his Democratic budget opponents as "girlie-men." (Grossman and McClain "Girlie Men").

the stereotype of women as less aggressive [has made] their sexual harassment of detainees seem to be milder and more acceptable than other forms of torture” (*Field Guide* 54).

Like Fusco, British feminist scholar and activist Lynn Segal troubles the too-easy linkage of women with peace reminding us that women’s relationship to war has always been complex and pointing out that, throughout time “the majority of women have supported the wars their leaders have waged”; that women were among Hitler and Mussolini’s most ardent supporters; and that suffrage was earned in large measure as a pay off for women’s support of World War I (“Gender” 22).²⁷ The complex and often contradictory relationship of women to war has only become more so as unprecedented numbers of women sign on as armed combatants forcing anti-war feminists to grapple not only with the limitations of their gendered analysis of war and peace, but also with divided attentions between their efforts to mobilize resistance to war and their efforts to “defend” women’s right to harassment-free participation in military environments.

Performance studies and the ghostly transmissions of cultural memory

As an academic discipline performance studies is in many ways ideally suited to facilitate a reflection on military commemoration. Theoretically, performance studies provides a lens through which to study actions within and beyond the aesthetic frame, as well as across a range of divides that are critical to an analysis of the politics of social memory—spatial, temporal, psychological/psychosocial, private/public. And, as a discipline that is “variously described as a trans-, inter-, anti-, post-, and pre-disciplinary,” performance studies makes possible the kind of

²⁷ In Canada, the federal War Elections Act of 1917 granted voting rights exclusively to women who had relatives serving in the military. The act was passed during Canada’s conscription crises when there was a dwindling in volunteer enlistment and a lack of support in the general population for conscription. The lack of new recruits meant that wounded soldiers who had already served on the battlefield were forced to return to the front. Granting military servicemen’s mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, and widows the right to vote helped to ensure the passage of the Military Service Act, which required all able-bodied Canadian men to fight in the war.

dialogue that is necessary to this dissertation, which calls upon scholarship from the arenas of Canadian studies, feminist historicism, critical race theory, and the cultural politics of memory (Alvarez “Performance” 73).

But, as with all academic disciplines ensconced within “Western” academic institutions, performance studies is also implicated in the reproduction of forgetful historical narratives and privileged archives.²⁸ In this section I offer a literature review that explores several discursive threads within performance studies that have critical resonance with this dissertation’s inquiry into the production of social memory. These include conversations within the field that are organized around myths of newness and notions of ephemerality; how performance functions as a vehicle for the cross-temporal and diasporic transmission of cultural memory; and, how memory is performed through the dissonant logics of archive and repertoire. I engage these discourses to draw attention to the ways that performance studies both participates in the construction of social memory through a complex navigation of avowals and disavowals, visibilities and invisibilities.

One way in which performance studies can be seen to have colluded with dominant Eurocentric systems of knowledge production is in its mythologizing and de-historicizing embrace of narratives of newness and originality. As an academic discipline, performance studies has its own highly mythologized origin story one that firmly situates NYU at its birthplace, and theatre studies scholar Richard Schechner and anthropologist Victor Turner, as its conceptual parents. Another way performance studies shores up Western myths of originality, discovery, and newness is through popularized genealogies of performance art’s lineage.

²⁸ Throughout this dissertation I use the concept of “the West” not as a geographically determined or fixed designation but rather to signify a range of hegemonic structures and practices that simultaneously produce and transgress boundaries. These include academic institutions and their accompanying methodological approaches as well as nation-states and their accompanying performances of national memory.

Performance artist and performance studies scholar Coco Fusco contests the dominant Western origin story of performance art as having its roots in Europe's Dada movement, and maps out another—more damning—lineage for performance art:

Since the early days of the Conquest, “aboriginal samples” of people from Africa, Asia, and the Americas were brought to Europe for aesthetic contemplation, scientific analysis, and entertainment. Those people from other parts of the world were forced first to take the place that Europeans had already created for the savages of their own Medieval mythology; later with the emergence of scientific rationalism, the “aborigines” on display served as proof of the natural superiority of European civilization, of its ability to exert control over and extract knowledge from the “primitive” world, and ultimately of the genetic inferiority of non-European races. (“English” 41)

In challenging performance art's origin story Fusco also reveals how the narrative's containment within a Western arts discourse contributes to the false separation of aesthetic practices from other geopolitical power relationships. Similarly, Diana Taylor critically examines methods of knowledge production, transmission, and legitimization in relationship to discourses of performance within the field of performance studies. Distinguishing the “archive” from the “repertoire”, Taylor describes the archive as the mechanism through which dominant and hegemonic systems of knowledge are produced, recorded, and legitimated, and by which their access and transmission is managed and controlled. The repertoire, on the other hand, she uses to describe embodied forms of knowledge transmission including spoken language, ritual, gesture, performance, and a range of cultural practices.

Taylor is not proposing that the archive and repertoire are necessarily oppositional, but rather that they reflect dissonant logics, and that Western knowledge production's differential privileging of the archival paradigm has produced a hierarchal relationship between archival and repertorial methodologies. Under our dominant (archival) system of knowledge production, repertorial practices become legitimated as knowledge only once they have been written into, or otherwise installed in, the archive. In this way, the archive becomes the mechanism through which the historical repertorial practices of Indigenous and non-Western populations are simultaneously appropriated and excluded. As Taylor's example of the Argentinean Junta's essentializing spectacles of state-violence illustrates, however, the repertoire can also be deployed as a mechanism in support of dominant narratives. This is certainly true of Canadian performances of military commemoration, which like the archive, act to disappear populations and events from history. Through its performed narrative of Canada as a nation born, not through acts of colonial violence, cultural genocide, and resource appropriation, but rather through the Canadian nation-state's engagement in the First and Second World Wars (and more recently, in the War of 1812), Canadian military commemoration contributes to the exclusion of Canada's First Nations from Canadian history.

Using performance as a lens to expose the ways that national commemorative practices (both repertorial and archival) disappear populations and events from the archives of privileged memory requires cognizance of the politics that underpin myths of newness and discourses of in/visibility within dominant systems of knowledge production. For example, as Taylor suggests, performance art's dominant lineages (like those put forth by RoseLee Goldberg and Michael Kirby), reflect the dual process of erasure and appropriation: "The avant-garde's emphasis on

originality, ephemerality, and newness hides multiple rich and long traditions of performance practice” (*Archive 9*).

Though within the archives of Western knowledge production visibility may be equated with power, performance studies has a long and reiterated history of privileging ephemerality as a constitutive element of performance. With her highly influential, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*, Peggy Phelan extended performance studies’ discourse of ephemerality by bringing it into dialogue with literary studies and art history and proposing an ontology of performance as disappearance. Phelan’s provocation is that performance, with its ontology of liveness, ephemerality, and non-reproducibility, provides a politically promising model for an ontology of subjectivity that is not fixed or capable of being contained within systems of representation that are caught within the binary codes of signification endemic to Western metaphysics.

By placing her “ontology of performance” as disappearance into dialogue with cultural studies discourses in the U.S. Phelan troubles the popular equation of visibility with political power within “identity politics,” and argues that it fails to take into account the limits of representation. If, for example, we are to believe the “visibility-as-currency-economy” equation, Phelan posits, “then almost-naked young white women should be running Western culture” (10). Using a Lacanian-based gender analysis Phelan argues that binary frameworks mark one pole—male—as valuable, while the other—female—is left unmarked or without value or meaning: “he who is marked with value is left unremarked, in discursive paradigms and visual fields. He is the norm and therefore unremarkable; as the Other, it is she whom he marks” (5). Phelan argues that a similar process of binary valuation—markings and un(re)markings—operates in relation to

representations of racially marked “Others,” wherein the (white) dominant remains the unremarked upon “norm.”²⁹

While Phelan rightly points out that an economy of visibility does not *necessarily* equate power with visibility, she passes over ways that visibility can also be an equally paradoxical domain for more privileged subjects. Just as the example of military commemoration exposes slippages between the logics of the archive and the repertoire, so too does it reveal paradoxes in in/visibility’s political economics. On one hand, the subjects who are granted a homogenizing pseudo-visibility through Canadian military commemoration’s rituals of reverentiality are clearly those who are granted elevated status through nationalism’s hierarchy of grievability. On the other hand, I propose that the visibility of these un(re)marked privileged subjects of national mourning should not necessarily be equated with political power. In fact, the state’s guarantee to its dead warriors of a place at the top of nationalism’s hierarchy of grievability can be seen as a way of denying their vulnerability, which is abundantly and brutally evident in their annihilation. In exalting their visibility as dead heroes, military commemoration masks the way these soldiers are victims of both militarized violence and hegemonic masculinity’s femophobic disavowal of precarity.³⁰

²⁹ Phelan uses the work of conceptual performance artist Adrian Piper to illustrate the problematic of equating identity with visibility in representations and discourses of race. In *Cornered* (1978) Piper delivers a videotaped address to her “white” spectator from the other side of an overturned table. Above her video-framed image two other frames contain birth certificates with the word “race” highlighted. After providing her “white” spectator with historical evidence of the statistical probability that they are, in all likelihood, “black” Piper turns the tables and begins to query them about how they will negotiate this identity in a racist world. For Phelan, *Cornered* demonstrates the power of bringing visibility, not to the already marked (in this case “blackness” as the mark of the racialized Other) but rather to the unmarked (“whiteness” as not “white” but as requiring the binary of “white” and “black” to maintain hierarchical power). Through her refusal to locate skin color as its physical marker and by engaging her spectator in a relational process of re-marking the un(re)marked Piper exposes the “blind spot” of race and “the utter insignificance of the ground which legislated [racial] differences—gene arrangement, the odd biology of blood” (*Unmarked* 8).

³⁰ I will take up the issue of commemoration’s denial of masculine vulnerability in greater depth in Chapter Four.

The politics of in/visibility changes with location—geopolitical, geographic, identitarian. Placed in a “Latin American”³¹ or Indigenous American context, “disappeared” as a linguistic term follows a radically different metonymic chain of significations than it does in Phelan’s Lacanian formulation of subjectivity. As Taylor writes, “Culturally, the Americas have invested heavily in the disappearance of the indigenous presence—our notions of modernity and economic progress depend on it” (*Archive* 119). In the face of a history of forced disappearances produced by and through colonial, geopolitical, and state violence, and the accompanying omissions and marginalizations of these same populations from the historical and canonical archive, performances of memory can become a form of repertorial survival. Within this context, a political emphasis on visibility is necessary (and, at times, necessarily ingenious in its methods) to challenge a representational economy that renders “Latin” and Indigenous Americans (within and outside of U.S.) as either overtly invisible, or made functionally invisible through a process of cultural homogenization.³²

Just as Phelan argues that performance is not translatable through representation, Taylor suggests that within the field of performance studies “performance” as a term has a “history of untranslatability” with its meaning shifting, sometimes subtly and sometimes radically, as it crosses disciplinary, geographic, and sociopolitical locations (*Archive* 15). The prominence of Austinian or Butlerian notions of performativity, Taylor argues, has resulted in the

³¹ In *The Idea of Latin America* Walter Mignolo traces the political invention of “Latin America” as a term to describe descendants of Catholic Southern ‘Latin’ European colonizers of South America. Like “the West,” “Europe,” and “the United States” the “idea” of Latin America masks the fact of the genocidal violence and exclusion from historical archives of indigenous populations and peoples of African descent that is the result of European expansionism and conquest. “When the relation between the name and the subcontinent is called into question” Mignolo asserts, “the political projects that brought ‘Latin’ America into being have to co-exist with political projects originating from the silenced population” (94).

³² This is not to suggest that there is a single, or best, strategy for negotiating the politics of (in)visibility. While making omitted histories visible can be important for both cultural and political survival, within the context of the material present remaining invisible can often be imperative to physical and economic survival. For example, undocumented migrants working in informal economies need to function below the radar of institutional and regulatory bodies.

marginalization of embodiment (or repertorial practices) by situating the performative within an increasingly discursive realm, one that while reflective of Western logocentrism, simultaneously masks its performative dominance through its deconstructionist critique:

Whereas in Austin, performative points to language that acts, in Butler, it goes in the opposite direction, subsuming subjectivity and cultural agency into normative discursive practices. In this trajectory, the performative becomes less a quality (or adjective) of ‘performance’ than of discourse. (6)

Taylor proposes that if North American and Latin American performance studies scholars are to engage in a more reciprocal dialogue, we “need to free ourselves from the dominance of the text” (*Archive* 27) and suggests “scenarios as meaning-making paradigms” and a methodological approach conducive to an analytic and political engagement with both text and repertoire (27-8). Scenarios, Taylor suggests, provide a way past the linguistic, historical, aesthetic, and methodological foreclosures produced by the term “performance.” “The scenario,” Taylor argues, “places spectators within its frame, implicating us in its ethics and politics” (33). “Scenarios of discovery,” for example, could resituate performance art’s avant-garde narrative, bringing attention not only to the way the myth of newness facilitates the devaluation, appropriation, and omission of the repertorial practices of “others,” but also by placing into the frame the larger projects of colonialism, imperialism, and neo-liberalism through which this erasure was (and continues to be) violently perpetrated.

An iconic example of a performed scenario of discovery that implicated its audiences is Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gómez-Peña’s *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit* [...]. A satiric spectacle designed to “resurrect the collective memory of colonial violence in America that has been strategically erased from the dominant culture” *Undiscovered* was part of a counter-

quincentenary project organized in response to official quincentenary “celebrations” of Columbus’s “discovery” of the Americas (Fusco, “English” 38). Fusco and Gómez-Peña placed themselves on display as two caged undiscovered Amerindians from an island in the Gulf of Mexico called Guatinau. In museums, historic sites, and other institutions of archival memory, from within their golden cage the “discovered” Gautinau couple “performed ‘traditional tasks,’ which ranged from sewing voodoo dolls and lifting weights to watching television and working on a lap-top computer” (39). “The cage,” Fusco explains, “became a metaphor for our condition, linking the racism implicit in ethnographic paradigms of discovery with the exoticizing rhetoric of ‘world beat’ multiculturalism” (39). By re-marking their already (and always) marked bodies, Fusco and Gómez-Peña made visible how their “Othered” bodies have been constructed as fetishized objects of a Western colonial imaginary; they made visible how scenarios of discovery function theatrically and discursively to legitimate and re-legitimate imperial acts of possession and violent erasure through the positioning of the “native [as] the show; the civilized observer [as] the privileged spectator” (Taylor, *Archive* 64). In the process, Fusco and Gómez-Peña made the spectator visible to themselves and by performing their satirical spectacle within museums, they also make visible how the archive performs as a mechanism of dominant memory construction.

In *Performing Remains* Rebecca Schneider extends Taylor’s arguments about the ongoing liveness of performance’s repertorial remains, by applying it to a consideration of the ways “archive itself becomes a social performance space, a theatre of retroaction” (104). Like Taylor, Schneider argues for performance’s uncanny capacity to reveal that which is buried, considered dead, or disappeared. But in addition to refusing the notion of performance’s ephemeral passage from live to not-live, Schneider challenges the binary wherein living (or once

live) bodies perform, while dead matter (objects, documents and other archival artifacts) remain inanimate.

Working against the division between the pastness of the past, and the present of the present, Schneider places her emphasis on remains, rather than liveness. Schneider argues that, like performance, archival remains have the capacity to reveal the sticky slip and slide of temporality—the way time and the consequences of its passing (and not passing) “give lie to the Enlightenment mandate that *we head into our futures undetained*” (174).³³ Combining Fred Moten’s notion of intermedial inter-inanimation, with Elizabeth Freeman’s “temporal drag”—or queerly syncopated time—Schneider complicates the “too easy divide between record and script, or archive and repertoire” (163). Schneider argues time’s cross-temporal slippages produce chiasmic moments in which remains—material and immaterial—engage in “cross- or intra-temporal negotiation, even (perhaps) interaction or inter(in)animation of one time with another time” (31).

Schneider’s attention to the performance of archival remains has growing relevance to the study of the construction of social memory in relationship to nationalism and military commemoration. After all, Schneider asserts, not only are “make-believe” historical reenactments increasingly deployed as a means of “making belief” or “the *making* of ideological investment”—so too is the archive (127).³⁴ In a move that is emblematic of what Ruth Phillips calls the “second museum age” Canada’s spectacular new museums of national record—like the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa (Chapter Three), and Winnipeg’s Canadian Museum for

³³ Emphasis is Schneider’s.

³⁴ Schneider is drawing on, and troubling, Richard Schechner’s assertion that “performances can either be ‘make-belief’ or ‘make believe’” (Schechner *Performance* 42). Also see Megan Davis’ “Make-Believing White Civility: Historical Re-enactments at Fort Langley, British Columbia” for an analysis of how re-enactment is being deployed within a Canadian context as method of hiding past Canada’s history of colonial abuse through the production of a provincial birth narrative that is “framed as an act of [white] civility towards Indigenous peoples” (58).

Human Rights—are no longer constructed as temples of knowledge filled with untouchable artifacts (“Re-placing” 83). They are sites of animation and interaction. There are objects to touch, games to play, and a multi-media array of spectacles to behold. The archive is indeed performing.

Though the object of this dissertation’s study is “Canadian” military commemoration, it is critical to recognize the Canadian nation—and nation-states more broadly—not as a given. Rather, the Canadian nation is a construction that is enacted through an array of performances—discursive, economic, political, military, institutional, repertorial, and archival—that, taken together, “disappear the traces of the performativity of that construction” (Taylor, *Disappearing* 25). Nationalism territorializes and essentializes. It separates here from there, “Us” from “Them,” legitimized acts of war from delegitimized acts of “terror,” and the grievable from the ungrievable. Likewise the institutional and archival structures designed to commemorate Canada’s wars often contain them within national boundaries or frame them as dehistoricized catastrophic events. But war is not contained within national borders or isolated temporal moments. Nor are its violent effects. Soldiers kill and are killed on “foreign” soil and entire populations are violently propelled into diasporic and cross-temporal momentum.

If violence and its traumatic effects defy borders so too must the memory of violence trespass against history’s territorialized archival record. Like Taylor, Joseph Roach argues for the importance of recognizing ways in which cross-temporal cultural transmissions function as “restored behavior against a historical archive of scripted record” (*Cities* 11). Roach draws on Paul Gilroy’s formulation of “Black-Atlantic” in which Gilroy remaps notions of modern history that locate historical narratives within fixed national boundaries and bounded historical timeframes and instead “charts [history’s] course along the dark currents of a world economy

that slavery once propelled” (5). This formulation resists the “dangerous fiction” of a “fixed and unified culture” (5) and facilitates an analysis that is less focused on “roots,” or origins, than on how cultural memory is transmitted across geographic and cross-temporal “routes” (283). The performative transmissions of cultural memory in Roach’s analysis take place in and through communities; in the relationships between communities; across time, space, and identity; and via the “three-sided relationship of memory, performance and substitution” (2).

Roach notes that impediments to cultural transmission are not simply a product of spatial and temporal distance, but of the geopolitical forces that first dislocate populations, and second, manufacture institutional proscriptions against memory’s cultural transmission. Violently propelled into diasporic momentum and into generations of enslavement circum-Atlantic communities found themselves both rent from their geographic and cultural origins and confronted with circumstances in which performing themselves through their repertorial practices was prohibited. *Code Noir* laws first enacted by Louis the XIV in 1685 that included prohibitions against slave assemblies and rituals were rooted in “an informed understanding on the part of the French about the power of public performance to consolidate a sense of community, inside or outside of the law” (59). Forced to find alternative sites in which, and methods by which, to “perform themselves,” Roach argues, led to cultural memory and community identity being performed through processes of surrogation or displaced transmission rather than through the direct transmission of tradition.³⁵

Like Roach, Honor-Ford Smith argues for the importance of mapping cultural memory’s

³⁵ In *Embodying Black Experience: Stillness, Critical Memory, and the Black Body* Harvey Young also analyzes ways in which diasporic memory is transmitted across time. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of “habitus” theorize how “*performance* allows the black body to be singular (black) and variable at the same time” Young suggests that the memory of the Middle Passage is atemporally carried in the collective black body, or the habitus of the community. Young looks at how performances of stillness have become a vehicle for the transmission of shared experiences of the black body through embodied memory, and at times, a means of resisting the racializing gaze. sustained stillness endured by Black captives before, during, and after their transport across the Middle Passage.

“temporal routes” as a way of explicating the “complex historical geology that shapes the present” (“Local” 14). Reflecting on two public memorial performances of *Letters from the Dead*—one in Toronto (2007), the other in Kingston, Jamaica (2009)—Ford-Smith provides a contemporary example of how mourning, when performed by diasporic populations whose losses to violence are marginalized by dominant discourses of criminalization, can facilitate a dialogue that is both local and transnational. First performed outside of Toronto’s Eaton Centre shopping mall at a location near where a young white Canadian woman had been killed, *Letters*’ was a response to the media’s spectacularizing and “Otherizing” reporting about the poor and non-white youth who were also killed by urban violence in Toronto. The memorial’s opening funeral procession—led by four figures painted grey—brought forth the “ghosts from Aboriginal, African Canadian, Latino, Asian, and working-class white communities into a space from which they had been erased” (11).

By staging its ceremonies of mourning within the context of diasporic routes *Letters* performs what Caribbean poet and scholar Edward Kamau Brathwaite has theorized as a tidalectic exchange. Brathwaite offers the concept of tidalectics a theoretical rejection of the Hegelian dialectic and an alternative means of reading across theoretic, historical, and geographic space. Brathwaite proposes that people of Caribbean descent are at the beginning of a second middle passage. This passage takes form not only through the Black Atlantic shipping routes that Gilroy discusses “but also in the form of airwaves and ‘bridges of sound’ (radio broadcasts and sound recordings, for example) that connect colony with colony and colony with metropole, often enacting tidalectic echoes” (Reckin 2). For Brathwaite the “middlepassage” is more than route with ongoing consequences it is an ongoing experience, a tidalectic call and response. Grounded simultaneously in the particularity of place and in the tidalectic experience,

Letters' mourning ceremonies resist dominant social memory's de-historicized and criminalizing narratives about urban violence. Instead *Letters* shifts attention toward violence's broader political economies and the way colonialism and its ongoing violent effects continue to haunt the present.

The theoretical frameworks of each of the scholars discussed provide valuable lenses through which to resist the forgetfulness of dominant social memory and the notion of history as a forward moving dialectic. In *Globalectics: Theory and the Politics of Knowing* Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o—who has lived, studied and taught in Kenya, Uganda, England and the United States—brings reflections on his experience with theories of globalization and Hegelian dialectics, to call for a “mutually affecting dialogue, or multi-logue” towards the “liberation of literature from the straightjackets of nationalism” (8). Proposing an approach he calls “poor theory,” Ngũgĩ suggests that the de-privileging of “modern theoretical scholasticism” is necessary for the “spatial and temporal [re]organization of knowledge” (36).³⁶ “Globalectical reading,” Ngũgĩ argues “means breaking open the prison house of imagination built by theories and outlooks that would seem to signify the content within is classified, open to only a few” (61) and challenging the “hegemony of the written over the oral” (64).

While Ngũgĩ's critique of the hegemonic hold of the West is focused on the theoretical and historical discourses of literature, the histories of performance art and performance studies have followed a similar trajectory with dominant historical lineages tracing the roots of performance art, and its theoretical and disciplinary correlates, to aesthetic and intellectual

³⁶ Ngũgĩ is careful to distinguish his use of “poor” from either a notion of the celebration of poverty or the indication of theoretical impoverishment. For Ngũgĩ “poor theory” recognizes of the capacity of the poor “to do the most with the least,” while also operating as a much “needed critique of the tendency in the writing of theory to substitute density of words for that of thought” (2).

origins in Europe and North America.³⁷ Academic disciplines can be seen as microcosms of larger structures of ideological and structural containment—of civilizations and nations. While performance studies’ interdisciplinarity holds within it the potential (if not exactly the promise) of exchange—we must consider on whose terms, and by what means?

The majority of the scholars I have touched upon in this introduction—Muñoz, Taylor, Phelan, Schneider, Roach, Ngũgĩ—have been, at some point, associated with NYU’s Department of Performance Studies. I say this is not to delegitimize either the scholars or the discourses they have contributed, but rather to make visible the challenge of intervening in the “politics of knowing” from beyond the borders of knowledge’s legitimizing disciplinary (and disciplining) structures. While I am not a student of NYU, this dissertation too, is necessarily part of its performance studies’ lineage, and in a broader sense, part of a Western academic lineage.

I propose neither a denial of, nor a breaking away from, this disciplinary lineage. Instead, with this introduction, I propose a model of looking to scholars, artists, and activists who articulate, theorize and otherwise perform practices of engaging identities-in-difference, theories-in-difference, disciplines-in-difference, and methods-in-difference. I propose a model that looks to the “differential consciousness” articulated by radical women of colour in the 1970s; to Muñoz’ theory of disidentification; and to Ngũgĩ’s *globalectics* and *multilogue*. I propose a model that looks not for originary *roots*, but to the cross-temporal and geopolitical *routes* of cultural transmission; a model that refuses notions of any authentic real, while remaining cognizant that, as Schneider argues: “While the ‘real’ may always be performative, or

³⁷ RoseLee Goldberg’s seminal *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present* (first published in 1979) traced performance art’s beginnings to Europe’s early twentieth-century avant-garde and a host of North American performance art historians and scholars attribute performance art’s reemergence in the 1960s and 1970s to the mythic Black Mountain collaborations of John Cage, Alan Kaprow, and Merce Cunningham, out of which grew Happenings (Sandford 1995).

constructed, that construction and its re-reconstruction exist in a battlefield ghosted by that construction's historical effectivity—its reality effects" (*Explicit Body* 22). Rather than pitting identities, theories, disciplines, and methods against one another, I propose a model that embraces a multi-modal approach to personal, political, and theoretical navigation.

Dancing with ghosts: Performance as praxis and embodied theory

The politics of social memory—which is intricately linked to the politics of social forgetting—is as much about *how* we remember, than *who* and *what* we remember. When I first learned of the Highway of Heroes memorials I naively imagined the seemingly spontaneous displays of public mourning for Canada's repatriated soldiers to be a sign of resistance to militarism and opposition to the war in Afghanistan. This assumption was, at least in part, a consequence of my having lived in the U.S. for a number of years, where military casualties are commonly evoked in anti-war protests and aesthetic displays. My research into the history of women's lament in the West further contributed to my Highway of Heroes memorial fantasy in which I imagined a polyvocal chorus who, in their grief, grapple with, and rail against not only the fact of death, but the geopolitical conditions that resulted in the loss of the soldiers being mourning. My imagined Highway of Heroes was not the one I encountered through the pervasive television and radio broadcasts, or newspaper and social media reports.

I did not attend any Highway of Heroes memorial gatherings in the course of this research. In retrospect, I recognize the limitations of this decision, especially from a research perspective. Much has been missed. Most notably, I now see how my refusal to engage as a participant witness, may have inadvertently colluded in reproducing at least one of the effects of institutionally sanctioned military commemorations by prematurely confirming (through my

absence) the impossibility of dissidence. But however flawed my decision not to attend the Highway of Heroes may have been, it was not taken lightly. I struggled with the tension between my desire to engage, and my fear that my bias against nationalist and military display would trigger me into a mode of unproductive oppositionality. My concern was twofold. First, that participation would implicate me in the production of a form of nationalist and militarist display that I do not wish to contribute to; and second, that if I attended, rather than opening to the possibilities that may have existed at the Highway of Heroes memorials, my resistance to what I perceived as its overarching narrative would overwhelm my perceptual capacities.

Notwithstanding the limitations that my decision produced, I am convinced that the tension as also been productive in that it has resulted in my engaging in research methodologies that have had significant bearing on this dissertation. Rather than reading the Highway of Heroes from the perspective of a participant witness, I opted to read the memorial performance through secondary sources including a variety of news, popular and social media venues. Though this kind of reading lacks the detail that an embodied performance analysis might provide, I propose that these secondary—or archival—sources are critical, in that they act as the echoes through which Canada's ever-expanding array of commemorative performances, like the Highway of Heroes, are able to affect the larger collective body. Despite its popularity as a memorial phenomena, the number of people who attended the Highway of Heroes is small compared to the numbers people (both within and outside of Canada) who learnt of the memorials through secondary sources—media, music, popular texts, art displays, photo montages, etc. My readings of the Highway of Heroes memorials throughout this dissertation are based in its prolific re-performance and on the work that these memorials continue to perform long after its participants have returned home.

But by far the most *impactful* outcome of my choice not to attend the Highway of Heroes memorials was that it led me to devise and perform *Impact Afghanistan War*. *Impact* was a counter memorial project in which I fell 100 times a day in a public space for one year—each fall in recognition of an Afghan death. Over the course of the year—Canada Day 2010 through Canada Day 2011—I fell in parks and on campuses, in courtyards and public squares, in front of churches and political institutions, at festivals and conferences, in cities throughout Canada, the U.S., and Europe. *Impact* became a way of engaging in an embodied dialogue with the Highway of Heroes that though not proximal (or onsite), through its gestures (standing at attention and falling), and its symbols (Canadian flag), had a recognizable and intimate association with the popular memorial. *Impact* allowed me to extend the discourse that the Highway of Heroes evoked to spaces that existed outside the domain of military memorial’s codes of conduct. And perhaps most importantly, it provided me with a means of expressing my grief for Canada’s military casualties without either positioning myself in opposition to the Highway of Heroes, or feeling that my grief was being contained within the limiting range of military commemoration’s narratives grievability.

23 December 2010

Beauchemin Park, Winnipeg

falls 17,500-17,600

Since I began Impact on July 1 the number of Canadian soldiers who have been killed in Afghanistan has risen from 150 to 154. Corporal Steve Miller, Canada's most recent Afghan war casualty, was killed on December 18. As with the other Canadian soldiers who have died in Afghanistan, I learned of Corporal Miller's death through media reports that accompanied the news of his death with a photo and details about his life. Corporal Miller was two days short of

his 25th birthday when he was killed. My oldest niece is 25. She's studying medicine and has a rich and promising life ahead of her. Like her, my other nieces and nephews are at a stage of their lives when they are stepping out into the world. Though not without risks, for them this is a time ripe with possibility.

On the morning after I learned of Corporal Miller's death I dedicated my first fall to him. But one fall did not dismiss his image, or thoughts of what a difficult time this must be for his family, from my mind. As I fall I find myself haunted by his young face. I also find myself wondering about all the nameless and faceless dead in Afghanistan. According to the Red Cross, war casualties in Afghanistan are on the rise. While many of the deaths are from war-related injuries, even more are the result of less direct factors, like "mothers who bring their sick children to hospital too late because they are afraid to travel or are held up by roadblocks, and relatives who take patients home before their treatment is completed."³⁸

Though it's been four years since I completed my year of falling, I remain haunted by both the named and the nameless dead. Through the reiterative gesture of falling (and rising), falling (and rising), a surrogated enactment of dying (and not) dying (and not), my body became a site for the transmission of buried embodied memories of the forgotten (but not forgetting) dead (and not) of history. Though each of *Impact's* 36,700 falls was done in honour of an Afghan death, the dead of the various geopolitical landscapes in and on which I fell whispered to me; those who died at the hands of my Dutch colonial ancestors hailed from across time and

³⁸ See International Committee of the Red Cross, "Afghanistan: War casualties soar in Kandahar hospital." <<https://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/news-release/2010/afghanistan-news-121010.htm>>

place; the dead of modernity's "diasporic and genocidal histories" chanted and cajoled—Why Afghanistan? Why Afghanistan? Why *only* Afghanistan? (Roach, *Cities* 4).³⁹

I am ghosted, not only by these cross-temporal and geo-historical voices, but also by a myriad of non-linguistic dispatches—fragmented physiological and affective remembrances of weather, of light, of texture and architecture, of sound, sensation, and symptom. As I share reflective remains from my year of falling throughout this dissertation, I do so both as an act of evocation—a summoning of *Impact*'s ghosts—and as a petition to readers to remain awake to their hauntings, to the voices that extend between and beyond both words and worlds, voices that refuse or have not yet found their way into the archival linearity and false ordering of text on page.

Two months after completing *Impact*'s final falls, I began *Unravel: A Meditation on the Warp and Weft of Militarism*. *Unravel* is a durational memorial meditation in which I deconstruct military uniforms (fatigues) seam-by-seam and thread-by-thread (ongoing from September 2011). Both *Impact* and *Unravel* have allowed me to situate myself, not as an objective researcher, a distant spectator, or an acquiescent witness, but as someone who is implicated within the scenarios of Canadian nationalism and military commemoration. Fall-by-fall, thread-by-thread, they have provided me with practices through which to investigate, expand, and erode commemoration's narrative frame by embodying a space of sustained engagement within the frame. While the reflective remains of *Impact* are scattered throughout this dissertation's pages, and *Unravel* is discussed explicitly in Chapter Four, both memorial

³⁹ Sections of the writings about *Impact* and the Highway of Heroes discussed throughout this dissertation have been previously published in several sources including my blog impactafghanistanwar.com; "Between Worlds: Reflections on a Year of Falling." *Theatre of Affect* (Essays), Volume 4 in the *New Essays on Canadian Theatre* series, Ed. Erin Hurley, Gen. Ed. Ric Knowles; and "Beyond Heroism and Towards Shared Vulnerability: Re-imagining Canada's Affective Deployments of Mourning in Response to Afghan War Deaths."

meditations inform—and are informed by—the entire project. Unlike military commemoration’s homogenizing elegiac narratives, *Impact* and *Unravel* have hailed ghostly choruses that are reminiscent of traditional lament’s commitment to an antiphonic engagement with the both the living and dead. More than a deconstructionist critique of performances of Canadian military memorialization, with the writing of this dissertation I draw upon lament’s notion of contrapuntality, as a means of creating an interdisciplinary and polyphonic chorus of lament against the forgetfulness of Canadian military commemoration’s production.

Chapters Overview

Throughout this dissertation I deliberately posit both Canadian military commemoration and performance as broadly construed. In the chapters that follow I bring dominant and counter memorial performances into dialogue. I investigate repertorial performances of commemoration—like the Highway of Heroes, Remembrance Day ceremonies, and my own counter-memorial performances—as well as archival performances of institutions and objects—like the Canadian War Museum, military fatigues, and *Unravel*’s threaded remains. I also intentionally wander outside of constructed borders of Canadian military commemoration in order to interrogate the ways Canadian nationalism disappears the violence of settler-colonialism. For example, I bring popular culture performances of nationalist and counter-nationalist narratives—like the Winter Olympics, Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and Jeff Barnaby’s film, *Rhymes for Young Ghouls*—into dialogue with performances more overtly linked to Canadian military memory, like the World War I and II documentary, *The Valour and the Horror*. In bringing this range of performances—repertorial, archival, institutional, and popular culture—of Canadian social memory together under the

umbrella of Canadian military commemoration I seek to make visible the larger scenario of Canadian settler nationalism and its sticky inter(in)animations with militarism, colonialism, and a hierarchical and raced global gender order.

In Chapter One, “From Contrapuntal Agency to Elegy: A Gendered History of Public Lament in the West,” I provide a literature review of five feminist historians—Gail Holst-Warhaft, Anna Caraveli, Nadia C. Seremetakis, Angela Bourke, and Parita Mukta—who investigate women’s historical role as the primary mediators of public mourning in the West, and regions colonized by the West. Each scholar grounds her analysis in particular geographic and historical case studies. Holst-Warhaft looks at lament in ancient Greece; Caraveli and Seremetakis examine the twentieth century mourning practices of rural Greece’s Inner Mani region; Bourke looks at lament in pre-industrial Ireland; and Mukta examines lament in Colonial India. I call upon these histories as a means to comment upon—or (re)mark—the un(re)marked gendered construction that underpins contemporary performances of Canadian military commemoration. I conclude the chapter with readings of twentieth and twenty-first century performances of mourning that extend the analyses of women’s lament by exploring strategies that are used by activists and artists for resisting the “bad scripts” of national ideology (Taylor *Disappearing* 184).

In Chapter Two, “Reframe: Remembering to Remember, Remembering to Forget,” I build on the investigation of historical shifts in mourning practices undertaken in Chapter One through the application of scholarship that extends Freud’s theory of melancholia to an analysis of the consequences of the disavowal of mourning by privileged first world subjects. I bring the works of scholars—Paul Gilroy, Judith Butler—who situate psychological theories of mourning within a geopolitical context, into conversation with readings of three performances that

construct very different narratives of the Canadian nationalism—the Canadian First and Second World Wars documentary series, *The Valour and the Horror* (1992); Canadian media representations of the Sochi Winter Olympics; and, Jeff Barnaby’s award-winning feature length film *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* (2013). As in Chapter One, my intention here is to denaturalize the performative processes of remembering and forgetting that contribute to the construction (and deconstruction) of Canada’s popularized and intersecting national mythologies of humanitarian militarism (abroad) and multicultural inclusivity (at home).

In Chapter Three, “The Canadian War Museum: Imagining (and Re-Imagining) the Canadian Nation through Military Commemoration,” I conduct a performance analysis of the Canadian War Museum (CWM). I begin by situating the museum within the broader context of a burgeoning Canadian military memory network, and examine the influence of network stakeholders in shaping the museum’s mandate, message, and some of the pedagogical approaches. In particular, I’m interested in the ways the museum activates its archival armory toward the interpellation of its primary constituency—children. Then, following Avery Gordon, I use the framework of ghost stories to do a reading of two of the museum’s exhibits: The museum’s “First Peoples” exhibit and the museum’s exhibit on Canada’s peacekeeping mission to Somalia. These ghost stories build on the previous chapter’s discussion of how Canada’s mythologies of happy-multiculturalism necessitates the masking of the racism of white-settler Canadian nationalism and the disavowal of Canada’s violent colonial histories.

Chapter Four, “Unraveling the Uniform’s Ambiguous Meanings & Unbecoming Canadian Nationalism’s Forgetful Narratives,” links the historical and theoretical frameworks discussed in previous chapters to auto-ethnographic reflections of *Unravel: A Meditation on the Warp and Weft of Militarism* (2011-ongoing). As counter-memorial projects both *Impact* and

Unravel (unavoidably) engage a range of gender's dominant gestural lexicons. While *Impact*, with its physically robust performance of falling and standing (at attention), is often perceived as reflecting a masculinist (or militarist) aesthetic, *Unravel*'s cloth-in-lap tableau is saturated with an iconically feminized symbolism. This chapter explores the tensions between the uniform's role in the gendered lexicons of violence and military memorialization's elegiac agenda and *Unravel*'s queer labour of unproduction or unbecoming. I examine how the uniform acts as a performing object that demands obligatory reverentiality while simultaneously concealing both the crimes, and the vulnerabilities, of its wearers.

This dissertation's Epilogue, "In Closing (and Not): Lament for the Stains of the Nation" is not a conclusion. It is a lament for the stains of our Canadian nation, and a call to practices of ethical social engagement. This epilogue brings together an examination of Canada's flag as a symbol of multicultural inclusivity nationalism and geopolitical moral exceptionalism, with a reflection on *Flag of Tears: Lament for the Stains of a Nation*, an embroidery project born of the idea of re-enlisting *Unravel*'s unloosed threads. Tears—each in recognition of one of Canada's missing and murdered Aboriginal women—are embroidered on to the Canadian flag in a task-based act of lament and collective reckoning. Taking its name from the Highway of Tears—an 800 kilometer stretch of Highway 16 in Northern British Columbia where an estimated forty women and girls have gone missing or been found murdered, *Flag of Tears* also gestures back to the Highway of Heroes. *Flag of Tears* refuses white-settler Canadian nationalism's hierarchy of grievability that provides its privileged national subjects with celebrated sites of commemoration, while casting the forgotten dead of its dominant constructions of history outside of the realm of grievability.

A dialogue

FORGOTTEN DEAD OF HISTORY:

Your foot rolling across my spine feels fine, so fine, but I wonder if you would perhaps, please, maybe, if it wouldn't disrupt your day, cause you to veer from your path, if you would, could, wouldn't mind, would be so kind to step a little to the left, place your heel on the knot on the edge of my scapula and stay a while, a breath or two or three, long enough for me to remember—or remind—whatever it is that might bring release. It is a sad thing to be dead so long yet be so unable to rest.

FORGETTING LIVING PRESENT:

My foot will not stray from its path. My foot will not stray from its path. My foot wil ... *a slight pronation, a turn of the right foot inward. A lilting* ... I will not stray from my path.

FORGOTTEN DEAD OF HISTORY:

I would if I could, I would if I was able, I would reach to release, remember, remind, relieve this knot myself. But I cannot move. My hand, my arm, my foot, my tongue are pinned beneath the stony weight of your monumental memory.

FORGETTING LIVING PRESENT:

I will not, I cannot, I refuse to veer, to succumb to your unreasonable requests. Your demands. I was not, did not, it wasn't me. I am not, I will not, I cannot ... *a slight pronation* ... hear ... *a turn of the right foot inward* ... see ... *a lilting*.

CHAPTER ONE

FROM CONTRAPUNTAL AGENCY TO NATIONALISTIC ELEGY:
A GENDERED HISTORY OF PUBLIC LAMENT IN THE WEST



Figure 3. Twenty-one gun salute at Queen's Park, Toronto. Screen capture from video documentation by author.

Remembrance Day 2010

Queen's Park, Toronto

falls 13,300-13,400

*As I fell in Queen's Park today a soldier stood at attention about 50 meters in front of me.
After each fall, I rose and we stood facing one another.*

One hundred times.

He was too far away for me to make out his face, but he looked young. Young and fragile.

*After I completed my falls I stayed to witness the twenty-one-gun-salute: The soldiers at
attention. The order to fire passed down a chain of command. The cannon's explosive roar. The
smoke.*

Twenty-one times.

Replete with symbols of nationalism, the Highway of Heroes memorials, like the Remembrance Day Ceremony I attended, are part of a larger Canadian military cultural memory project that is produced not through a simple top down propaganda mechanism, but rather, through a complex network of organizational and institutional stakeholders that have become adept at using popular media (Fremeth 53). More than simply compilations of particular historical narratives, military memory projects have their own poetics constructed of signs, symbols, and gestures. At the Highway of Heroes memorials flags abound. They're draped over freeway overpasses, flown on fire-engine ladders, held aloft by veterans, waved, and held abreast by civilians. As the motorcade bearing the bodies of the dead, their families, and their military escort pass, uniformed personnel—military, police, fire and rescue workers—stand at attention and salute. Un-uniformed citizens mimic the militaristic gestures. Some salute. Others choose the more civilian but equally patriotic and nationalist display of placing hand over heart. While not all of these gestures are driven by a singular intention, or performed as acts of compliance, taken together, military commemorations construct a cohesive and codified nationalist choreography. Grief, as affective fuel, generates a communal and public pledge to nation, a pledge whose performance extends far beyond the temporal and corporeal boundaries of the memorial event through its representation and re-representation in both mainstream and “grassroots” social media.

Citizen participation in military memorials is largely one of a ritualized enactment of silence. The physical props—flag, cannon, poppy, yellow ribbon—signify not only remembrance and the honouring of the dead, but also the message that this is not the time or place to debate

foreign policy, to voice dissent, or to question the geopolitical conditions that resulted in the loss of the military personnel being mourned. Just as the military has its own internal set of rituals and practices designed to transform recruits into battle-ready warriors, participation in military commemoration transforms civilians into reverential patriots. We stand at attention. We adhere to the rules of engagement—even if only temporarily. Through participation in the Highway of Heroes popular repatriation memorials, or Remembrance Day ceremonies, through the wearing of poppies (or our silence in the face of their prolific seasonal blossoming on jacket and coat lapels) we are temporarily interpellated as “civilian soldiers” (Orr, *Militarization* 452).⁴⁰

In *Panic Diaries: A Genealogy of Panic Disorder* and “The Militarization of Inner Space” sociologist Jackie Orr traces the history of the U.S. government’s manipulation of insecurity and terror as a means of militarizing the civilian psychology and calling into being the “civilian soldier.” Likewise, in “Fear (The Spectrum Said)” and “The Future Birth of the Affective Fact: The Political Ontology of Threat” Brian Massumi argues that the modulation of fear through its production as an “affective fact” has become an increasingly pervasive and instrumentalized political tactic in post-9/11 U.S. In the case of Canada, with our greater emphasis on military commemoration projects, I propose that, to a much greater extent, grief is the affective vehicle through which Canada’s more “reluctant militarists” are conscripted into war (Ruddick “Rationalities” 242):

Reluctant militarists must keep their eyes fixed on justice despite the absence of moral or political connections between the capacity to out-injure and the cause in

⁴⁰ While I didn’t attend any Highway of Heroes memorials, like most Canadians, I have attended many Remembrance Day ceremonies. When I do attend national commemoration ceremonies I resist performing nationalism’s more overt signifying gestures—like waving a flag, saluting, or holding hand over heart during the singing of the anthem. Despite this, I have always felt that through my participation I become enlisted into army of citizen soldiers brought together to defend a nationally scripted collective memory.

which one fights. Whatever the cause, ‘our boys’ must be seen as defenders and victims, not killers. Accordingly, military thinking provides indentifiable (sic) techniques of redescription and evasion that focus the mind on strategy rather than on suffering; on sacrifice rather than on killing; and on the cause rather than the bodies torn apart in its name [n.22].⁴¹ Primary among these conceptual strategies is the creation of the ‘just warrior’ using interlocking myths of masculinity, sacrifice, and heroic death. (“Rationalities” 242-243)

While civilian participants in the Highway of Heroes, Remembrance Day ceremonies, and other acts of military commemoration perform their ritualized enactment of patriotic silence, it is military and state officials who shape the overarching narratives that attributes meaning to the deaths. The reiterated news reports following the death of each Canadian Afghanistan War casualty—affectively buoyed by images from the Highway of Heroes memorials, of military personnel performing their regimented displays of mourning, of grieving family members, and of civilians silently performing their ritualized gestures of remembrance—are punctuated by the meaning-making narratives of those in positions of national and/or military authority:

The relentless commitment of Cpl. Scherrer and other brave Canadians in Afghanistan is a source of pride to all Canadians. (Prime Minister Steven Harper on the death of Corporal Yannick Scherrer)⁴²

Our Canadian Forces members [...] face an enemy that will go to any length to try to undermine any progress made. The courage demonstrated by Pte. Todd

⁴¹ Note 22 references Elaine Scarry.

⁴² CBC News/World, March 27, 2011 [online] <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2011/03/27/afghanistan-soldier.html>.

speaks volumes to his dedication to our country and to this mission. (Defence Minister Peter MacKay on the death of Private Tyler William Todd)⁴³

The bravery and remarkable commitment of Canadians like Sapper Collier are bringing safety and stability to the people of Afghanistan [...] Every day, their dedication and work protect our interests and values here at home and around the world. Sapper Collier's sacrifice will not be forgotten. (Prime Minister Steven Harper on the death of Sapper Brian Collier)⁴⁴

Massumi explains that the effective modulation of affect is achieved through its bifurcation—the splitting off of the emotional and phenomenal experience from cognitive or critical interpretation (“Fear”). By rendering “affective experience” subjective (private) it becomes bracketed off from the political (public) process of producing rationalized narratives of nationalism with their accompanying military and foreign policy agendas. Whereas, in Massumi’s example of the U.S. Homeland Security’s color-coded terror alert system, fear is the “affective fact” through which the narrative for the necessity of a “war on terror” is produced, in the case of Canada’s military memory projects, grief becomes the affective fact through which narratives of humanitarian militarism and heroic sacrifice are manufactured and maintained.⁴⁵

Through the performance of both official and popular public military memorials the

⁴³ CBC News/World, April 11, 2010 [online] <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2010/04/11/afghanistan-canadian.html>.

⁴⁴ CBC News/World, July 20, 2010 [online] <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2010/07/20/afghanistan-cdn-soldier-killed.html>.

⁴⁵ Post 9/11, Canada has also increasingly deployed fear as an affective mechanism to justify increased military spending, participation in non-NATO or UN supported military engagements, and most recently, its “anti-terror” Bill C-51. I maintain, however, that because of Canada’s long and institutionalized practice of public military commemoration, grief’s role in the interpellation of citizen soldiers continues to be significant in at least two ways. First, as a mechanism whereby dissent is managed (and silenced), and second, as a means whereby Canada’s reluctant warriors can maintain a sense of national identity rooted in the intersecting narratives of heroic sacrifice and Canadian humanitarian militarism.

powerful emotions connected to mourning are simultaneously evoked and contained. In concert with the containment of emotions is an imposed reverentiality that results in the silencing of public discourse. In this way, the bifurcation of experience into affective (emotional) and cognitive (rational) arenas can be seen as performing a crucial managerial function in the ideological processes of engendering military and nationalist rationalities. Military commemoration's bifurcated—but deeply interconnected—affective and cognitive meaning-making components produce an assumptive, regulatory, and disciplinary ideological effect that reaches far beyond its reverential participants.

Through an examination of the works of five feminist scholars—Gail Holst-Warhaft, Anna Caraveli, Nadia C. Seremetakis, Angela Bourke, and Parita Mukta—who point to the long and gendered history of grief's bifurcation into controlled public and interiorized private realms throughout the West, in this chapter I seek to illuminate how military memorialization has been shaped by and through dominant and structurally bifurcated orderings of masculinities and femininities that have themselves been produced by and through centuries of imperialist and colonial expansionism. Set against the backdrop of this feminist historical analysis I examine several twentieth and twenty-first century performances of grief in relationship to militarist and nationalist discourses including India's militarized funeral for Mahatma Gandhi; Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo protests in resistance to the Argentinean military junta; *dead-in-iraq* (2007), Joseph Delappe's online commemorative intervention for U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq; and *Impact Afghanistan War*, the year-long public memorial I performed in recognition of the Afghan dead.

Following Roach (and Gilroy), I ground my usage of the concept of “the West” not as a fixed and essentialized geographic location bounded by a set of national boundaries. Rather, by beginning this research with an analysis of the history of women's lament and the interdictions

that led to its near disappearance as a publicly situated practice *in the West*, I am proposing that historical constraints placed on women's public mourning practices should be seen as part of the larger fluid and mobile processes of Western geopolitical expansionism that have fueled dominant contemporary gendered and racialized hierarchical social orderings.

Despite the ever-increasing proliferation of both popular and scholarly literature on death and grief, few contemporary death and bereavement studies scholars have addressed the important role that women have historically played in public mourning rituals throughout many Western pre-industrial communities. This gap in historical recognition is accompanied by, and contributes to, a lack of analysis of the underlying historical and material factors that led to the censure of women's lament throughout much of the West (and regions colonized by the West). I propose that this gap also contributes to the naturalization of contemporary performances of military commemoration by masking, or leaving un(re)marked, the gendered bifurcations that underpin those practices.

The five scholars whose work I discuss in this chapter are notable exceptions to this trend of silence. Through their employment of a feminist analysis these writers contest, and extend conventional readings of lament and grieving practices from the fields of literary theory, anthropology, and bereavement studies. Though each author grounds her analysis in particular historical, geographic, and cultural terrains, taken together, their work illuminates significant thematic congruencies about the aesthetic, affective, social, and political function of women's lament in ancient Greece (Holst-Warhaft), in two marginalized regions of pre-industrial Europe—rural Greece (Caraveli and Seremetakis), and Ireland (Bourke)—and, in colonial India (Mukta). Each author also investigates the underlying factors that have contributed to the near demise of traditional lament. In the process, their work raises salient questions about the political

motivations that informed the need to control and contain (within the realms of the “arts”; a privatized domestic sphere; or an interiorized and individualized psychological realm) community-based affective and repertorial practices.

While foregrounding the category of “woman” is useful in addressing some of the gaps in death and bereavement studies scholarship, the undifferentiated use of the term can also produce and collude with existing (and normalized) gaps in regards to issues of race and class. Among the scholars whose work I discuss, this collusion is most conspicuous in Holst-Warhaft’s analysis in which she fails to include any discussion of chattel slavery as constitutive element of ancient Greek society. As Page duBois argues, both despite and because of the ubiquity of slavery in ancient Greece, it has been largely erased from—or relegated to the status of an unremarked upon normalized backdrop in—modern scholarship.⁴⁶ DuBois suggests that this erasure is grounded in both the need to idealize Greek society as the foundation of western culture and democracy, and to disavow more recent histories of slavery.

By tracing the Western historical routes of women’s lament, I seek to turn attention towards the interface between interdictions against women’s public mourning practices and the rise of military commemoration as an important mechanism of the production of a global gender order that has been integral to the spread nationalism through Western expansionism, colonization, and imperialism. This new gender order masks its hierarchical structurings and rationalizes the displacement of localized gender orderings through an Enlightenment discourse that relies on the naturalization of Eurocentric (white) hegemonic masculinity, the

⁴⁶ As Tina Chanter points out, the marginalization of slavery is also evident in the writings of scholars, like Luce Irigaray and Judith Butler, who use a Lacanian analysis to challenge conventional interpretations of *Antigone* from the perspective of feminist and queer theory.

heteronormative nuclear family, and of both the nation-state and militarism as necessary mechanisms for their maintenance.

To begin, I ground this chapter in a brief examination of some of the disciplinary and gender biases that inform contemporary Western bereavement and death studies scholarship and that have contributed to exclusions, omissions, and limitations of analysis in the fields. I follow this with a literature review of the work of each author that includes an interwoven analysis of four thematic threads: First, an examination of the relationship between the aesthetic form and the affective and political function of traditional lament. Second, a look at how the social and public context of women's mourning practices within pre-industrial societies challenges traditional literary and anthropological readings of women's lament. Third, an examination of the extent to which women were able to utilize lament as a means of resistance through which they could speak back, create counter narratives and alternative oral histories, and negotiate some of the of the material conditions of their lives. And lastly, a look at some the political, ideological, and institutional mechanisms through which women's lament was regulated and controlled, and has, in large measure, been disappeared from the public arena throughout the dominant West.

I devote the final section of this chapter to a reading of performances that harness the affective power of collective grief in relationship to militarist and nationalist discourses. These examples extend the analyses of women's lament that make up the body of this chapter by exploring strategies that are used by activists and artists for resisting what Diana Taylor refers to as the essentializing narratives and "bad scripts" of national ideology. Following José Esteban Muñoz, I propose a disidentificatory and performative embrace of the gendered and raced (marked and unmarked) poetics of mourning as a model for resisting the violent essentialisms of militarism and nationalism.

Death, mourning and bereavement studies: Biases in the field

Sigmund Freud's *Mourning and Melancholia*, published in 1917, has had, and continues to have, immense influence not only on theoretical, psychiatric, and popular *conceptions* of grief and mourning, but also on individual, social and institutional bereavement practices and their associated material effects. In *Mourning* Freud argues that the bereaved individual has invested their ego in the deceased and must therefore "work through" a process of mourning to let go of the lost "love object" in order to liberate their ego. If unsuccessful, the individual will remain in a (pathological) state of melancholia or despair in which they are unable to fully love or to embrace life. In this way, anthropologist and death studies scholar Geoffrey Gorer (among others) argues, Freud's *Mourning* contributed significantly to the redefinition of mourning as a private and internal process and formed the theoretical foundation for generations of Western bereavement scholars to come (139).⁴⁷

Gorer also notes the effects of World War I on public mourning practices in twentieth century Britain. With hundreds of thousands of military casualties a year, Britain's existing public mourning rituals became untenable. A visibly grieving nation would threaten morale and the war effort. Mourning rituals were disrupted by pragmatic considerations as well: Often there was either no body to mourn or the body was so violently fragmented and abject that its disavowal became necessary. And with the deaths of so many young men, the "army of widows" dressed in black would not only be bad for morale, periods of social or romantic withdrawal could not be followed if the nation was to reproduce itself in the post war period (xxi).

⁴⁷ In Chapter Two I will extend this analysis of the effects of Freud's theories of mourning and melancholia by applying the works of scholars who situate psychological theories of mourning within a geopolitical context to readings of contemporary performances Canadian nationalism.

One of the ways Canada historically managed war-related grief on the home front was through censorship of news media war reporting during both the First and Second World Wars. The overarching mandate of these policies was to minimize the violent effects of war and to maximize the heroic and patriotic narratives. As Canadian military studies scholar Robert Bergen writes of World War I news stories: “Most of the news reports received were not of the 15,600 Canadians dying horribly in less than a month in the mud of Passchendale, but of ridiculously upbeat versions of battle” (*Censorship* 5). Though there has been no “official” censorship of war reporting in Canada since the Second World War, in his comparative analysis of news media coverage of Canada’s military engagements in World Wars I & II, the Korean War, the Gulf War, Kosova and Afghanistan, Bergen argues that “journalists and the military alike have been involved in censorship at different times and to varying degrees throughout these conflicts” (1). Like the upbeat battle stories from the trenches of Passchendale, the Highway of Heroes highly publicized memorials for its repatriated Afghanistan War casualties, can be seen as a celebration of heroism wherein the violently fragmented bodies of the dead are shrouded beneath symbols and narratives of Canadian nationalism, and military humanitarianism.

Gorer suggests that there is a relationship between the near disappearance of public mourning rituals and the rise of what he calls the “pornography of death” (as evidenced through a mid-twentieth century proliferation of violent horror movies, comics and magazines as well as books on the horrors of war and concentration camps). He goes on to suggest that the West’s “disavowal of mourning” has resulted in “maladaptive and neurotic behavior” ranging from a

trivial “preoccupation with busy-ness” and the “mummification of mourning” to a kind of social callousness and numbing to the real effects of violence (127-132).⁴⁸

In some ways, the Highway of Heroes complicates Gorer’s assessment regarding the decline in public rituals of mourning and the overall disavowal of mourning in relationship to war. But the Highway of Heroes is more than a public mourning ritual—it is also a spectacle of military pageantry. And unlike the First World War, in which over 61,000 Canadians died, during the ten years Canada was at war in Afghanistan, there were 158 military casualties. In contrast many thousands of Afghans have died as a result of the war in Afghanistan. This kind geopolitically disproportionate distribution of death has become a characteristic contemporary warfare in which far more civilians than soldiers die in the far away conflict zones that Canada, the U.S. and other western militaries engage. I suggest that Canada’s spectaculized rituals of military commemoration are less about mourning and more about its disavowal. Less about feeling grief, and more about masking violence’s real effects.

Whereas Gorer traces the decline of public mourning rituals in Britain to the combined effects of death’s corporeal overwhelm during World War I and the impact on popular culture of Freud’s theory of mourning and melancholia, historian Philippe Aries extends Gorer’s analysis with a more comprehensive social history of shifts within Europe “away from community-based grief towards the privatization of ‘hidden death’ within immediate kin groups” (Hockey “Changing” 193). Aries argues that throughout medieval Europe death was a profoundly public event that was navigated through social rituals that provided both the individual and the larger

⁴⁸ If anything, many of Gorer’s assertions could be considered even more valid today than when he published his study. A quick perusal of television programming reveals a prevalence of forensic crime shows as just one of a myriad of popular culture’s newer genres of death pornography. So while few of us are required rub shoulders with death and mourning prior to its intrusion into our personal lives; and most of us have little idea of how to respond to a friend, neighbour or colleague who has experienced the loss of a loved one; death’s gory and cellular details permeate our public arena and our collective imaginations.

community with resources to “tame” death by making it knowable and familiar. Aries notes that the increasing invisibility of death corresponded to Europe’s gradual shift away from a community-based notion of identity and towards the concept of radical individualism. Death, like many of life’s previously social conventions, became a solitary phenomenon to be managed by “an enormous mass of atomized individuals” (*Hour* 47).

What Aries, Gorer, and the vast majority of death and bereavement studies historians and scholars have in common, is their almost total lack of attention to gender (or race) except to note gender-specific social prescriptions and proscriptions like that of differences in dress requirements for male and female mourners.⁴⁹ In her analysis of cultural representations of women and grief, Jenny Hockey argues that the lack of attention to gender within death and bereavement scholarship is rife with contradiction since both clinical research methods and popular cultural representations related to grief are highly gendered (“Women”). As Hockey points out, early bereavement materials were based largely on studies of (white) women and grief that were in turn universalized to explain “adult” grieving processes (89). Additionally, she notes that while contemporary cultural representations of grief (images and narratives) commonly associate grief’s emotional expression with women, it is men who are more closely associated with the event of death through its narration and professional mediation.

As the public relations quotations by Canadian politicians and military representatives cited earlier in this chapter demonstrate, the gendering of the cognitive (rational) and phenomenal (emotional) bifurcation of mourning’s affect is evident in the media reports of Canadian military casualties in Afghanistan. While it is predominantly male (military and state) spokespeople who shape the cognitive meaning-making narrative surrounding the deceased and

⁴⁹ The exception to the limited attention to race in bereavement scholarship is in anthropological accounts where the mourning practices of racialized “others” are prevalent.

the circumstances of their death, the media images signifying the emotional expression of loss that affectively bolster these narratives are more often those women—the wives, mothers or “girlfriends” of deceased soldiers.

In Canada, mothers in particular, have long played an iconic role as the emblematic bearers of the nation’s grief in military commemoration ceremonies. Every Remembrance Day—on the eleventh minute past the eleventh hour—the National Silver Cross Mother lays a wreath at the foot of the National War Memorial in Ottawa. The Silver Cross is a Canadian invention and institution. In 1919, the Canadian government began awarding the Silver Cross to mothers and widows of soldiers who had died during the war. And in every year since 1950, the Royal Canadian Legion has named a national representative for all Silver Cross Mothers who is bestowed with the honour of laying the wreath. As Graham Carr notes, the Silver Cross Mothers’ role in Remembrance Day imagery makes a crucial symbolic connection between “war as the guarantor of national security” and the nuclear family as “society’s [and the nation’s] most cherished institution” (69). The message is clear—both war, and its commemoration are family affairs.

The bifurcation of the performance of mourning functions not only through the gendering of grief into a cognitive/rational (masculinized), and embodied/emotional (feminized) binary, but also through grief’s spatial organization into public (formally and politically modulated) and private (familial and psychologically interiorized) realms. Along with gendered delineations in the method, degree, and site of expressions of loss, grief’s emotions are further bifurcated into anger (gendered male) and sorrow (gendered female). In addition to becoming the just warriors’ justified response to violent deaths, military retribution can be seen as a means of providing a distancing antidote to the grief’s feminized attributes—a mechanism by which masculinity is

shored up and sorrow warded off with the guarantee that one's death will be forever memorialized as heroic. Through the gendered bifurcation of emotions associated with loss, and the bifurcation of the arenas in which different emotions are acceptable, the emotions themselves are taken out of dialogue with one another. As with the femiphobic disavowals of hegemonic masculinity, rage becomes a mechanism for the annihilation of grief's unbearable sorrow. But, just as rage can be used to hijack grief's sorrow and compel it into acts of violent retribution, grief—as Judith Butler proposes—might also bring about the collapse of rage, and the deflation of rage's destructiveness (Schmidt "Speaking"). One way such a move might be facilitated is through approaches to mourning in which the bereaved are provided with vehicles to express grief's full range of emotions. In the case studies of lament that follow, the authors are not proposing either that grief collapses rage, or that rage's destructiveness is necessarily deflated through embodied expressions of grief. What they do offer, however, is a glimpse into practices of public lament in which the sorrow and rage associated with grief are not bifurcated, and in which their public expression becomes a vehicle of personal, social, and political agency.

From street to stage: Women's lament in ancient Greece (Gail Holst-Warhaft)

Once there were experts in the art of speaking, cursing and singing grief. Now there are experts in the art of dulling grief. (Gail Holst-Warhaft, *Cue for Passion* 23)

One doesn't have to know much about Greek theater to be familiar with two of its most notoriously tragic heroines—Medea and Electra—whose rage-filled grief drove them to bloody acts of vengeance with monumentally devastating consequences. But, as Gail Holst-Warhaft illustrates in *Dangerous Voices: Women's Laments and Greek Literature* and *The Cue for*

Passion: Grief and Its Political Uses, beneath these epic and cautionary tales about the capacity of women's grief to "incite revenge" lies the less well-known story of the role of lament in ancient Greece (*Cue 4*). Like the laments of our tragic heroines (and their accompanying choruses) the real-life laments that were a common part of early Greek mourning rituals were artful performances. Unlike those written for the stage, however, real-life laments were constructed and performed by women.

With her feminist historical analysis Holst-Warhaft challenges the disciplinary constraints of Greek literature by restoring women's lament to the context from which it originated—the street, the community, and the public arena.⁵⁰ In so doing, she sheds light on some of the aesthetic, poetic, and affective characteristics of lament. Holst-Warhaft argues that counterpoint, or polyphony—a central compositional component of lament in most pre-industrial societies—needs to be viewed not merely as a formal or aesthetic aspect of lament but also as reflective of lament's role as a communal art and of its context within the social sphere (*Cue 52*). Through the use of counterpoint, skilled lamenters perform *and conduct* structured and collectivized improvisations that incorporate elements of sound, poetry, and affective performance to channel the myriad of powerful emotions associated with death, and to assist the bereaved in communicating their overwhelming and often "inarticulate grief" (*Cue 4*).

Where literary theory limits analyses of women's lament by removing it from its social location, Holst-Warhaft points out that twentieth-century Western bereavement scholarship, with its roots in psychological theory, has almost altogether ignored the traditional death and mourning rituals of pre-industrial societies (*Cue 5*). Like Gorer, Holst-Warhaft notes that

⁵⁰ Through his study of the role of ritual in traditional cultures, anthropologist Victor Turner noted that when cultures modernize and industrialize their increased division of labour leads to many of the functions of ritual being "taken over by the arts, entertainment and recreation" (qtd. in Schechner, *Performance* 67).

beginning with Freud, psychoanalytic approaches to grief and mourning have emphasized the interior experience of the individual mourner. This psychoanalytic treatment of mourning reduces the role of the larger society to the professional and institutional facilitation of the successful resolution of the individual mourner's grieving process. No longer a social and collective process, within the psychoanalytic model, grief falls under the isolating jurisdiction of the individual.

In contrast, Holst-Warhaft argues that the lament practices of pre-industrial societies were not only communally mediated; they served multiple purposes—individual, social, and political. In addition to providing an affective vehicle to facilitate the expression of grief, lament transformed individual community members' "private pain *and anger* into a generalized and communal reflection on death" (*Dangerous* 71).⁵¹ Through the combination of aesthetic form, emotional affect, and social narrative, lament, especially in cases of unjust deaths, became a tool to demand justice and (at times) retribution. Lament also provided women with an opportunity to challenge the dominant social order and influence material conditions related to death like the negotiation of inheritance rights.

Interdicts against women's lament in ancient Greece began as early as the sixth-century B.C.E. when laws introduced by Solon restricted the practice of "lamenting the dead" to those directly related to the deceased (*Cue* 34). Noting that similar controls were also placed on women's festivals and on women's appearance in public spaces, Holst-Warhaft suggests that while the primary justification behind laws restricting lament practices may have been to halt "the blood feuds that had disrupted Athenian society," Solon's legislation must also be seen as

⁵¹ Emphasis is mine.

part of a larger trend towards the disenfranchisement of women that was paradoxically connected to the development of democratic principles of the polis (34).

As the case studies that follow will demonstrate, interdictions against women's lament were not specific either to the time period or the geographic location of ancient Greece. It's also important to note that women's lament is but one of a multitude of community-based repertorial practices that have been restricted or eliminated altogether from the public arena throughout the West and regions geopolitically dominated through Western expansionism: Roach's example (Introduction) of the early *Code Noir* laws illustrates how enslaved populations were prohibited from practicing their traditional community rituals and practices.⁵²

While beyond the scope of this research to do more than gesture towards the broader range of socially-situated repertorial and affective practices that have been contained or eliminated as a result of Western (ideological, economic, and political) expansion, it is important to recognize that historical interdictions against women's lament were not *only* about the control of women. As is always the case with patriarchy, the control of women is part of a larger project of social, political, and economic control that takes place at the intersections of race, ethnicity, and class. A significant shortcoming produced through Holst-Warhaft's omission of any discussion of chattel slavery from her analysis is that it also results in an absence of any discussion about the need for imperialism to contain mourning and other community-based repertorial practices as one of a range of means of asserting control over populations.

⁵² Despite the *Code Noir* prohibitions, Roach notes that enslaved communities did not cease to perform mourning rituals and other acts of cultural memory transmission. Rather, they invented new forms that involved creative acts of surrogation, wherein they performed themselves (and their grief), by performing "what and who they thought they were not" (*Cities* 5). Though beyond the scope of this dissertation there is a large body of scholarship on the concepts of syncretism and creolization, processes through which cultures brought together through the forces of slavery and colonialism generate hybridized cultural practices. For a discussion of the process of creolization see Edward Kamua Brathwaite's *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1820*, and Stuart Hall's "Créolité and the Process of Creolization."

The Greek city-states of sixth-century B.C.E. emerged out of the transformation of agricultural kin-based societies into large trading centers with an increased concentration of wealth and a more centralized and hierarchical political structure. In Athens, the most patriarchal of the city-states, there arose a power structure based on an elite male citizenry that regulated both military and trade, including agreements over land and inheritance rights, rights that had previously been negotiated through kinship structures. In her study of Greek ritual lament Margaret Alexiou notes, “If the family, based on father right, was to be established as the basic unit of society, then the power of women in religious and family affairs must be stopped and they must be made to play a more secondary role at funerals. *Restrictions on women are another sign of incipient democracy*” (qtd. in Holst-Warhaft *Dangerous* 117).⁵³

Holst-Warhaft concurs with Alexiou regarding the relationship between Solon’s restrictions on women’s role in funeral rites and the shift towards a democratic structure based in a patriarchal nuclear family model. She points, however, to a gap in Alexiou’s analysis when she suggests that another important factor to consider is the way in which women’s lament, through its public focus on grief and loss, interfered with the state’s ability to control attitudes about the “value of death for the community or state [thus] making it difficult for authorities to recruit an obedient army” (3). Holst-Warhaft notes that as the state became increasingly involved in legislating mourning rituals the narratives associated with death also changed, with the emphasis moving away from loss or mourning and towards eulogy or the praise of the dead. Praise, especially in cases of death incurred in battle, became death’s public face while the emotions associated with grief and loss became relegated to the increasingly isolated and privatized sphere of the nuclear family.

⁵³ Emphasis is Holst-Warhaft’s.

Though Holst-Warhaft effectively traces how indictments were used as a means of containing, eradicating, and appropriating women's lament to gain control over the modulation of grief towards state and militarist aims, she neglects to examine the ways in which mourning and burial practices in ancient Greece rendered its non-citizen slave populations ungrievable. Since, in ancient Greece, enslavement of a vanquished enemy was common practice—as were proscriptions against proper burial rites for irregular citizens—Holst-Warhaft's omissions are particularly problematic in the context of her exploration of the relationship between mourning, the Greek city-state, militarism, and war.⁵⁴ Holst-Warhaft's omission is reflective of the degree to which otherized populations can become disappeared while remaining in plain sight.

If proscriptions against burial and mourning become mechanisms for the disavowal and disappearance of the dead, mourning on the other hand can be seen as an act of solidarity with the dead. Holst-Warhaft draws a connection between traditional practices of women's lament and contemporary uses of grief as a political tool to facilitate community expression, empowerment, and resistance and provides a diverse range of examples of the reclamation of lament as a community-based practice. Some, most notably that of The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo—Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo—are examples of women using the power of public lament to resist militarism and war. Wearing white scarves and carrying large placards that bear pictures of their disappeared children, the Madres have held weekly protests in the plaza across from Argentina's Presidential Palace since the late 1970s. Though the Madres protests were initially aimed at Argentina's military junta, since the junta's fall in 1983, successive

⁵⁴ See Tina Chanter's "What if Oedipus or Polynices had been a Slave? Antigone's Burial of Polynices" for a critical analysis of how the issue of chattel slavery has been suppressed in written scholarship of Sophocles' *Antigone*. Despite the tendency of looking to the character of Antigone as a model of resistance to a corrupt and patriarchal state, most western scholars ignore how Antigone's conflict with Creon over the treatment of Polynices's corpse relies on her insistence that her brother is not a slave. As such, her contestation of the wrongness of her brother's corpse is made via the simultaneous assertion of the rightness of the same treatment as it was applied to slaves.

democratically-elected government administrations have failed in their efforts to convince the Madres to bury their dead and bring closure to their mourning. When forensic specialists were brought in to work with Argentinean medical students to exhume the graves left behind by the junta, some individual mothers opted to accept the bones of their disappeared children for burial. As a political organization, however, the Madres fought the exhumations, just as they refused economic reparations and all government attempts at paying posthumous homage.

Through their sustained performance of a ritual of remembrance the Madres have been instrumental not only in transmitting the social memory of Argentine's Dirty War but also in finding some of their disappeared children's, stolen children (many children of the disappeared were adopted by military families of the men who were responsible for the abduction, torture, and murder of their parents). Under the banner of H.I.J.O.S.—“the children of the disappeared” have taken up the Madres' activism, with a continued search for their siblings, and an ongoing call for justice. While, as Taylor notes, H.I.J.O.S. have carried on the Madres tradition of “emphasizing the public, rather than the private, repercussions of violence and loss [as a means of turning] personal pain into the engine for cultural change” (*Disappearing* 168) they have invented their own methods: Through the guerrilla performance of *Escrachas*—acts of public shaming—“Argentina's children of the disappeared [...] target criminals associated with the Dirty War” (164).

Through their politically effective utilization of “Motherhood” and grief as symbols and vehicles of resistance against state repression, the Madres have also influenced numerous subsequent groups and movements who have employed strategically essentialist notions of “mother” or “woman” to challenge violence, militarism, and war. Some of these movements include CoMadres, the Committee of Mothers and Relatives of Political Prisoners, Disappeared,

and Assassinated in El Salvador; the nuclear freeze movement in Britain and the U.S.; the Sri Lankan Mothers' Front and the former Yugoslavia's Women's Peace Movement; and, one of the most long-lasting, and far-reaching groups that identify the Madres as a key inspiration—Women in Black.

Whereas in the U.S., Cindy Sheehan whose son—U.S. Army Specialist Casey Sheehan was killed in the Iraq war—mobilized her grief in a highly visible campaign in resistance to the U.S. war in Iraq, I could find no such examples in Canada. This isn't surprising. As the story of the Silver Cross mothers illustrates, within Canada the grief of mother's has a long history of being institutionally integrated into militarism's nationalist discourse. I propose that Sheehan's courageous actions were, at least in part, made possible because she wasn't acting in isolation. She was able to reach out to U.S. Veterans For Peace and organizations of families of veterans for peace. In contrast, the Canadian government's century-long dominion over Remembrance Day ceremonies and its sponsorship of educational materials that teach Canadians what and how to remember has made it difficult for Canadian veterans and their families to channel grief into anti-war campaigns. Moreover, Canada's well-established narrative of humanitarian militarism has effectively re-branded "peace" as a national military strategy, making death an act of heroic sacrifice for the greater good.

The peripheral poetics of women's lament in twentieth-century rural Greece (Anna Caraveli and Nadia C. Serematakis)

The mourning song performances function as divination rites in which women, through their poetic discourse on the dead, identify the manifestations of evil and

of social crisis that become visible and accessible to criticism because of the event of death. (Nadia C. Seremetakis “Women and Death” 109)

Despite its almost total disappearance throughout much of the contemporary West, remnants of women’s traditional lament have survived in practice and through oral history and collective memory in remote regions throughout the West (Holst-Warhaft *Cue* 6). One such region, the isolated rural enclave of Greece’s Southern Peloponnesse, is the focus of works by Anna Caraveli and Nadia C. Seremetakis. Drawing on the Greek concept of *poesis* “which refers to both making and imagining” Seremetakis argues that women’s lament and funerary practices in Inner Mani operate as an “empowering poetics of the periphery” a space through which the “event of death” provides women with an opportunity to comment on and influence their social world (“Last” 1).

Located in the south of Greece’s Peloponnesian Island, Inner Mani is an arid, infertile, and ecologically isolated region with a strong pre-capitalist clan-based political and economic structure that actively and violently resisted the incursion of state control well into the twentieth-century (“Women” 108). By the latter half of the twentieth-century, however, Inner Mani’s political, economic, and social structure had largely come under the control of state institutions and capitalist economic structures resulting in the demise of many of the region’s traditional cultural practices. Ideological narratives equating modernization with progress, and tradition with backwardness accompanied changes in the political economy of Inner Mani. Despite modernizing pressures, including criticism from an emergent middle-class who expressed embarrassment and disapproval of women’s lament, Maniot women continued to practice their traditional mortuary rituals and to use lament as a vehicle of cultural agency and resistance well into the late twentieth-century.

Seremetakis contrasts readings from the literary canon that conceive of Greek women's lament as individually authored "aesthetic and dramaturgical devices" with an analysis that locates lament as a social practice and "a political strategy that organized the relations of women to male-dominated institutions" ("Ethics" 482). And presenting a counter narrative to theoretical analyses put forth by Foucault (1979), Asad (1983), Scarry (1985), and Taussig (1987) that focus on the ways dominant institutions use the social construction of pain as a semiotic device to manipulate the subject, Seremetakis argues that Maniot women use the "peripheral poetics" of lament to manipulate institutions in an act of "sociopolitical resistance" (484).

In "The Bitter Wounding: The Lament as Social Protest in Rural Greece" Caraveli similarly challenges limiting conventional anthropological narratives that reduce women's prominence in practices of lament and other mortuary rituals to a consequence of their "polluted" status. Caraveli argues that women in rural Greece occupied their traditional role in such way as to transform their marginalized status into a position of personal, social, and political agency: "Lament becomes for the singer an avenue of for social commentary on the larger world, rather than an instrument of restriction and isolation" (191).

Seremetakis and Caraveli both argue that Maniot women's traditional funerary rituals played an extremely significant role in community governance practices. The stateless, kin-based political economy of pre-capitalist Inner Mani was organized via two gendered institutions that assumed political and legal functions now largely associated with the state: The Yerondiki, an all-male council that held formal political and juridical power, and the Klama, or women's mourning ceremony, whose power, though informal, held significant political and juridical influence in a range of issues related to the death including land disputes and revenge feuds (Seremetakis "Ethics" 503). Women's mourning ceremonies served a political function in that

they balanced the power of the Yerondiki's all male council by placing women in the center and shifting men's location to that of the margins.

Through the use of counterpoint, or "call and response," lament facilitates a process wherein meaning is constructed through the larger choral relationship rather than being located solely within the lament text. According to Seremetakis and Caraveli (as well as other authors discussed in this chapter), the antiphonic dimension of lament is a critical component not only of lament's aesthetic form, but also to its relationship to the larger community and dominant social structures. By bringing attention to bear on the antiphonic, or counterpointal dimensions of the lament song (*moiroloi*), Seremetakis resists lament's reduction to that of a literary artifact "traceable to an individual author" and instead insists on its collective production and its social context as a primary vehicle of political negotiation ("Ethics" 482).

To understand the full power of the Klama, and of women's role in traditional mourning rituals in Inner Mani it is necessary to understand that these ceremonies were more than single events; they consisted of a series of elaborate social rituals that extend years beyond the time of death (Seremetakis "Women" 108). As with the laments of ancient Greece, the mourning songs at the center of these rituals served multiple purposes; they acted as oral histories, as a means through which collective conflicts were mediated, and as a vehicle for women to comment on (and influence) larger social issues.

Women's lament continued to play a political and discursive role well into the late twentieth century as Inner Mani came increasingly under the political, institutional, and regulatory control of a modernizing Greek state. Using lament as a form of social protest performers were able to "comment on a wide range of topics, from the performers' own social roles to practices in modern medicine and the effects of the changing economy on their families"

(Caraveli “Bitter” 178-9). Below, the lamenter (and since lament is always a collective performance—the larger community as well) expresses grief not only over the loss of the young child but also over the incursion of institutionalized modern medical practices that displaced traditional healing practices:

Ah, deeply pained child, I have loved you so much!

They tore your belly open with their knives twice,

Looking for the sickness in your guts, my white dove.

But the medicines were drained, the healing herbs were lost;

So they left your pain uncured my small child.

Performer: Alexandra Tsoumani

Recorded by Anna Caraveli, August 15, 1978

As with the interdicts against women’s lament in the early city-states of ancient Greece, the imposition of state control over the community-based repertorial practices that constituted the political structures of the Inner Mani can be seen as part of a larger process in the centralization of power. Just as in ancient Greece, twentieth-century incursion of economic, social, and political neo-liberalism brought not only the demise of an existing gender order, but also the imposition of a new modernized (and unmarked) global gender order.

The world on its head: Irish women’s lament poets (Angela Bourke)

The Irish lamenter had license to behave and speak disruptively, but her craziness was not the isolating kind that makes people unable to communicate. If lament poets were crazy, it was surely only in the way a quilt may be crazy—in an

articulate and structured way and as a creative response to containment. (Angela Bourke “More in Anger” 175)

As with the women of Inner Mani, despite the marginality of their peripheral social location, during times of death Irish women lament poets occupied a central social position. While their laments took place in “world upside down time” their messages carried over into the day-to-day (175). Like Holst-Warhaft, Caraveli and Seremetakis, Angela Bourke extends the conventional literary analysis of lament as an aesthetic form by placing it back into the context from which it originated. Through her feminist analysis of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Irish women’s lament Bourke challenges dominant narratives that either decontextualize lament (as a literary art object) or characterize it as a barbaric practice.

Just as a death disrupts the emotional, physical, and economic lives of those closest to the deceased, in many cultures its accompanying rituals of mourning are understood as generating a liminal space in which accepted social norms are turned upside down. Irish women’s traditional mourning rituals and ritual laments were marked by violations of normative behaviors such as the rending of clothes and hair, keening and wailing, and in some instances, the baring and beating of breasts.⁵⁵ Through the affective, performative, and ritual space of lament, Irish women were able to subvert dominant social and gender norms to comment on and influence the tangible conditions of their lives including terms of inheritance, marriage, and exposure of abuse within the home.

⁵⁵ Some of these mourning related practices continue to be performed in many communities throughout the world. In areas where the West, as a mobile, homogenizing (and hegemonizing) political, social, and economic force, has made incursions their performance as community practice either has diminished or is under threat. As Tova Gamliel notes in her ethnographic study of Israel’s Yemenite community, though wailing as form of women’s lament continues to be practiced, since the practice it is no longer being transmitted to younger generations it is “doomed to extinction” (71).

Also like Holst-Warhaft, Caraveli and Seremetakis, Bourke critiques conventional literary readings of Irish women's lament suggesting that in its translation from repertorial practice to archived object critical elements of lament are disappeared or lost. Reading lament as an individually authored aesthetic object, Bourke argues, ignores the way in which lament's aesthetic form is in an integral relationship with its community function. Bourke uses the analogy of a quilt's removal from its social context and its placement in a museum. Just as the quilt, in its transition from bed to museum or gallery is separated from the context from which, and purpose for which, it is produced; in its transition to page (or stage), lament is also rent from the social context it was once beholding to.

While each of the authors discussed in this chapter articulates the importance of anger as an integral component of traditional women's lament and part of its poly-vocal meaning-making process, Bourke is the only one who places this inclusion of anger into direct dialogue with contemporary bereavement scholarship. Drawing a comparison with Elizabeth Kübler-Ross' highly popularized "stages of grief" model, Bourke argues that the lamenter functioned as a "sort of grief therapist: an explicit aim of her poetry was to move listeners to tears, to facilitate them in expressing their own grief" ("Irish" 288-9).⁵⁶ Crucially, however, though Bourke draws on Kübler-Ross as a means to both emphasize the role of anger in lament, and to revalue traditional Irish women's lament within the framework of contemporary Western bereavement scholarship, she is careful to place the "therapeutic function" of Irish women's lament within a social and political, rather than an individual and psychological context. Thus, Bourke extends the limiting

⁵⁶ Kübler-Ross developed her "five-stages" model (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance) in response to her work with terminally ill hospital patients. In *On Death and Dying*, published in 1969, Kübler-Ross argues that the then institutionally accepted medical practice of keeping information about the severity of patients' illness interfered with their ability to process and "accept" their deaths, and ultimately, to die with dignity and a sense of their own agency and participation. Though in the popular imagination Kübler-Ross' five-stages have long been associated with both death and grief, *On Grief and Grieving* was not published until 2005 (O'Rourke, 2010).

and individualizing narratives not only of literary aesthetic readings of Irish women's lament but also of contemporary Western psychological understandings of mourning.

I suspect that Bourke's choice of Kübler-Ross as a lens through which to examine Irish women's lament is also a strategic intervention designed to disrupt contemporary and limiting notions of the acceptable range of public emotional expression allotted to the bereaved in the dominant West: "In our culture we choose to approve of grief expressed as sadness and to be embarrassed by displays of anger, but an understanding of anger as a fundamental part of grieving allows us to see invective as an essential part of the lament" ("Irish" 290). Like Holst-Warhaft, Seremetakis and Caraveli, Bourke argues that lament performances, with their artful and cathartic public expressions of anger as well as sorrow, served multiple functions for the individual, and the community as a whole, and had the power to effect change.⁵⁷ Bourke points out that the funerals in pre-industrial rural Irish society within which Irish women's laments were performed were multi-class events where "conflicting interests and conflicting interpretations of signs could be expressed in various ways" ("More" 165). Because of these conflicting interests and interpretations, the content of the lament was often delivered, and simultaneously masked, by its aesthetic and formal composition:

Mourners who listened carefully would hear the words of the keener not only praise and grief but also clear statements of identity and protest and a catalogue of women's wrongs. Others listening less carefully or less sympathetically—or the uninitiated, unnerved by the experience—would hear mostly noise or would miss the small verbal clues that gave point to the familiar formulas. ("More" 168)

⁵⁷ Anthropologist Victor Turner argues that ritual is not a merely symbolic act intended to satisfy the psychological needs of the individual mourners but is rather an action intended (and believed to) produce results (Hockey "Changing").

Unlike the Silver Cross mothers whose laying of the wreath on the eleventh minute of the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of the year, is heavily emplotted with a nationalist narrative, Irish lament poets took full advantage of the central position they occupied during the time of death, and of their license to speak and behave disruptively, to communicate the concerns and negotiate conditions of their social marginality. Through lament, Irish women were able to communicate grievances such as those related to domestic violence while simultaneously protecting the victim by masking the message through the use of satire, the juxtaposition of blame with praise, and by communalizing or collectivizing statements of abuse so that it was less about an individual women but could be read as a generalized statement about women's social conditions.

Despite these creative and strategic uses of ambiguity, however, the power of lament did not go unnoticed by dominant institutions like the church and the state. Religious authorities throughout Europe issued interdicts, similar to those introduced in ancient Greece, from the beginning of the Christian era through the twentieth century. As Holst-Warhaft points out, in Ireland, where the ritual of "keening" and women's central role as mourners at funerals had survived longer than elsewhere in the British Isles, the church viewed the practice of lament "as a pagan custom" that challenged "their own professional control over death" (*Cue 36*). Lament was regularly banned throughout Ireland and its practitioners threatened with excommunication. It was also the subject of frequent and scathing commentaries by English writers who "compared Irish lamenters to heathens" (*Cue 36*). The extensive efforts on England's part to silence Ireland's lamenting women (often exercised through the authority of the Church of Ireland) corresponded with Britain's lengthy reign of terror over the Irish peasantry and its subsequent need to "quell the potential for violent revenge" (*Cue 37*).

Despite centuries of state censure against women's mourning practices, in both Greece and Ireland women's lament continued to be practiced at least in rural areas. As Bourke points out, where centuries of official censure by the Church of Ireland and critique by English politicians and public intellectuals failed to silence Irish women's lament, "increased industrialization and the spread of the English language and urban values" left in their wake only traces of lament in the memories, poetry and oral traditions of formerly traditional Irish-speaking communities ("More" 162). Ultimately then, a key factor in the demise of women's lament was the incursion of modernization trends that were produced historically through Western/European colonial expansionism and that continue today through the homogenizing/hegemonizing effects of economic neo-liberalism and military expansionism.

India: Women's lament beyond Western eyes (Parita Mukta)

In different societies, over varied times, and under very different political economies, when state powers have been consolidating their authority, this has necessitated (with varying degrees of success) both the displacement of mourning, the harnessing of the force of lament in their own aggrandizement and, in extreme cases, the erasure in social memory of the dead. (Parita Mukta, "Civilizing Mission" 27)

Thus far, the focus of the works reviewed in this chapter has been on mourning rituals and women's lament practices in regions within "the West" (with the examples of rural Greece and Ireland troubling notions of the West as a site of homogenous hegemonic privilege). Parita Mukta's "The 'Civilizing Mission': The Regulation and Control of Mourning in Colonial India" further complicates the notion of the West as a hegemonic, homogenous, and fixed location of

privileged subjectivity by extending beyond the West as a fixed geographic location. Mukta offers an illustration of some of the ways in which control over women's mourning practices might be considered an important ingredient of a larger recipe of Western colonization and an example of one of the ways the West functions as a mobile geopolitical and ideological force.

In addition to the geopolitical location that is the focus of Mukta's case study, another major difference between her analysis and that of the other authors discussed in this chapter is that Mukta pays less attention to the aesthetics of women's mourning. Instead she concentrates on the mechanisms of regulation and control exerted by colonial India's elite indigenous male social reform movement and on the geopolitical and ideological underpinnings that informed the move towards silencing Indian women's lament. Mukta illustrates how England's censure of women's lament extended beyond the boundaries of the British Isles and became part of its "civilizing mission" in India. While Holst-Warhaft, Seremetakis, Caraveli and Bourke all note the critical role that modernization—as an ideological component of Western Enlightenment and its corresponding project of expansionism—played in the demise of women's lament, Mukta focuses not only on how women's traditional mourning practices were a *casualty* of modernization's trends, but also on how they were a specific and crucial *target* of colonization and its accompanying ideology of modernity (25).

Using a postcolonial Indian feminist analysis Mukta troubles the Western (and Western feminist) gaze by problematizing the "othering" of both India, and Indian women.⁵⁸ Unlike Holst-Warhaft, whose focus on women as an undifferentiated category renders issues of class

⁵⁸ In her highly influential essay "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse," Chandra Talpade Mohanty critiques Western feminists' writings on the "Third World Woman" for their lack of recognition of the effects of their discourse within the larger colonial context. Mohanty argues that in their writings about third world women Western feminists have produced a body of knowledge about a (female) non-Western "other" that reflects "assumptions of privilege and ethnocentric universality, on the one hand, and inadequate self-consciousness about the effect of Western scholarship on the 'third world' in the context of a world system dominated by the West, on the other" (19).

and race invisible, Mukta offers a nuanced reading of the struggles surrounding Indian women's mourning practices, one that considers internal (class, caste, and gender) differences as well as colonial influences on discourses and social reform movements during India's colonial era. She accomplishes this in several ways: First, she disrupts dominant Western modernist narratives that regarded "Indian women as 'backward' in the ways in which they demonstrated grief" by drawing on the work of feminist scholars (like Holst-Warhaft), and Indian folklorist, Jhaverchand Meghani. These authors' work demonstrates both the culturally particular aspects of women's mourning practices as well as the many "historical cross-cultural similarities of lament" (25-26). In this way Mukta also challenges anthropological disciplinary biases which tend to focus on the exoticized practices of the non-Western "other," by pointing out that these practices are not "non-Western," but rather that they have been largely eradicated and disappeared in much of the West through the implementation of policies and mechanisms of regulation and control that were then extended and applied to the West's outlying colonies.⁵⁹ Lastly, Mukta's analysis reveals the ways in which colonial powers enlisted the indigenous upper-caste elite of India towards the implementation of control and the manufacture of a particular type of colonial subject.

Mukta argues that the control exercised over women's lament by India's indigenous elite must be seen within the context of England's colonial mission, and that it had a direct

⁵⁹ Though Mukta's focus is Indian women's public mourning practices, I'm struck by how her analysis resonates with Silvia Federici's analysis of Europe's witch burnings (*Caliban*). Using a Marxist feminist analysis Federici examines the intersectional relationship between capitalism, patriarchal oppression, and colonialism and argues that Europe's control and suppression of the repertorial practices of women and colonial populations was (and continues to be) a necessary element of capitalism's emergence and spread. Challenging the notion that capitalism (with its accompanying ideologies of private ownership and individualism and its reliance on wage labour) emerged in Europe as an evolutionary transition away from a feudal economy to a more benevolent "democracy" Federici contends that "capitalism was the response of the feudal lords, the patrician merchants, the bishops and popes, to a centuries-long social conflict that, in the end, shook their power" (21). Though Federici does not directly address women's mourning practices (or their regulation and control), like Mukta, she suggests that control of the embodied practices of women and indigenous colonial populations were as necessary to capitalism's emergence and proliferation than was the control (enclosure) of land and other physical resources.

relationship to the “institution of a specific form of democracy which legally divested women from their critical political role in mediating kinship relations, inheritance rights, and a public restitution of ‘justice’” (26-27). This same contradiction, between the institution of a more centralized “democratic” model and the restriction of women’s public participation, is noted by Holst-Warhaft in her analysis of the restrictions on women’s social roles that were instituted by the emergent city-states of ancient Greece. (Notably, Holst-Warhaft fails to address the equally contradictory relationship between slavery and the ideology of democracy.) Seremetakis, Caraveli, and Bourke also emphasize the ways in which women’s mourning practices significantly contravened both pre-existing and emergent dominant social political orders and were therefore subject to censure. Mukta, however, attributes far greater significance to the suppression and censure of women’s mourning practices, in her insistence that the “confinement of grief was essential both for the proper safeguarding of an increasingly important (and privatized) domestic realm, and for the security of the emerging colonial state” (34). Where Holst-Warhaft begins to trouble the relationship between the censure of women’s lament (as well as that of women’s participation in the larger public realm) and the emergence of democracy and ancient Greece, Mukta’s insistence that this censure was “essential” for the institution of a “specific form of democracy” raises the stakes on an analysis of the history of women’s lament. The “democracy” that Mukta alludes to is that which was born of Europe’s Enlightenment ideals based in the rights of the rational individual and a universalized and uni-directional notion of progress (pit in opposition to “tradition”). It could be argued that the deeper roots of this democratic model (a model that promotes hierarchical citizenship) are to be seen in the polis of the early city-states of ancient Greece.

The widespread practice of women's lament in India, which crossed caste and religious (Hindu and Muslim) boundaries, entailed,

a demonstrative show of emotion [...] whereby the social construction of grief (through lament) had been channeled into the loud weeping and mourning of deaths, and where the call for vendetta murders was often institutionalized into the structure of laments, came under serious opposition in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. (29)

As Mukta notes, the earliest critiques of women's lament in India corresponded with the 1857 Revolt, a period in which multiple constituencies throughout Indian society rose up to challenge British political authority (29). Despite the correlation between these large-scale and widespread uprisings and lament's well known role in the "voicing of harsh social truths [and the] hurling of accusations against those deemed to have brought about the direct (or indirect) death of the person mourned" (35), calls for the reform of women's lament ignored the issue of vendetta and instead were framed as a call (by India's indigenous male elite) for more modernized forms of behavior among upper caste Indian women (37).

Ultimately, Mukta argues that the real significance of the shift in mourning towards more privatized, state, and institutionally controlled practices lies in containing the "transgressive, public nature of mourning" and that the relegation of women to an increasingly privatized domestic arena was instrumental in enabling this shift (44). Through her emphatic insistence that control of women's mourning practices was essential for the manufacture and maintenance of an "increasingly important (and privatized) domestic realm," as well as for "the security of the emerging colonial state," Mukta suggests that there is a crucial link between the need to control

and contain women's affective expression and the colonial (and capitalist) state's need to control and contain populations, land, and resources.⁶⁰

Mukta complicates feminist readings of lament that use "woman" as an undifferentiated category by illustrating how colonialism and its "civilizing mission" were integral to the imposition of indictments against women's mourning practice, and how those indictments were necessary for to the security of the colonial state. In this way Mukta's analysis provides a particularized example of Connell's more overarching claim that hegemonic (white, Eurocentric, owning class) masculinities assert themselves through process of colonialism and imperialism. As Connell argues, this expansionist spread of hegemonic masculinity produces a global gender order that is differentiated both internally (within) and externally (across) nations, communities, and organizations.

Like Mukta, though to a far lesser extent, Bourke also takes up the ways in which the British colonial state used interdictions against women's lament as a means of quelling Irish resistance. Likewise, Caraveli and Seremetakis, through the specificity of their focus on Inner Mani, connect their analysis of women's lament to a the larger discussion of resistance to the incursion of capitalist economic structures and modernist ideologies. Holst-Warhaft, on the other hand, with her omission of any discussion of race, class, and of the integral role of chattel slavery leaves the imperialist practices of ancient Greece unmarked and unnamed.

In addition to the problematic of reproducing normalizing omissions, this chapter's discussion of the history of women's lament carries with it two other risks. As Gayatri Spivak argues in her highly influential essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" intellectuals who write about

⁶⁰ While Mukta's focus on a colonization and its imposition of a form of capitalist modernity, its important to note that like many socialist and communist post-independence states, through its embrace of a modernist approach India implemented a series of development policies (the Green revolution, the construction of mega-dams, etc.) that have resulted in the displacement of India's Adivasi populations from their traditional lands.

oppressed (subaltern) populations risk either becoming unknowingly complicit in processes of colonialism and imperialism and cultural erasure or romanticizing the oppressed as pure. To complicate the idea that the oppressed can speak for themselves Spivak juxtaposes debates on widow burning by colonial—"White men saving brown women from brown men"—with those from Indian nativists—"The women actually wanted to die" (296-297). Spivak argues that discourse, as a mode of producing meaning (with material effects), has its routes in a history of symbolic representation that has long been a tool of what Foucault terms "epistemic violence." With her conclusion—"The subaltern cannot speak"—Spivak is not proposing that intellectuals therefore abandon the task of representation. Rather, she is insisting that deconstructing the methods of representation is a critical element of dismantling oppression.

In reviewing these authors' case studies it has not been my intent to argue for a nostalgic return to a fictively utopic feminist past. Rather I have sought to provide a glimpse into the ways in which women's lament operated historically as a vehicle to facilitate, not just individual processes of mourning, but complex social and political negotiations as well. Though varied in approach, and historically and culturally specific in analysis, several central threads weave these authors' theses together: First, though none denies the artistry of the lament practices, nor of the importance of the role of skilled individuals in the composition of lament narratives, all challenge the reduction of the lament narrative to an individually authored literary object by placing it squarely within the context of a public, collective and political practice. Second, each author examines the ways in which women have historically used lament as a tool of resistance through which, from their peripheral social location, they could speak back to the dominant, create counter-narratives and alternative oral histories, and influence the conditions of their personal and collective lives. Third, to varying degrees, each also addresses the political,

ideological, and institutional mechanisms through which women's lament was regulated, controlled, and largely disappeared from the social arena. And finally, especially when taken together, these author's works emphatically illustrate the importance of the inclusion of women's unique and central role in mediating public mourning throughout the West, not only for its own sake, but also for the sake of understanding the political significance of community-based repertorial practices and of the corresponding political rationale that underpins their censure, containment, control, or co-optation.

The displacement of women—as gender-marked bodies—from their role as the primary public mediators of mourning, left its new mediators un(re)marked. Unlike the invisibility of the marginalized or disavowed “other,” the privileged invisibility of remaining un(re)marked is a powerful one that naturalizes the gendered and racialized essentialisms produced by processes of colonialism, imperialism, and nationalism. Unlike Canada's military commemoration ceremonies, historical women's lament created spaces in which some existing power hierarchies could be temporarily disrupted. Choruses of lamenters gave voice to grief's full range of emotions and were able to comment on and influence the tangible conditions of their lives. The displacement of lament's polyvocality (of both narrative and emotional content) with eulogy's reductive accolades, homogenizes the celebrated dead, disavows those rendered ungrievable, and silences the living through proscriptions of obligatory reverentiality.

Challenging the toxic representations and bad scripts of militarism and nationalism through disidentificatory memorial interventions

Mukta argues that the significance of the regulation of women's lament in colonial India is not only in denying women (and the larger community) access to a powerful aesthetic and

affective means of political resistance—it is also in the state’s taking over of the mediation of mourning for the promotion of its own nationalist agenda. Mukta offers Mahatma Gandhi’s funeral—organized by India’s Ministry of Defense—as a particularly disturbing example of the state’s harnessing of the affective power of collective grief:

After nearly a century of social reformist activity which had centered around the question of death and mourning, the death that caused the greatest convulsion in twentieth-century India was that of Mahatma Gandhi, five months after the political processes of colonization had been formally overturned [...] The images and descriptions that survive of the state funeral that he received are both moving in the scenes of the grieving crowds that congregated to pay their last homage [...] and disturbing due to the strong and visible presence of the military (a bitter travesty of all that Gandhi had stood for). (42)

In life, Gandhi steadfastly embraced non-violent action as a force for social change towards the production of a post-colonial nationalism grounded in a multivocality of religious, class, and caste identities. Gandhi’s non-violence was a sustained performance of radical vulnerability that defied hegemonic notions of masculinity. His equally radical insistence on the peaceful co-existence of “identities-in-difference” resisted religious and nationalist fundamentalisms. In death, however, Gandhi’s body was opportunistically enlisted as a symbol of a militarized Indian nationalism.

During his funeral, Gandhi’s “body was carried upon a weapons carrier, surrounded by ‘four thousand soldiers, a thousand airmen, a thousand policemen, and a hundred sailors’” (42). Clearly, the spectacular militarization of his funeral did not erase all that Gandhi stood for from popular Indian (and global) imagination. But—as with Canada’s discursively paradoxical linkage

between humanitarianism and militarism—it did construct a relationship between Gandhi’s radical commitment to non-violence and India’s military. And—as with both popular and state-sponsored Canadian commemoration ceremonies—this relationship extends far beyond the corporeal and temporal site of its performance as the metonymic bond between Gandhi and his military entourage are projected into the present and future through the reperformance, or “still liveness” of photographic images from the funeral.⁶¹

As discussed in the Introduction, spectacles of militarized nationalism produce essentializing discourses that naturalize “seemingly obvious differences within and between the sexes or the races or the classes” (Taylor *Disappearing* 24-5). Their ability to do so often relies on their contemporaneous capacities not only to dissipate difference, but also to disappear, or naturalize, the processes whereby difference is dissolved. The eulogizing and monovocal narratives of performances of military commemoration are particularly well suited for the production of nationalist discourses since they are adept at homogenizing the dead—and silencing the living. Regardless of their individual identities or political affiliations, military commemoration transforms all dead soldiers into national heroes. Moreover, it transforms the most bereaved of mourners—like the Silver Cross mothers—into civilian soldiers, and, as Gandhi’s funeral demonstrates, the most non-violent of the nation’s celebrated dead, into reluctant (but dead) militarists.

Because both militarism and nationalism are so adept at reifying essentialisms, resistance to state and military agendas necessitates taking up what Taylor calls the “bad scripts” of

⁶¹ Rebecca Schneider argues that the forward and backward gesture of photography (and other technologies of media reproduction) not only records an event but also hails its future viewers (*Performing*). The same is true commemoration and memorialization, which not only commemorates the moment of death, but also hails us as citizen subjects through the ritualized mechanisms of memorialization that are largely shaped through a military and nationalistic poetics.

national ideology and identity (*Disappearing* 184). As the example of the Canada's Silver Cross mothers illustrates, women have long been symbols of the nation, and the grief of mothers (and wives) has been, and is, regularly mobilized in support of the nation and as a call to arms.⁶² But while women's grief has been deployed on behalf of nationalist and militarist agendas, women-centered and women-led movements have also been at the forefront of anti-militarist organizing. As discussed previously in this chapter, Argentina's Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo, and more recently, Cindy Sheehan, are two notable examples of the script of motherhood being used in resistance to militarism.

While not *essential* to their anti-military organizing, the Madres role as mothers was *instrumental* in their process of politicization and their activism against the state. In Argentina of the seventies and eighties, middle-class married women were still largely relegated to the domain of the home and the family while men dominated the more public domains of the workplace and politics. This gendered division of labour, together with their socialized role as primary care givers, meant it was predominantly women who were responsible for the time-consuming quest to discover the whereabouts of their missing children. In this way, a generation of women—who until the disappearance of their children had been primarily homemakers—found themselves suddenly immersed in the world of politics and embarking on a path of activism. Despite their lack of prior political experience, the Madres successfully refused the essentializing discourse

⁶² In the Introduction I note of Lynn Segal's examples of the ardent support of women for Hitler and Mussolini and the fact that a selective group of women in Britain and Canada earned suffrage as a political pay off for their support during the First World War. In their introduction to *Women-nation-state*, Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias examine how women operate as a symbolic category in the construction of and reproduction of nationalism. Yuval-Davis and Anthias identify five ways women participate in the construction of ethnic, state and nationalist identities: "(a) as biological producers of members of ethnic collectives; (b) as reproducers of the (normative) boundaries of ethnic/national groups (by enacting proper feminine behavior); (c) as participating centrally in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity and as transmitters of its culture; (d) as signifiers of ethnic/national differences; and (e) as participants in national, economic, political, and military struggles" (7-8).

the junta used to justify the disappearances of their children on the grounds that they were subversives and enemies of the state. Wearing white baby diapers as a symbol of their bond to their disappeared children, the Madres inserted themselves into a “terrifying scenario [that] was organized and maintained around a highly coercive definition of the feminine and motherhood which the women simultaneously exploited and attempted to subvert” (Taylor, *Disappearing* 184).

Like the Argentinean military, the Madres performative use of motherhood can be seen as producing an essentializing narrative that naturalizes differences between the sexes. But as Spivak posited when she coined the term “strategic essentialism,” all uses of essentialism are strategic—deployed as a means to either bypass or to acknowledge difference (“Scattered” 477). Through their exploitation of essentialized notions of motherhood, the Madres differentiate themselves from the military junta’s “patriarchal discourse” that situated them as “bad mothers, mothers of subversives” (83).

Since war, militarism, and nationalism are inextricably linked to the production of essentializing hierarchies, any analysis of militarism, nationalism, and the nationalistic project of military commemoration must necessarily engage the ghosts of what queer performance theorist José Esteban Muñoz has dubbed the “now stale, essentialism versus anti-essentialism debates” (6). Extending the work of feminists of colour who theorized the notion of intersectionality and “identities-in-difference,” Muñoz proposes the concept of disidentification as “a mode of performance whereby a toxic identity is remade and infiltrated” (185). As with Taylor’s example of the Argentinean junta’s bad script of motherhood, the toxic and otherizing identities produced by the dominant or majoritarian public are simultaneously injurious and inescapable. With disidentification, Muñoz offers a means by which “a subject who has been hailed by injurious

speech, a name, a label, reterritorializes that speech act and the marking that such a speech produces (185).

Like the Madres—who took up nationalism’s toxic representations of mothers—examples of disidentificatory performances of militarized masculinity can be seen in a range of veterans’ anti-militarist organizing including the “winter soldiers” campaigns, which were organized to expose military atrocities in Vietnam, and more recently, in Afghanistan and Iraq.⁶³ Similar to the Madres’ use of symbols of motherhood, U.S. anti-war veterans rely on the re-deployment of symbols of military masculinity in their anti-war struggles. For example, winter soldiers often deliver their testimonies dressed in fatigues and wearing dog tags. This kind of disidentificatory approach allows for the reclamation of military masculinity as an identity predicated on domination, and made toxic through the performance of state-sanctioned acts of violence. Through their performance of public testimonials that reveal the crimes of war, the winter soldiers’ masculinized subjects reterritorialize their toxic identity, not by disavowing either their masculinity or their identity as soldiers, but by becoming a new kind of soldier. Like Gandhi, in taking a stand against the violence of militarism, they defy both hegemonic notions of masculinity that disavow vulnerability, and essentializing nationalistic discourses that justify violence by rendering “enemy” populations ungrievable and therefore killable.

While the focus of this chapter has centered on the history of women’s lament, my point has not been to suggest either that all public expressions of grief by women actively resists

⁶³ Vietnam Veterans Against the War organized the 1971 “Winter Soldier Investigation” as a three-day media event in which discharged soldiers gave testimony about war crimes they had committed or witnessed. A documentary—*Winter Soldier*—that chronicled the war crimes hearing, was released in 1972. Inspired by the 1971 hearings, in 2008, the group Iraq Veterans Against the War hosted Winter Soldiers: Iraq and Afghanistan, a three-day event that, in addition to hearing testimony from U.S. military veterans and active duty soldiers, also heard from Iraqi and Afghan civilians.

While there are numerous veterans’ organizations in Canada their focus tends to be on preserving and maintaining control over Canadian military memory, and on advocating on behalf of veterans for benefits, and other resources. In my searches, I have not found any visible “veterans against the war” organizations.

militarism and nationalism *or*, that resistance to militarism is necessarily (or best) performed by women (or through the embrace of a feminized poetics). Instead, I propose a disidentificatory and intersectional feminist embrace of the gendered poetics of mourning, deployed in resistance to the naturalized essentialisms produced by nationalism and militarism, and performed through military commemoration. One such performance is Joseph Delappe's *dead-in-iraq*. A memorial for U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq, Delappe's commemorative performance takes place in the virtual commons of the popular online first person shooter game, *America's Army*.

If death pornography abounds, one of its more opportunistic manifestations can be found in *America's Army*, which auspiciously premiered on July 4 (Independence Day) 2002.

Developed by the U.S. military as a promotional, recruitment, and "education" tool, *America's Army* is the brainchild of Colonel Casey Wardynski. On a Best Buy games-buying expedition with his two sons the Colonel was "amazed to discover that about 60 percent of the games available involved something that looked like an army" (qtd. in Brady *Performance* 86).

Wardynski saw in the virtual war game an opportunity to supply the real U.S. Army with "a better prepared customer" (87). Now in its fourth edition the *America's Army* franchise, with its "teen" rating and free online access, is a highly successful example of "experiential marketing" (86-87).

The game's online Fact Sheet explains how *America's Army* "reflects the bedrocks of Soldiering [and] adherence to Army Values" (*America's Army* "Fact Sheet"). *Individual development. Teamwork. Leadership.* These are the value-laced promises *America's Army* makes to its virtual soldiers, virtually clad in U.S. uniforms, bearing their virtual weapons. These are the values they perform as they engage in the bloodless mayhem of the repeated task of virtual

killing, virtual dying, and virtual rising to kill, die, rise, kill, die, rise, kill, die, rise kill, die, rise...

Enter Joseph Delappe—AKA, “dead-in-iraq”:

I enter the game using my login name “dead-in-iraq” and proceed to type the names using the text-messaging system. [...] I do not participate in the proscribed mayhem. I stand in position, drop my weapon, and type until I am killed—whereupon I hover over my dead avatar’s body and continue to type. (Delappe, “Dead” 2)

Like his millions of generic virtual comrades, Delappe arrives in *America’s Army’s* militarized zone wearing a U.S. military uniform and bearing arms. But unlike *America’s Army’s* armies of virtual soldiers who take up their toxic mission—to kill their equally generic terrorist enemy—Delappe does not comply. Delappe is on an altogether different mission—to deliver “reality into the fantasy”—which he executes by typing in chronological order, the name, age, and date of death, of the real life U.S. soldiers who lost their real lives in the real bloody mayhem of the Iraq war (qtd. in Brady 63). While Delappe refuses *America’s Army’s* prime directive—to kill the enemy—he is only able to do this through a disidentificatory embrace of *America’s Army’s* rules of engagement, by enlisting and then simultaneously engaging in and refusing the game’s masculinized poetics.

Delappe began his online memorial in 2006 in commemoration of the third anniversary of the U.S.’s launch of “Operation Iraqi Freedom.” Like the soldiers I witnessed on Remembrance Day, Delappe performs a kind of masculinized stoicism. But whereas the regimented gestures of the soldiers assigned to commandeer the Remembrance Day cannons—the order to fire passed down a chain of command. The cannon’s explosive roar—can be seen as

an unflinching disavowal of vulnerability, Delappe assumes a stance of radical (virtual) vulnerability. He drops his gun and stands undefended. When killed he leaves his dead avatar body in plain site while he types in the names of the U.S. soldiers who died in Iraq and whose bodies have been hidden from public view. Delappe refuses both militarism's hyper-masculinist violence, as well as its femiphobic denial of vulnerability. He collapses the space between war's annihilating actions and its annihilating effects, and between the annihilation of the vulnerability of the other and the annihilation of the vulnerability of the self.

Through his disidentificatory performance of masculinity, Delappe resists militarism's toxic and essentializing mission and "[contests] the hegemonic supremacy of [*America's Army's*] majoritarian public sphere" (Muñoz 1). Through his combined act of engagement (playing the game) and refusal (not accepting the games' rules of engagement) Delappe disrupts the expectations of the *America's Army's* virtual combat zone. Delappe exposes the lies embedded in military masculinity's mission—war is not a game in which one miraculously rises from the dead ready to fight another battle. In war, the dead remain dead. By typing the name of "real life" dead soldiers into the game's text-messaging system Delappe makes visible the bodies that are hidden from public view via the U.S. policy of public censure.

In typing the names of the dead into the game's live (virtual) chat string Delappe also disrupts the monovocality of nationalism's eulogizing military commemoration ceremonies. In the process he hails an unlikely and polyvocal chorus from within the virtual-live game of war:

[US Army] –hk-burritoman#1messed: i think they are dates of deaths of
soldiers

[US Army] dead-in-iraq messaged: CEDRIC LAMONT LENNON 32 ARMY
JUN 24 2003

[US Army] BgRobSmith messaged: are those real people??

[US Army] dead-in-iraq messaged: JOHN ELI BROWN 21 ARMY APR 14 2003

[US Army] bin-lad-e-nG.W.B messaged: I am sriry

[US Army] dead-in-iraq messaged: JOSEPH ACEVEDO 46 NAVY APR 13 2003

[US Army] bin-lad-e-nG.W.B messaged: I am sriry

KICK NOTIFICATION: dead-in-iraq has been kicked by an Administrator

[US Army] dead-in-iraq messaged: JIMMY J ARROYAVE 30 MARINE APR 15
2004

[Admin] [BM]LoftyDog ADMIN MESSAGE: cause i don't need to sit through
1000 deaths

[Enemy] stepdown messaged: RIP, THIS IS A GAME

[US Army] dead-in-iraq messaged: HESLEY BOX JR 24 ARMY MAY 6 2004

[US Army] dead-in-iraq messaged: JEFFERY G GREEN 20 MARINE MAY 5
2004

[US Army] dead-in-iraq messaged: ERICK J HODGES 21 MARINE NOV 10
2004

[US Army] -os-zelptic messaged: dead stfu you dumb****{FUBAR}rtftd was
shot by [-Boomer-}

[US Army] turkeybird messaged: who cares

[US Army] Pvt_Styx messaged: he drops his gun at the beginning of every round
[US Army] dead-in-iraq messaged: GEORGE T ALEXANDER JR 34 ARMY
OCT 22 2005

[US Army] Pvt_Styx messaged: jeez shut up already we get it people died
[US Army]={UMD}=HairyJohnson messaged: hmmm so whats your point?
XSTALKERX89 was shot by {UMD}=MORE_BEER.

CrazyCrav has added a vote to kick dead-in-iraq. [8/11]
[Enemy] sargentroysmith2 messaged: HE NAMES PEOPLE DEAD IN IRAQ
[US Army] Paddi15978 messaged: lol
jojomom has successfully joined the server

[US Army] dead-in-iraq messaged: DAVID G TAYLOR 37 ARMY OCT 22
2006

[US Army] cpm@messaged: what's wrong with what he's doing
[US Army] dead-in-iraq messaged: NICHOLAS K ROGERS 27 ARMY OCT 22
2006

[US Army] Paddi15978 messaged: OMFG mnot this cunt again

(Delappe "Dead" 3)

Many things stand out in these exchanges. There is the femiphobic attack—*mnot this cunt again*—on Delappe's performance of vulnerability; the efforts to silence Delappe by garnering

the required votes to *kick* him from the game; the blatant irreverence—*who cares, lol, jeez shut up already we get it people died*; the acknowledgment of loss—*I am sorry*; and the voices of Delappe's virtual comrades who defend his actions—*what's wrong with what he's doing*. What I find hopeful about this polyvocal and frequently dissonant commentary is the way it both disrupts and exposes militarism's codes of hyper-masculinist conduct. Delappe's online commemoration generates a collective meaning-making process that—though often disheartening in its display of femiphobic violence—resists the normalizing univocality of both militarism and military commemoration.

Neither wars, nor military commemoration ceremonies, are designed as spaces of critical reflection and public discourse. They are zones in which the gestures and actions of combatants and mourners are rigorously and ritualistically prescribed and proscribed. Soldiers are trained to obey orders without hesitation—which is to say, without thought. And within the Canadian Forces—in order to regulate of the voices of the bereaved—it is common practice to have military family members write eulogizing statements before their loved ones are even deployed to combat zones.⁶⁴ These prewritten statements are kept on file to be released to the press in the case of a soldier's death. The rationale for this practice is to alleviate the burden of making a statement while in a state of grief. These pre-written (and pre-vetted) eulogies do more than cleanse the family's words of the messy emotions associated with grief, they also ensure that any change of heart, or increase of critical analysis, a soldier may have communicated with family members during their deployment is not part of the commemorative process.

⁶⁴ I learned this detail about the management of military families' grief at a staged reading by Montréal's Teesri Duniya Theatre of James Forsythe's *Safer Ground?* (2012). The production I attended was a work-in-progress reading of excerpts of a verbatim play derived from interviews Forsythe conducted with Canadian soldiers returning from Afghanistan, their families, and members of Montréal's the Afghan community. In one excerpt, a soldier's spouse explained the surreal process of writing a brief statement to be released to the press in the case of their partner's death.



Figures 4 & 5. From left to right, *dead-in-iraq* screenshot "dead...whats your point?" (from Joseph Delappe's website), and *Impact Afghanistan War* (photo Shannon Scott).

During the year I performed *Impact Afghanistan War* I happened upon a York University FaceBook group page that had phone-recorded video footage of me falling to the accompaniment of the laughter of the video's "shooter" and their friends.⁶⁵ The video post was followed by a FB chat that bears some resemblance to the chat string that Delappe's performance generated. In concert with the dismissive laughter, there was some name calling. By internet standards, these comments were relatively innocuous and consisted mostly of suggestions that I was crazy, drunk, or both. What most fascinated me however, was how a polyvocal meaning making chorus quickly emerged. People who had witnessed *Impact* during the months that I had been falling on campus, began to explain to others what they understood about the project. When one person explained that each fall was in honour of Canadian soldiers who had been killed in Afghanistan, someone else chimed in to say that the falls were actually dedicated to the Afghan dead whose deaths go unacknowledged in Canada. Colleagues at York have shared their experience of overhearing similar live conversations about *Impact* while traveling on TTC or sitting in campus cafes.

⁶⁵ For two semesters during the year that I performed *Impact*, I was doing coursework and working as a Teaching Assistant, which meant that I was at York up to four times a week, and often did my daily falls on campus.

When I began *Impact* I felt distressed at the notion that my intentions might be misconstrued. Overtime however, I've come to realize how integral ambiguity was to *Impact*'s dialogue with the Highway of Heroes and other Canada's popular and state-sponsored military commemoration ceremonies. *Impact*'s intent was never to hail a chorus of mourners who would echo a singular point of view. Rather, it was to hail a polyvocal chorus engaged in a process of collective reckoning.

I didn't learn of *dead-in-iraq* until after I completed my year of falling. Since my discovery of *dead-in-iraq*, however, I have been struck by some of the similarities and differences between the two projects: *dead-in-iraq* combines the performance of virtual dying with the naming of the real dead in order to commemorate those whose deaths were hidden from public view because of the U.S. ban on media coverage of repatriation ceremonies—*Impact* combines falling, as a surrogated enactment of dying, with counting of each set of falls out loud (one to one hundred) to commemorate the unnamed Afghan dead who have been rendered invisible by the U.S./NATO no-body-count policy; *dead-in-iraq* is performed in the virtual commons of *America's Army* combat zone—*Impact* in the corporeal commons of parks, campuses, and other sites of public gatherings that are far removed from the battlefield; *dead-in-iraq* performs a disidentificatory embrace of military masculinity—*Impact* challenges normalizing gender associations through its performance of gender-ambiguity with some passersby reading the performance as masculinist (and my body as male), while others (who read my body as female) infer a feminized poetics.

But where *dead-in-iraq* and *Impact* are perhaps most similar is in their use of the performance of vulnerability to reterritorialize the toxic identities associated with militarism and war. Through this act of reterritorialization, they make strange the normalized and essentializing

gestures of nationalism, militarism, and nationalistically inscribed performances of commemoration. Similarly, in examining the history of women's lament, I have sought to make strange military commemoration's normalizing elegiac narratives by drawing attention to their performances of in/visibility. The displacement of women—as gender-marked bodies—from their role as the primary public mediators of public mourning, left its new mediators unmarked. Unlike the invisibility of the marginalized or disavowed “other,” this is a powerful invisibility, one that naturalizes the essentialisms produced by nationalism and military masculinity's global gender order. The displacement of lament's polyvocality (of both narrative and emotional content) with eulogy's reductive accolades, homogenizes the celebrated dead, disavows those rendered ungrievable, and silences the living through prescriptions of obligatory reverentiality. Like *dead-in-iraq*, *Impact* sought to make strange that which military commemoration rendered naturalized, to hail a polyvocal citizen chorus, and to denaturalize the violence of nationalism and militarism.

5 January 2011

York University, Toronto

falls 18,800-18,900

Yesterday, while falling at York an ambulance appeared on the horizon. It was traveling on a footpath and heading my way. As I fell—ninety-two, ninety-three, ninety-four—several questions went through my mind: Will I finish before they reach me? Will they, can they, stop me? Who called them?

By ninety-six the ambulance pulled up in front of me and alongside my stand with its postcards (fig.1) and inscribed-upon flag. A paramedic rolled down his window—ninety-seven—

looked at the cards and the flag—ninety-eight—looked at me—ninety-nine—rolled up his window and the ambulance drove on. In the ambulance's wake I was struck by a sudden and raw surge of emotion. I wanted to cry out. To hurl myself to the ground. To weep, and scream with outrage: Emergency! Emergency! Emergency!

CHAPTER TWO

REFRAME:

REMEMBERING TO FORGET; REMEMBERING TO REMEMBER

12 September 2010

Christie Pits Park, Toronto

falls 7,300-7,400

Yesterday, I realized that this was the first September 11th since 2001 that I've lived outside of the U.S. That it took several days for this to sink in speaks to how differently 9/11 is experienced within and beyond U.S. borders. While events surrounding this year's "ground zero" memorial ceremonies were covered in the Canadian media, it didn't dominate the news; there remained a sense that the rest of the world continues to exist.

Falling these last few days I'm reminded of how, immediately after 9/11, I nurtured an irrational hope (perhaps hope is always irrational), that the palpable sense of fear and loss that accompanied the rupture of North Americans' naive (or privileged) notion of a benevolent sky, might manifest an empathy capable of recognizing the suffering of the multitudes of "Others" for whom geopolitical violence is a daily catastrophe—an empathy not bound by national boundaries. I also (again—perhaps irrationally) hoped for an en masse critical reflection (or collective soul searching) on the role of U.S. foreign policy (as well as that of other "first world" countries like Canada) in the production of global inequity and violence.

While to a-not-to-be-dismissed extent this did happen, it wasn't enough. When the U.S.—with its coalition of the willing and the coerced—launched its wars on Afghanistan and Iraq, despite massive and vocal global opposition, my hope turned to despair. And as I watched the hypnotic media images of the towers falling—over and over and over and over and over and

over—I became curious about the mechanisms through which social numbness is constructed. Along with this curiosity came a curious compassion, not only for the disavowed “Other,” but also for the alienation born from within the belly of the Imperial beast where sandstorms of misinformation and distraction collude to reduce the role of citizenship to one of spectator and consumer.

In *Frames of War* Judith Butler extends Louis Althusser’s notion of “modalities of materiality” to argue that the mechanisms through which war is framed need to be understood as “material instrumentalities of violence” that function as more than simple precursors to, or commentaries on, war, but as acts of war in and of themselves (xiii). These frames function not only by legitimizing particular agendas and geopolitical worldviews through the selective placement of images and narratives within the frame, but also through the “de-realization” of “enemy” populations by casting them outside of what is considered the normal realm of “human” values into an otherness that is consequently outside of the range of our compassion and empathy (*Precarious* 33).

While at its most overt, de-realization is evident in the demonization of the “enemy,” it also functions more subtly by placing entire populations outside of the range of our collective grief thereby facilitating a large-scale empathetic detachment from the consequences of our nation’s military actions. A primary mechanism through which this de-realization operates in the social sphere is through the “differential allocation of grief” wherein “grievable humans” are allotted institutionally supported venues for “celebrated public grieving” while there is a corresponding “prohibition on the public grieving of other’s lives” (*Precarious* 37).

Butler suggests that a more “egalitarian mourning” that insists on the grievability of all

lives, a mourning that is based on the recognition that vulnerability is a primary (and shared) condition of life, could facilitate “an ethics of non-violence and a politics of a more radical redistribution of humanizing effects” (Butler 2003, 9). Writing in the context of the U.S. she argues, however, that such mourning would destroy national self-perception and require that “the notion of the world itself as a sovereign entitlement of the United States must be given up, lost, and mourned, as narcissistic and grandiose fantasies must be lost and mourned” (2006, 40).

Inside the frame of U.S. post-9/11 memorialization are those who perished in New York’s Twin Towers, at the Pentagon in Washington, and in the crash of hijacked United Airlines Flight 93 in a field in rural Pennsylvania. And inside the frame of Canada’s popular Highway of Heroes memorials are the Canadian military personnel who died while serving in the Afghanistan war. These are lives that in death are simultaneously exalted and eclipsed. Sacrificed on the altar of national commemoration, the remembered and revered dead cease to exist for themselves, their families, and communities. Not only are they corporeally dead, in death their right to an identity in difference is also denied. However minoritarian, disavowed, dissenting, frightened, or even mundane they may have been in life, in death they are forever pressed into service as heroically patriotic representatives of the militarized nation state.

And outside the frame? Cast outside of the frame are haunting legions of derealized and disavowed Others. Populations and histories—past, present, and in the making—whose inclusion within the frame would disrupt the patriotic and binary narratives of good and evil, “Us” and “Them,” that supply nation states and their dominant and dominating populations with their ideological foundation and moral justification. Cast outside of the frame of military commemoration are the populations and histories whose visibility within the frame would interfere with the nation’s capacity to either hail its armies of enlisted, or to maintain a sense of

national innocence.

However material we might understand the frame to be—and most certainly, its material effects are annihilatingly real—those outside its purview are not unreal, not unseeable. The success of the frame is precisely in its ability to blind the see-er, to numb their capacity to apprehend the lives that exist outside of the frame’s ideological construct. Diana Taylor—who could see with her own eyes the ruins of New York City’s smoking Twin Towers from her apartment window—argues that “the intensely mediatized seeing” of the repeating footage of the planes striking the towers, and of the towers’ collapse “became a form of social blinding: percepticide, a form of killing or numbing through the senses” (*Archive* 244).

Beginning this chapter with a reflection on the percepticidal spin of U.S. post-9/11 militaristic nationalism might be considered very Canadian of me. After all, if the U.S. positions itself as the world’s geopolitical centre and self-appointed police (backed up by righteous military might), the spin of Canadian nationalism can be seen as one of moral exceptionalism (backed up by a more reluctant and benevolent militarism). Under the menacing shadow of the U.S.’s more belligerently imperialist nationalism, the light of Canada’s constructed sense of national innocence glows ever so bravely and brightly.

In this chapter I examine some of theoretical and institutional mechanisms that underpin Canadian memorialization in relation to militarism and colonialism with an eye to how they simultaneously facilitate processes of both social remembering and social forgetting. How, through seeing, do we become blinded? And how, through remembering, do we forget? How are our engagements in acts of war that target civilian populations, and in colonial and geopolitical violence, rendered inapprehensible through our commemorative strategies? How has colonialism come to be cast so far outside the frame of dominant white-settler narratives of Canadian

nationalism that our Prime Minister can boldly pronounce to the world that Canada has, “no history of colonialism”?”⁶⁶ What is the relationship between Canada’s privileged memorialization of the First and Second World Wars and its disavowal of the colonial violence on which Canada is founded?

I begin this inquiry by bringing Paul Gilroy’s analysis of Britain’s privileged memorialization of its involvement in the “great anti-Nazi war” as a form of postcolonial melancholic disavowal (88), into conversation with Canadian World War II commemoration. In particular, I focus on the controversy surrounding the 1992 primetime airing of Terrence and Brian McKenna’s Canadian World War I and World War II documentary series *The Valour and the Horror*. Canadian studies scholar Howard Fremeth has identified *Valour*’s airing, and the subsequent controversy as formative events in the emergence of a powerful, innovative, and far-reaching Canadian “military-cultural memory network” (52).

In the second part of this chapter I extend my inquiry into the intersection of Canadian military commemoration and popularized notions of Canadian moral exceptionalism by looking at different ways the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) is taken up. As Jennifer Henderson and Pauline Wakeham argue, Canada’s TRC functions as “a paradoxically ‘representational anomaly’” (“Colonial” 5), one that makes visible the atrocities of Canada’s residential schools while simultaneously framing them as a historically contained exception. Following Henderson and Wakeham, I explore the paradox of Canada’s TRC by juxtaposing a reading of Canada’s platinum-medal-worthy public relations performance on the global stage of the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics and Jeff Barnaby’s award-winning feature length film *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* (2013).

⁶⁶ Prime Minister Harper made this statement at a press conference during the 2009 G20 Pittsburgh summit (Henderson and Wakeham “Colonial” 1).

To close the chapter I return to post-9/11 New York City (NYC) with a discussion of Krzysztof Wodiczko's *City of Refuge: A 9/11 Memorial*. Wodiczko extends Emmanuel Levinas's notion of reintroducing the biblical concept of designating certain cities as sites where the "half-guilty, half-innocent" are given refuge from vengeance by applying it to his vision of NYC as a post-9/11 living memorial. With this return to post-9/11 NYC my aim is not to revisit the well-traveled terrain of Canadian exceptionalism. Rather, it is to draw a connection between Wodiczko's (utopic) vision, and how the TRC's community-based repertorial processes and their incursion into popular cultural arenas—through creative productions like *Rhymes*—functions (in the here and now) as a living memorial with the potential to facilitate an ongoing critical reflection on the popular mythology of Canadian white settler nationalism. I also distinguish this concept of the living memorial as a site of unsettling critical reflection, from the forgetful and fixed narratives of Canadian military commemoration.

The Valour and the Horror: *Remembering and forgetting through World War II commemoration*

As Paul Connerton notes, together with a shift in late twentieth century historiography in which historians moved away from "the role of legitimating history to one of bearing witness and to chronicling historical catastrophe" (23) there emerged the increasingly widespread and popularized belief in both the therapeutic and political value of the narration of historical trauma (33). Connerton cautions however, against the notion that remembering has an *inherent* ethical-political value, and offers World War II memorialization as one example of the complex ethics of memory and forgetting. On one hand, Connerton asserts that the testimonial narratives of Holocaust survivors are "at once political acts and therapeutic acts" that resist genocidal erasure

as the most brutal form of “coerced forgetting” (33). On the other, he notes that outside of Germany, World War II memorialization practices often collude with the history of Germany’s “taboo of post-war amnesia” through the disavowal of both war-time and post-war atrocities committed against German civilians by allied forces (47).⁶⁷

In *Postcolonial Melancholia*, critical race theorist Paul Gilroy examines how through its privileging of World War II commemoration Britain does more than simply collude with Germany’s post-war amnesia—it actively contributes to the production of other significant memory foreclosures. Gilroy argues that, for British subjects, Britain’s involvement in the great anti-Nazi war has taken on a “totemic power” that helps to facilitate what he calls Britain’s postcolonial melancholic disavowals by veiling from contemporary memory the genocidal brutality of Britain’s colonial history (89). The irrefutable goodness that is continually re-inscribed through the reiterated narrative of Britain’s engagement in the anti-Nazi war functions to divert attention from both the nation’s neo-liberal continuations of its colonial legacy (as enacted through Britain’s contemporary anti-immigrant narratives and policies), as well as from its continuing military engagements in multiple “postcolonial conflicts” (89).

As in Britain, Canada’s World War II commemorations can be seen as contributing to the larger project of distancing the nation from its colonial legacies. However, given Canadian settler nationalism’s near-wholesale denial of Canada as founded in colonial violence (I will follow up with this in my discussion of the Canadian TRC), what appears to be more immediately at stake in struggles over who and what is remembered in relation to Canada’s involvement in World War II is Canada’s image as a nation of benevolent militarists. If, as popular national mythology

⁶⁷ The two specific examples Connerton gives are that of the post-war amnesia in relationship to the allied aerial bombardments campaign (which I will take up later in this chapter) and the large-scale post-war rape of German women by Russian and other allied forces.

would have it, World War I was the “Great War” in which Canadians proved their sacrificial mettle on the “killing grounds” of Vimy Ridge, World War II is Canada’s “Good War.”⁶⁸ It is the birthplace of Canada’s image as a nation whose military engagements were simultaneously heroic and benevolent, an image that is nurtured and sustained through a range of conventional military commemoration projects and, more recently, through a proliferating range of newer more popular culture-savvy memory projects.

Though military memory projects (monuments, museums, commemoration events, etc.) have long been a part of Canadian culture, through his use of the term *military-cultural memory network* Fremeth gestures towards what he asserts are two significant changes in Canadian military memory projects that have emerged since the early 1990s: First, the expansion of conventional military memory projects into a broader range of public and cultural arenas (radio dramas, Hollywood-style movies, military shows at sporting events and community festivals, etc.); and second, the emergence of a complex network of organizational and institutional stakeholders that have become adept at utilizing popular media forms and at accessing infrastructural support to “canonize and archive Canadian military memory” (53).⁶⁹

A key formative event in the emergence of this network of military stakeholders and the resulting expansion of Canadian military cultural memory projects, according to Fremeth, was the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation’s (CBC) 1992 primetime airing of the film series *The Valour and the Horror*, a three-part docudrama about Canada’s military engagements in World War I and World War II. Written by brothers Terence and Brian McKenna, *Valour* came to be

⁶⁸ In Canada, World War II commemorations are not so much privileged in military memorial but rather, as Ian McKay and Jamie Swift note, are merged with that of World War I, in a way that “erase[s] the profound differences between the two conflicts” (94).

⁶⁹ By stakeholders Fremeth is referring to “those actors in the transmission of collective memory and the production of cultural memory forms about military history” (Canadian military representatives, veterans’ organizations, organizations that represent the military families, military historians and scholars as well as a range of cultural producers) (66).

seen as part of what General Rick Hillier, during his tenure as Canada's Chief of Defence staff, dubbed a "decade of darkness" for the Canadian Forces⁷⁰—an era in which the "Somalia Affair," the Canadian Airborne Regiment's initiation rites controversies, and Canada's failed attempt to halt the Rwandan genocide disrupted Canada's reputation as a peacekeeping nation and left the Canadian Forces with a deeply tarnished public image (54).⁷¹

Valour's most contentious episode, "Death by Moonlight: Bomber Command," combined dramatic re-enactments with documentary interviews and archival footage of the allied bomber offensive against Germany that 50,000 Canadians participated in. Through their representation of the bombings that targeted and killed 600,000 German civilians and wounded many more, the McKennas' film challenged the allied bombing campaign on both strategic and moral grounds. The series sparked a \$500-million-class-action lawsuit by Canadian Royal Air Force (RAF) veterans against the program's producers, a Senate Committee Hearing, and a nation-wide public debate over who had legitimate rights to the control of social military memory, and by what means.

Despite RAF veterans' allegations that they had been defamed by the film's portrayal of the bombing of German civilians, the Senate Committee hearings on *Valour* did not contest the accuracy of the filmmakers' representation of the facts of the bombing (Senate of Canada 15). This lack of contestation of the facts related to the bombing of German civilians is especially notable in light of the committee's extensive criticisms of the film's producers on the grounds of relatively minor historical inaccuracies—details regarding uniforms, insignias, setting and

⁷⁰ See *Toronto Star*. "Top General's Comments Anger Liberals."

⁷¹ See Sherene Razack's *Dark Threats and White Nights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping, and the New Imperialism*. In the Chapter Three—"The Canadian War Museum: Imagining (and Re-Imagining) the Canadian Nation through Military Commemoration"—I will examine the museum's representations of Canada's peacekeeping mission to Somalia.

chronologies. But a primary focus of the criticism from military historians who testified before the committee, and who were engaged in public debate about the series, was on the filmmakers' use of docudrama as a form that blurs genres of documentary and drama, or history and entertainment: "The use of actors in such a production is dangerous. Dramatic sequences, even when accurately documented, are still open to considerable misinterpretation and bias through voice and demeanor. Sensationalism often prevails" (Senate of Canada 26). An irony in the anxiety over *Valour's* theatricalized blurring of lines is that these same historians fail to question the military's reliance on scripted, choreographed and prescribed activities or its production and deployment of sensationalized public commemoration ceremonies.

Fremeth proposes that the criticisms of the film's use of docudrama were underpinned by the recognition on the part of professional historians of "the power of docudrama to popularize military history and reach a much larger audience than any scholarly book or article" (64). Where historians saw an incursion into their domain, veterans recognized a powerful mechanism for expanding theirs. Though veterans were critical of the filmmakers' portrayal of the bombings, they did not oppose the use of docudrama. In fact, one of the veterans' demands was that the filmmakers produce a new edited version of the series that would take into account their objections, a maneuver, Fremeth suggests, that illustrates the veterans' "respect for the ability of the filmmakers to popularize the past and make it aesthetically pleasing for the public and, in particular, for youth who had trouble relating to military history" (65).

Though the RAF veterans were ultimately unsuccessful in their class-action suit and in their efforts to have the McKennas' film series censored, stakeholders in Canada's military network appear to have won the more significant battle over control of the ongoing framing of Canada's military-cultural memory. One element of this success can be attributed to the

stakeholders' embrace of docudrama, alongside other popular culture approaches, as methods of popularizing military memorial.⁷² Evidence of the reinvigorated and increasingly media savvy military cultural memory network that emerged in Canada's post-*Valour* era can be seen in multiple arenas. In addition to major increases in spending on conventional memorials and museums dedicated to warfare and military memorial,⁷³ popular dramatic forms have emerged as a "key element in the memorialization of military history" (63) as can be seen in the CBC's popular radio drama series, *Afghanada*, which first aired in 2006; in *Passchendaele* (2008), the World War I Canadian epic starring (and directed by) Paul Gross; and in the increasingly hip Remembrance Day television advertisements.

It is not my intention to deny either the overall value of Canada's engagement in World War II, or the sacrifice of those who fought. As the child of Dutch immigrants who grew up in occupied Netherlands I was raised on stories of the courage and generosity of Canadian soldiers who were on the front lines of the Netherlands' liberation. My very citizenship as a Canadian is in large measure a result of the reverence my grandparents, parents, and the Dutch in general have for Canada. The immense gratitude of the Dutch is not only because of the sacrifices made by Canadian Forces in the liberation of Holland, but also a response to multiple gestures of caring during the war, such as the sharing of army rations with those who were starving in the north of Holland.

⁷² Another significant element of this success can be seen in the power of the military memory network to assert both legal and public relations pressure on a range of institutions—media, educational institutions, museums—to ensure control over which narratives are included within the frames of Canada's dominant (archived) military memory. One example of this pressure can be seen in the Canadian War Museum's two-year battle over how the museum would represent the World War II bombings of German civilian populations. The battle concluded with the resignation of the then museum director Joe Geurts in 2007 after a Senate Committee report advised the museum to change the Bomber Command display to reflect the wishes and concerns of veterans groups (*Toronto Star* "War").

⁷³ The Canadian War Museum in Ottawa—one of the most notable and costly conventional memorials to be constructed post-*Valour and Horror*—will be the focus of Chapter Three where I will also discuss the integration of more popular media and docudrama elements into the conventional realm of the museum.

What I have sought to illustrate with this brief discussion of the vehement reaction against *Valour* is the extent to which stakeholders in Canada's military memory network resist the inclusion of any narratives that might be seen to violate Canada's just warrior and humanitarian militarist mythologies. I want to note, however, what I consider a far more insidious act of disavowal. As with Gilroy's example of Great Britain, it's important to point out that Canada's World War II commemorations do more than absolve the RAF of war-time atrocities. Sustained by the narrative of great anti-Nazi war as the ultimate battle of Good versus Evil, the more far reaching aspect of the totemic power of World War II commemoration is in its capacity to eclipse the evils of colonialism, neo-colonialism, and their ongoing violent effects. But as Aimé Césaire reminds us in his scathingly poetic post-World War II essay on colonialism—Hitler did not invent evil. Césaire writes of Europe's response to Nazism:

People are surprised, they become indignant. They say: "How strange! But never mind—it's Nazism, it will pass!" And they wait, and they hope; and they hide the truth from themselves, that it is barbarism, the supreme barbarism, the crowning barbarism that sums up all the daily barbarisms; that it is Nazism, yes, but that before they were its victims, they were its accomplices; that they tolerated that Nazism before it was inflicted on them, that they absolved it, shut their eyes to it, legitimized it, because, until then, it had been applied only to non-European peoples ... (*Discourse* 36).

Césaire refuses the western narrative of Nazism as a historically isolated genocide invented by an evil madman and defeated by an army of righteous (Western) warriors. Instead, he makes a connection between Europe's disavowal of its perpetration of racist colonial violence and its perpetration of the Nazi Holocaust. He temporally and spatially deterritorializes the dominant

World War II commemorative frames that are behold to the dictates of European and white settler-colonial nation states.

Nationalism constructs its frames of legitimization and grievability through the production of privileged subjects whose destructibility is rendered “*unthinkable*” while their acts of destruction are simultaneously rendered “*righteous*” (Butler *Frames* 47).⁷⁴ Drawing on Talad Asad’s 2007 study of suicide bombings Butler illustrates how these nationalistic framing mechanisms are less about legitimizing or de-legitimizing particular acts than about legitimizing or de-legitimizing *actors* (41). Thus, whereas suicide bombings are deemed illegitimate acts of aggression against “innocent” civilians by virtue of the fact that they are conducted by “terrorists,” the deaths of German (or Afghan) civilians, however “regrettable,” are deemed the result of legitimate acts of war because their destruction was perpetrated by state-sanctioned “just warriors” and waged against a population whose innocence is eclipsed by nationality.

Soldiers and veterans, as state-sanctioned actors, must banish from collective memory any acts that would tarnish their image as “just” warriors. Individual soldiers (male and female), constrained by notions of military masculinity, are compelled to deny their own vulnerability, or risk having it framed (and feminized) as cowardice. Military commemorations must eulogize its just warriors within nationalistically prescribed parameters, and banish all others to the realm of ungrievability and inapprehensibility. Likewise settler-nationalism—delivered through an expanding and dazzling array of national and international public relations performances—must construct a discursive frame that blinds us to actions, past and present, that do not align with Canada’s national identity of benevolent militarism and geopolitical moral exceptionalism.

⁷⁴ Emphasis is Butler’s.

*Sochi Olympics 2014, the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the haunting
ghouls of Canadian nationalism*



Figure 6. Downloadable “We Are Winter” poster from <http://olympic.ca/wearewinter/>.

Blizzards blind. As a Prairie girl I was raised on stories of bodies found frozen metres from home or from the relative safety of a car stuck on the side of the road. Scare-tales designed to keep me safely indoors, to make me wary of disorienting maelstroms. Ghost-story antidotes to the storm’s snowy lure. Canada’s 2014 Winter Olympics’ media blizzard came with no such warning, no promise of safe havens. An extension of the “Own the Podium”⁷⁵ campaign that was launched in preparation for the Vancouver 2010 Winter Games, the “We are Winter” media blitz invaded our quotidian spaces of private and public gathering—our homes, schools, streets, workplaces, cafes, restaurants, bars, movie-theatres, cabs, cars, and busses. Dubbed the “largest

⁷⁵ The “Own the Podium” campaign was launched in 2004 after Canada was awarded the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. In February of 2004 the Federal government passed a budget that gave the Own the Podium campaign \$23 million per year for five years. In 2010 the awarded an additional \$6 million per year to support team sports (*Own*).

brand undertaking in history” by its creators—the Canadian Olympics Committee (COC)—“We are Winter” extended Canada’s proprietary Olympian claim from the dominion of the “podium” to the ownership of an entire season (Krashinsky). Prolific pre-Sochi promotional advertisements were followed by ubiquitous coverage of the Games. In its first Olympics’ broadcast since 2008, the CBC delivered 24/7 access to the Games, and with its “anywhere with Bell” campaign, Bell Canada provided customers with on-demand access to Sochi 2014 on their smartphones and tablets.

As Indigenous humanities scholar Len Findlay argues, “How the west was won, was intimately connected to how the west was spun” (219). And as the percepticidal spin of Canadian nationalism continues unabated in its struggle for control of the national imaginary of settler conscience and consciousness, it has also become increasingly adept in projecting its Canada-the-good brand into the international geopolitical imaginary and market. Feel-good events like the Winter Olympics provide Canada with an opportunity to perform, for both a global and an enthusiastic home audience, a beguiling act of what Findlay calls “pseudo-inclusive re-whitening” (224).

With stunning allure the broadcast blizzard of all that is Canada in Sochi—the medals, the tears, the oh-so-Canadian acts of selflessness—blinded us to the ghosts our popular, political, and public relations narrative of Canadian nationalism. Russian President Vladimir Putin’s pre-Sochi anti-gay proclamations provided Canada with a particularly salient moment to strut its ambassadorial exceptionalism. As our gold medal hockey-playing Canadian flag-bearer Hayley Wickenheiser proudly exclaimed in an interview with CBC’s Jian Ghomeshi: “We’re seen as a humble, a gentle country that is peaceful and includes everyone [...] Coast-to-coast we’re a huge nation, we’re a vast nation, and we’re very different [...] We’re this giant poster for acceptance

and diversity and that anything is possible” (CBC “Flag-bearer”).⁷⁶ (One can almost hear k.d. lang—our very own white-suited angel-dyke—crooning Hallelujah in the background.)

What I find most unsettling about the Olympian thrall of Canadian humility and inclusivity is its astounding lack of either reflexivity or irony. While across the country Canadian cities proudly hoisted the rainbow flag as a sign of our much-touted embrace of difference, for anyone watching the Sochi Games, the profound absence of racial diversity among Canada’s athletes was glaringly evident. Contrary to Wickenheiser’s claims, to look at the Games it would seem that we are not only winter, we are also white as snow. But Canada’s flag-bearing ambassador Wickenheiser’s message is not hers alone—it is one that is at once carefully crafted and broadly construed. As critical race and anti-colonial scholar Sherene Razack argues, “The disavowal of conquest, genocide, slavery, and the exploitation of peoples of colour” that are so much a part of our paradoxically inclusive, yet snowy-white, Canadian nationalism may well be considered “a quintessential feature of white settler mythologies” (“Introduction” 2).

In an effort to unsettle the pseudo-inclusivity and social forgetfulness constructed through dominant narratives of Canadian nationalism, in this section of the chapter I situate Canada’s Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics public relations performance as the snowy backdrop for a reading of two performances that have placed issues of redress and counter-narratives of Canadianess

⁷⁶ I watched this interview before CBC began its purge of Ghomeshi from publicly accessible online archives. While the charges against Ghomeshi have yet to go to trial, through narratives that have surfaced from multiple sources, two things seem clear. First, that Ghomeshi had a long-standing pattern of making inappropriate sexual advances to women; and second, that Ghomeshi’s inappropriate, or as some reports indicate—predatory and violent—sexually behaviors were a secret in plain sight. I address this here, not out of a desire to further pillory Ghomeshi, but as an illustration of how Ghomeshi’s actions are part of a political economy that both constitutes and is constituted by social relations of power and that involves bodies far beyond those of the perpetrators and victims of sexual abuse. While beyond the scope of this dissertation, I think it is important to consider the degree to which Ghomeshi’s role in the Canadian imaginary as a signifier of Canadian multicultural and egalitarian values—together with the immense success he brought to Q—contributed to the production of a collective blinding to Ghomeshi’s predatory sexual behaviours. Just as Canadians quickness in locating homophobia and racism as something that happens elsewhere contributes to a disavowal of homophobia and racism within Canada, I think it behooves us to consider the extent to which Canadians’ attachment to a national mythology of goodness blinds us to the prevalence of day-to-day sexism and sexual harassment, and its eruptions into acts of violent sexual assault.

onto both our national and our international stage: Canada's Residential School Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and Mi'gmaq filmmaker Jeff Barnaby's award winning film *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* (2013). To facilitate this reading I begin with a discussion of Allen Feldman's critical analysis of the "trauma trope" as an organizing framework for truth commissions. I follow this with an application of Len Findlay's concept of "rehearsal" as an organizing trope for understanding performances of redress.

In his analysis of South Africa's TRC Allen Feldman critically examines the discursive structures that place biographical narratives of violence within the "redressive and curative trajectory" of human rights frameworks (165). Just as theatre and Holocaust studies scholar, Vivian Patraka, warns of the dangers of theatre's representational tropes contributing to a false sense of resolution or facilitating for audience members a cathartic break from a violent past, Feldman argues that, under the umbrella of a popularized western trauma trope, truth commission testimonies become "emplotted" with "prescriptive expectations [...] to produce healing, trauma alleviation, justice, and collective catharsis" (170).

Though critical of the ways the trauma trope operates as a controlling discursive mechanism within South Africa's TRC, Feldman is careful to distinguish between the archival *report* of the TRC hearings, and its repertorial *practice*. Whereas the report, operating within a trauma narrative model, produced an impression of the hearings as being "focused on the psychopathology of political victimage" (175), Feldman likens the hearings to Seremetakis's description of antiphonic witnessing: "a prescribed technique for witnessing, for the production/reception of jural discourse, and for the cultural construction of truth; and [...] a political strategy that organizes the relation of women to male-dominated institutions" (qtd. in Feldman 176). Feldman notes that many of the victim-witnesses at the community level were

women who performed their counter-memorial testimonies as an antiphonal call and response, wherein witnesses spoke “from and for the community [...] for familial, township, religious, and political filiations that had undergone common political terror” (175). With their testimonial laments, these women resisted the foreclosures of the trauma trope’s individualizing framework. Rather than providing biographical testimony based in their personal or embodied trauma, they facilitated a process of antiphonic witnessing that resituated trauma within the context of the social body, both living and dead.

In addition to individualizing the narratives of South Africa’s social and political trauma, the trauma trope also reduces reconciliation to largely symbolic process. Whereas the community-based hearings process were an “act of political and historical intervention” Feldman argues that in the “face of transnational discourses of human rights and transnational media economies [this] local context is elided, marginalized, and even effaced as the survivor biography is rendered into symbolic capital” (184). The generic popularization of western psychological tropes of trauma, healing, and working through operate to individualize suffering and dehistoricize survivor testimonies thereby facilitating an ongoing process of “structural forgetfulness” (172). Enclosed within the trauma trope’s ideological frame, South Africa’s TRC report renders invisible both the geopolitical pre-history of the trauma, and the “violence of removed witnessing” produced through “one-sided performative strategies that promise the politically afflicted a progression to civil dignity supposedly already possessed by those who manage the rationality of jural exposure and resolution” (197). Whereas under the trauma trope the TRC carried the prescribed expectation of collective catharsis followed by resolution as closure, the TRC’s motto—“Truth. The Road to Reconciliation.”—clearly signals that the commission and its truth-telling testimonials were not intended as a cathartic and purifying

conclusion. Rather, they were framed as a necessary *beginning* of a much longer journey (180). Framed this way, fiscal-social reparations were never intended to be outside of the TRC's truth-telling mandate, they are an integral component of its long term process.

As with its exalted and dramatically mythologized predecessors—Canadian peacekeeping and Canada's much acclaimed multiculturalism—Canada markets its role as the first Northern nation to engage in a TRC as further evidence of its position as a moral leader on the global stage. But unlike truth commissions throughout the Global South that came into being as a result of regime change and large-scale citizen pressure, Canada's TRC emerged out of a process of litigation. Public disclosure of the systematic abuses perpetrated on Aboriginal students in residential schools began in the early nineties when the first of what would become a proliferation of lawsuits by former residential school students was filed against the Canadian government and church groups (Henderson and Wakeham "Colonial" 9).⁷⁷

In 1990, a year after the first suit was filed, Chief Phil Fontaine, then Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, spoke publicly of the physical and sexual abuse he experienced as a student in the residential school system. Breaking the taboo of silence surrounding the sexual abuse of men, Fontaine disrupted a dominant code of hegemonic masculinity that demands the disavowal of all forms of vulnerability, but especially those related to the violent (and feminized)

⁷⁷ The Canadian Constitution (Act of 1982, section 35) uses the term Aboriginal peoples to refer Canada's "Indian" [First Nations], Inuit and Métis populations making Aboriginal an umbrella term under which legal struggles for Aboriginal rights are waged within Canada. In international human rights discourse, on the other hand, the United Nations uses the term "Indigenous rights" to refer to the rights of peoples native to an area. First Nations came in to use in Canada in the 1970s and 80s to describe Canada's non-Inuit and non-Métis Aboriginal populations, and as a replacement to the term "Indian" which had taken on derogatory meaning. Though First Nations has largely replaced the term "Indian" in common usage, within Canadian legal parlance the term "Indian" prevails. Throughout this dissertation I use the terms Aboriginal, Indigenous, and First Nations. I will only use the term "Indian" within the context of quotes or in the titles of legal bodies and acts.

perpetration of sexual abuse.⁷⁸ With his disclosure, Fontaine invited other survivors—men and women—to come forward and in 1994, the Assembly of First Nations published a report written by and for Aboriginal communities—*Breaking the Silence: An Interpretive Study of Residential School Impact and Healing as Illustrated by the Stories of First Nations Individuals*. During the same period, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was established as one of the first large-scale bodies to hear and document the testimonies of residential school survivors.

In response to the growing numbers of lawsuits, the Canadian government negotiated the 2007 Indian Schools Settlement Agreement, which, in addition to establishing compensation “rates” for residential school survivors through the “Common Experience Payment” process, created a mandate and framework for the five-year-long TRC that began June 2008 (“Colonial” 11).⁷⁹ The “irruption of memory of residential schooling into Canada’s public spheres” has, as Jennifer Henderson and Pauline Wakeham argue, the status of what Ian Baucom calls a “truth-event”:

The “truth-event” stands as a paradoxically “representational anomaly”: an anomaly because its appearance has been controlled, up to recently, such that it has seemed to form an exception to the rule of Canada’s vaunted tolerance, but at the same time it is representative in that residential schooling condenses in itself the truth of a whole colonial system. (Henderson and Wakeham “Colonial” 5)

⁷⁸ In Chapter Four I will return to a discussion of the social and institutionalized denial of sexual assault against men.

⁷⁹ During the first years of the TRC the federal government argued that it had no obligation to provide the commission with archival records. The TRC took the government to court and in January 2013, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice ordered the federal government to release the documents. With limited time to review the newly released millions of government documents, the commission sought and won an extension to the TRC’s five-year timeframe. While the final of Canada’s formally mandated Residential Schools TRCs took place in Edmonton, Alberta in March 2014, the commission will continue as a formally sanctioned body until July 2015 (*thestar.com* “Truth”). Information about the Common Experience Payment process and copies of the TRC mandate can be found on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada website.

One way the TRC process can be seen to reflect the paradox of this representational anomaly is in how healing is framed, in different contexts, and by different communities. Within the context of a neoliberal worldview, healing from loss or trauma is an individualized and interiorized process mediated by designated experts and through sanctioned institutional venues and emplotted with a reconciliatory script. Within an Indigenous epistemology, on the other hand, healing is neither individualized nor prescriptively encoded. As is evident in the TRC forums, it is a socially situated and antiphonic process that incorporates a range of meaning making methodologies including ceremony, storytelling, song, dance, and art.⁸⁰

Understanding healing as a collective and a political undertaking also helps to resist the trauma trope's pathologizing and otherizing stereotypes. As Jo-Ann Episkenew asserts, "Healing does not imply that Indigenous people are sick. [...] Colonialism is sick; under its auspices and supported by its mythology, the colonizers have inflicted heinous wounds" (as qtd. in "Colonial" 16). Unfortunately, however, the disavowal of Canada's history of conquest, genocide, and colonialism is deeply ensconced within white settler mythology. Canadian nationalism's colonizing logic persists within the context of Canada's TRC, Episkenew asserts, through the disavowal of the sickness of colonialism within Canada's settler society: "Although Indigenous people understand their need to heal from colonial trauma, most settlers deny that their society is built on a sick foundation and, therefore, deny that it requires a cure" (qtd. in "Colonial" 16). Taking healing outside of the realm of the individual psyche or the institutionalized and privatized sphere of mental health professionals, refuses the isolating effects of trauma discourse

⁸⁰ These testimonial and healing frameworks are not confined to TRC forums. In 1998, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF) was established to "address the legacy of physical and sexual abuse in the residential school system" and has supported and documented a range of approaches to healing designed and delivered by and for Aboriginal peoples "in cities and small towns, on reserves and in rural, remote and isolated communities" (*Final Report of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation Volume III: Promising Healing Practices in Aboriginal Communities* prepared by Linda Archibald 2006, 2).

and of what Feldman calls the “structural forgetfulness” of a dehistoricized past and a decontextualized present (172).

Acknowledgement of Canada’s sick colonial history (and its ongoing condition) was not part of Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s 2008 Statement of Apology. Nor is it part of the healing agenda he prescribed for the TRC:

This commission presents a unique opportunity to educate all Canadians on the Indian residential schools system. It will be a positive step in forging a new relationship between aboriginal peoples and other Canadians, a relationship based on the knowledge of our shared history, a respect for each other and a desire to move forward together with a renewed understanding that strong families, strong communities and vibrant cultures and traditions will contribute to a stronger Canada for all of us. (qtd. in Henderson and Wakeham, *Reconciling* 336-37)

The ahistorical rhetoric of Prime Minister Harper’s apology frames the Indian residential schools system as an anomaly—“a sad chapter” in Canada’s (and settler-Canadian’s) otherwise amicable historical relationship with the Aboriginal peoples of this land. As Aboriginal scholars and critics of Canada’s TRC note, this dehistoricization is only possible through the bracketing off of “land, treaty, and sovereignty issues from historical consciousness” (*Reconciling* 19). As Eva Mackey argues, the erasure of links between the Aboriginal peoples and land grabs does not require white settlers “to account for the ways that intersecting processes of colonial theft of land and cultural genocide are the foundations of the modern nation-state or to recognize that non-Aboriginal Canadians are all contemporary beneficiaries of this process” (50).

Whereas truth commissions as public forums have historically been the purview of the Global South, “political apology” Henderson and Wakeham argue, “has been the reconciliatory

technology of choice of the North—the sphere of those civil societies which imagine themselves to be innocent of the types of human rights abuses that would necessitate investigative commissions often associated with problems such as genocide, apartheid, and dictatorships” (“Colonial” 11-12). Canada’s TRC functions as a somewhat hybrid model, and one that is rife with paradox. While the Assembly of First Nations advocated for an apology, it was the Canadian government (and its legal and public relations teams) who shaped much of its public relations rhetoric. And while the apology, the Indian Schools Settlement Agreement, and TRCs were all products of a negotiated agreement that can be viewed as a (pragmatic) compromise on the part of the Assembly, as Stó:lō First Nation scholar Dylan Robinson notes, it is a misconception that Canada’s TRC is *run* by the Canadian government.⁸¹

Just as Feldman distinguishes the archival report of South Africa’s TRC, from the process of cultural transmission that took place through the hearings’ testimonial practice, Robinson argues that the rhetorical spin put on Canada’s TRC by the Canadian government and the mainstream media, neither reflects, nor can it ever fully contain or control the TRC’s community-based processes. As one example of how the TRCs resisted the control of Canada’s settler-national narrative Robinson points to the integration of a range of repertorial and artistic testimonial approaches including “plays, songs, stories, art work.” These approaches were critical for creating a forum whereby intergenerational survivors were able to use the TRCs as a vehicle for cultural transmission within and beyond the context of the hearings. In privileging

⁸¹ Robinson’s comments are taken from “Conversatorio 2: Truth and Reconciliation,” held on 28 February 2014 as part of panamerican ROUTES/RUTAS panamericanas (RUTAS) international multiarts festival on human rights. RUTAS took place at Toronto’s Daniels Spectrum and was produced by Aluna Theatre in partnership with Native Earth Performing Arts (Aluna Theatre, “Conversatorio”). The TRC conversatorio panel addressed the fraught relationship between testimony, reconciliation, and redress by bringing scholars, activists and community leaders from Indigenous communities in Canada into dialogue with in dialogue with Latin American artists, writers, theatre makers and scholars. Robinson was joined on the panel by Oneida Elder Grafton Antone; Anishinaabe/Ashkenazi artist-researcher Jill Carter; Miguel Rubio of Peru’s Yuyachkani; Argentinean writer, Nora Strejilevich; and Brazilian scholar and theatre and performance artist Carla Melo.

modes of embodied redress and aesthetic expression the TRC introduced a praxis model that challenged conventional modes of Canadian national performativity like Harper's public relations pageantry of apology. In addition to inviting the embodied testimony of survivors, the TRC put out an open Call to Artists. Artists were invited to submit works directly related to residential schools as well as to a broader range of issues—cultural oppression, resistance, cultural genocide, resilience, restoration—connected to the violence of settler colonialism.⁸²

Whereas the trauma trope, Prime Minister Harper's apology, and the mythology of white settler nationalism all invoke the metaphor of closure as the primary measure of a successful healing process, what would it mean, instead, to think of redress as something in need of repetition, review, and refinement? Following Findlay, I propose that the TRC might be most productively understood using the concept of "rehearsal," as an organizing trope that allows for "the diverse pursuit of redress as a performance of [...]: academic, cultural, and political *theatre* which functions as a necessary preliminary to the *big show of belated justice* that may transform Canada into a more thoroughly decolonized, if not a fully post-racist, society" (218).⁸³ Rehearsal in the context of redress foregrounds notions of practice, experimentation, refinement and review, and resists containment within imposed institutional and structural mandates and timeframes. Rehearsal is improvisational. It generates fissures, leaks, and sticky impressions that make their way into unexpected cultural arenas. Rehearsal offers a frame for understanding testimony as the ongoing and intergenerational labour of refusing forgetfulness.

Though Findlay invokes the term "theatre" in his definition, throughout his application of rehearsal as an organizing trope, he proposes an extra-theatrical framework which includes

⁸² See the edited collection *Reconcile This! West Coast Line # 74*, by Jonathan Dewar and Ayumi Goto for an excellent series of articles by artists, curators, and cultural thinkers discussing how artists can contribute an ongoing practice of reconciliation in Canada.

⁸³ Emphasis in original.

multiple genres of Aboriginal resistance including legal, academic, performance art, and other forms of cultural production. I call this *rehearsal as praxis*. With this augmented naming, I distinguish rehearsal from its instrumentalist theatrical applications. In the context of professional theatrical production—though often productively experimental—rehearsal remains the hidden labour that is the necessary precursor to the “show” as consumable product. Looking at rehearsal as praxis resituates its productive potential—from its “place” as a behind the scenes process of preparation for audience consumption—to the social arena where its performance of an experimental and fluid praxis of redress becomes part of a larger epistemological model for collective capacity building towards the unsettling of Canada’s settler colonial nationalism.

“The idea of rehearsal,” Findlay proposes, “suggests private experimentation, repetition, and refinement in the interests of achieving a better public performance” (218). Rather than locating rehearsal as a private undertaking in preparation for a public performance, however, I propose that rehearsal in relation to redress is more productively thought of as a public praxis. I don’t dispute that survivors engage in processes of reflection and review prior to giving testimony at the TRC, or that artists undergo rigorous processes of experimentation and refinement before presenting works. What I find most productive about the TRC (and the multiple creative and activist processes it has engendered) is the public performance of rehearsals of redress as a multi-modal model for an ongoing praxis of decolonization.

Because the Canadian TRC’s mandate is limited to issues related to residential schools, and reparations are only provided for school survivors, its critics point to its structural shortcomings. Most notable among these is the absence of any discussion of land claims or constitutional indigenous rights violations. Through its treatment of Canada’s residential schools as an isolated “truth event,” the TRC also risks contributing to the disavowal of the integral

relationship between settler-colonialism's (past and ongoing) use of institutionalized mechanisms of cultural genocide and resource extraction.

Despite its popularization as a discursive gesture, as Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang argue, decolonization is not a metaphor ("Decolonization"). Similarly, despite the ideological and public relations manipulations of Prime Minister Harper and the Canadian government, reconciliation is not a symbolic gesture of national healing. Meaningful reconciliation demands a systemic approach to decolonization and a redistributive justice process that "brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life" ("Decolonization" 1). This kind of decolonization necessitates the unsettling of white-settler Canadian notions of national innocence.

Though I concur with those who argue that the shortcomings, limits, and risks of the Canadian TRC and the Canadian government's deployment of a reconciliatory technology of apology are immense, like Robinson I also believe that the TRC has been a crucial forum for both intergenerational community dialogue and for the production of a rich and varied counter-memorial archive. As with South Africa's TRC, I believe that the Canadian commission's truth telling process is not an end, but a beginning of a road. This is not a journey to be mapped by settler-Canadian concepts of reconciliation. Rather, as Tuck and Yang suggest, it is a journey in which settler populations are called on to adopt an "ethic of incommensurability" on the road to an unsettled future (35).

Looked at through the lens of rehearsal as praxis, the TRC has no ending, no cathartic closing night. It is an ongoing process that sets into motion all manner of performancesl forl and aesthetic, institutional and pop cultural, formal and informal. Performances that refuse the hermetic seal of closure, the legal dictates of legislative bodies, the bracketing off of cultural harm from land grabs and treaty violations. Performances that act as vehicles for ongoing

resistance. Performances that make demands beyond the reach of governmental discourses and reconciliatory frameworks. Performances that travel unexpected routes and traverse both geopolitical borders and generational timespans. Performances that act as a living memorial to the victims and survivors of the ongoing wars perpetrated by the Canadian state on Canada's Indigenous peoples. Performances that act as a living memorial to the victims and survivors of the ongoing wars perpetrated by the Canadian state on Canada's Indigenous peoples. Performances that act as a living memorial to the victims and survivors of the ongoing wars perpetrated by the Canadian state on Canada's Indigenous peoples.

winner of the Best Feature Film award at the 2013 Vancouver International Film Festival, the winning feature film *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* (2013).

Since its premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival (2013) *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* has garnered awards at film festivals across Canada, the U.S. and Europe and was shown at the TRC's March 2014 gathering in Edmonton.⁸⁴ Though entirely unlike the blinding onslaught of Canada's Winter Olympics media blizzard, *Rhymes* is generating its own impactful momentum. With snowballing appeal *Rhymes'* counter-incursion into the imaginary of Canadian and international audiences traversed the alternative film circuit (national and international) and in January 2014 made its theatrical debut at Toronto's Cineplex Theatre at Yonge and Dundas. Since then *Rhymes* has been screened at mainstream cinemas throughout North America, and in November 2014, was picked up by the popular mainstream online media distributor Netflix, where it was made available to over 37 million subscribers.

I turn to *Rhymes* in the next section of this chapter for several reasons. First, because, like the TRC, *Rhymes* addresses the issue of Canada's residential schools. I'm also interested, however, in the film as an example of the how performances of redress can defy national (discursive, institutional, geographic, and generational) boundaries. Though *Rhymes* speaks to a "historical" event, through his use of a range of stylistic devices writer/director Jeff Barnaby has

⁸⁴ *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* growing list of awards include: the TriBeCa Creative Promise Award (2012); the Vancouver International Film Festival's Best Canadian First Feature (2013); the Technicolor Clyde Gilmour Award (2014); the Vancouver Film Critics Circle Award for Best Director of a Canadian Film (2014); and the American Indian Film Festival's best director—Jeff Barnaby—and best actor—Glen Gould (2014).

produced a film capable of engaging a broad audience in a conversation about the ongoing effects of colonialism's violence.

The art of remembering: Rhymes for Young Ghouls



Figure 7. Aila, *Rhymes for Young Ghouls*. Image from emptykingdom.com.

“This is what brings my people together—the art of forgetfulness.”

Aila, *Rhymes for Young Ghouls*

Days after the CBC began its 2014 Olympics barrage of paradoxically self-congratulatory and prideful Canadian humility, I saw *Rhymes for Young Ghouls*. Set on the fictional Red Crow Mi'gMaq reserve of the 1970s, *Rhymes* is a quintessential Canadian ghost-story. Unlike the peaceful and bucolic Canada of CBC's Sochi Olympics' media blizzard, the Canada of *Rhymes* is rife with ghouls caught in maelstroms of violence—historical, institutional, and viscerally corporeal. Genre-blurring violence that traverses the borders of war-movie realism, film-noir hyperrealism, and graphic novel mythical realism. Violence slowed, at times, to a storyboard pace, and accompanied by a pragmatic “rules for survival” narration. Abject violence that erupts with blood, shit and piss, and oozes with sound as fists, boots, and bats smash into soft flesh and

hard bone. Binary-exploding violence, where the fantastic and the imaginary collide with the real. Violence that fires flares from the past to illuminate the present in its red-hot glow.

Violence that exposes the bodies beneath the snow.⁸⁵

As film critic Isabel Cupryn asserts, “The most shocking thing about Jeff Barnaby’s nightmare world [...] is that it’s real.” Barnaby establishes the realness that underpins *Rhymes* by opening the film, documentary-style, with text from Duncan Campbell Scott’s 1921 amendment to Canada’s Indian Act. The Act made it compulsory for Aboriginal children up to the age of fifteen to attend Indian Residential Schools. With this opening, Barnaby resists the containment of residential schooling within the confines of an anomalous truth event, and instead unleashes a “temporal drag” whereby a myriad of pasts, and presents “inter(in)animate” one another (Schneider *Performing*).

From the film’s beginning, thirteen-year-old Aila, *Rhymes* protagonist, heroine, and sometimes narrator, informs us that time is not linear. Not only did she “age 1000 years” the day her mother hanged herself and her father was taken to prison, she also talks to the dead. As Aila matter-of-factly continues her relationship with her dead mother and young Tyler—the orphan boy Aila’s mother accidentally ran over while drunk—she also navigates the living present with an artful pragmatism. Looming large as the “Kingdom of the Crow’s” hungry child-devouring wolf, St. Dymphna’s residential school has an insatiable appetite that demands offerings, either of Mi’gmaq children, or of monthly under-the-table truancy-tax payments. Aila chooses the latter. To fund her freedom, she runs the family’s marijuana grow-op. An artist, like her mother,

⁸⁵ There was no malice in the blizzard tales of my youth—only the storm. *Blood on the Snow* (2002), an installation by Anishinabe artist Rebecca Belmore, brilliantly unsettles the association of snow with Canada’s purified settler identity. A white chair sits at the centre of the installation’s large white quilted blanket. The blood that seeps down the chair makes visible not only the violence of colonialism, but also the coldness of white indifference. With *Blood on the Snow*, Belmore also makes a connection between colonialism’s historical violence against Aboriginal populations, and continuing violence being perpetrated against Aboriginal women and girls.

Aila applies her creative talents to all she does. As she craftily rolls and hawks her honey, cognac, and formaldehyde-laced blunts at the weekly parties she and her Uncle Burner host, Aila bears watchful witness to the art of forgetfulness that brings her people together.

The forgetfulness of Aila's Red Crow community of "rez princes and princesses," "drum and feather Indians," and "broken rez-rats" is altogether different from the percepticidal forgetfulness of the Olympic's white-out, or of Prime Minister Harper's dehistoricizing apology, or of feel-good Canadian settler nationalism. The forgetfulness that binds Aila's people together is born of conditions of brutal, incessant, and institutionalized abjection delivered at the hands of Indian Agent Popper and his goon-squad, and by St. D's ghoulishly faceless residential school priests and nuns. As Nicolas Chare (after Julia Kristeva) argues of Holocaust survivors, because memories of extreme abjection cannot be recalled from a place in which the self can be removed from the experience, the process of recollection produces a collapse of self into the experience and a state of "semiotic excess" in which the experience overwhelms language's symbolic capacities (107). Without a language or a forum to facilitate the recollection of pervasive and violent abjection, forgetting becomes a defense against one's own annihilation.

Just as the TRC provided a community forum for residential schools survivors, art provides Aila with a language through which to remember and communicate the semiotic excess of her, and her community's experience. Moreover, through its creative and pragmatic application to her role as the Red Crow reservation's weed-princess—it provides her with the proceeds to pay the monthly truancy-tax for herself and her compadres. Donning the same skull-like gas mask she wears to protect herself from her spray-can-art fumes, Aila purposefully keeps from inhaling the mind-numbing product she sells, refusing its promise, however temporary, of a reprieve from memory.

When Popper steals Aila's drug-money/truancy-tax funds *Rhymes* transitions into a full-blown caper-heist-revenge (with a twist) mode. While hatching their plans to steal back their money one of Aila's crew queries, "Why stop at robbing him?" But *Rhyme's* vengeance is not the stuff of retribution flicks. Nor does it resemble the sadistic, brutal, and random acts of violence that Popper regularly inflicts on the residents of Red Crow. The vengeance that Aila and her accomplices seek is seasoned with a decidedly sardonic teen-aged (and Aboriginal) humour. Shit is their weapon of choice and they have no problems collecting gallons of the stuff—the Rez has no shortage of eager contributors. Dressed as animal spirits and ghouls, they execute their revenge-caper on Halloween.⁸⁶ With the help of Jujijj—who, like ghostly young Tyler, is Aila's adoring young sidekick and a chimerical resident of St. Ds—they break into the school and feed the shit into the pressurized water system so that when Popper takes his nightly shower he is bathed in the excretions of those he so gleefully subjects to abject treatment.

Just as Fontaine disrupted dominant gender codes when he publicly disclosed the physical and sexual abuse he was subjected to as a residential school student, Barnaby challenges the colonial stereotypes of Aboriginal women that are perpetrated through popular media. Aila is no Disneyfied Pocahontas. With Aila, Barnaby offers a model not only of powerful femininity but also of non-femiphobic masculinity. Barnaby explains his choice of Aila as *Rhyme's* heroine in an interview with Muskrat Magazine's Jamaia DaCosta:

My Nation is a matriarchal society, and paying respect to that archetype of a woman and the strength that is there particularly in First Nations women, it's

⁸⁶ Barnaby brilliantly deploys Halloween not only as effective aesthetic and plot devices, but also as a cipher for what Joseph Roach has theorized as the uncanny process of surrogation—a process through which cultural (living) memory is performatively transmitted across time, space, and identity by communities who are confronted with circumstances in which performing themselves through their repertorial practices was prohibited. Barnaby hijacks Halloween's commodified and hollow spectacle of spirit-evocation—highly popularized throughout North America—and restores to it some of its more transgressive meaning as a time in the year when, for many, the veil between the living and the dead is believed to be thinnest.

imperative for me as a First Nations man who loves his mom, and loves his wife and loves his sisters, to pay reverence to their struggle and their strength. [...] It just made sense to me to have a young Native girl bring this institution of ugliness to its knees. It made sense to me because First Nations women are the language and cultural keepers, they are the epicenter of our matriarchal society. (Interview)

A trick for going out into a blizzard is to tether oneself to that which you can't see but cannot afford to lose sight of. *Rhymes* fable-like mythical realism is grounded in a real history of a particular people, and in the real violence of the state as enacted through Canada's Indian Act and the missionary-run residential school system that it sanctioned as part of its overarching agenda of cultural genocide.⁸⁷ Pitting Aila's artful strength against the ugliness of Popper's brittle masculinity (and the institutions it is constructed to uphold), Barnaby carefully tethers her to her family's and her community's histories, and to the living and dead who revere her. Aila's connection to her people—both past and future generations—is her salvation. When an enraged Popper endeavours to reassert his ugly domination by raping Aila, young Jujijj—a representative of the generation of the future—shoots him in a brain-spattering moment of binary terror that explodes the precarious underbelly of settler nationalism.

Aila and Jujijj's capacity for resistance is not accidental. It is born of Aila's sustained engagement with—and her mentorship of Jujijj in—a creative praxis of resistance to the cultural

⁸⁷ I am electing to use the term "genocide" here rather than the term "assimilation" for two reasons. First, I believe it most accurately reflects the intent behind the Canadian government's policies as expressed in the Indian Act and as carried out through a range of governmental policies. And second, as an act of discursive defiance of Canada's institutional archive of social memory, which "officially" recognizes only the following five genocides—the Holodomor, or the starvation of millions of Ukrainians in the early 1930s; the Holocaust, Srebrenica massacre in Bosnia; and the Armenian and Rwandan genocides. Debates have surfaced around the politics of archival memory surrounding the museum's decision not to use the term genocide to describe Canadian governmental policies toward Aboriginals. Two days prior to the museum's opening *A Tribe Called Red* pulled out of the opening festivities after issuing a public statement protesting the "museum's misrepresentation and downplay of the genocide that was experienced by Indigenous people in Canada by refusing to name it genocide" (CBC "Tribe").

genocide of white-settler nationalism, its institutions, and its violent hegemonic masculinity. Using art as a story telling medium Aila passes onto Jujijj stories she has learned from her mother and Ceres (the female elder who is runs Aila's grow-op). With these stories, Aila helps to tether Jujijj to the culture that St. Ds, and its hungry wolves, is set on destroying. Unlike archived history, oral history is kept alive through a process of repeat, a process that when undertaken in conditions of institutional sanction, demands creativeness, inventiveness and the development of risk-taking capacities. Through her commitment to artful resistance and personal and cultural survival, Aila models for Jujijj a practice of productive risk-taking. Like Aila, Jujijj is no passive spectator. To hear Aila's stories he must repeatedly escape from St. Ds. Through his commitment Aila, and to learning about his culture, he develops a range of capacities. He is watchful. He learns the routines of his residential school captors, he studies the school's dark crevices, and he provides Aila and her cohort with the information they need to pull off their caper.

Taking a step back from the film itself, Barnaby's capacity to deliver a narrative that refuses dominant notions of Canadian settler nationalism and the violence of hegemonic masculinity is also no accident. Like Aila, Barnaby has tethered himself to his community and has become a bearer of a non-femophobic First Nations' masculinity. Also like his young protagonist, Barnaby has an arts-based praxis that provides him with a vehicle for the ongoing rehearsal (via skillfully executed filmic performances) of resistance. Rehearsal that provides Aboriginal audience members with creative models for resistance, and non-Aboriginal audience members with the unsettling opportunity to build capacities towards unbecoming attachments to an imagined nation that is beholden to notions of white settler nationalism.



Figure 8. Jujijj, *Rhymes for Young Ghouls*. Image from, fr.canoe.ca.

I first saw *Rhymes* during its run at the Toronto's Cineplex Theatre on a night when Barnaby and some of the film's actors were doing a post-show Q&A. From what I could tell, the audience was predominately Aboriginal and filled with family and friends of the cast. At the moment of Popper's explosive demise at the hands of Jujijj, Aila's doe-eyed sidekick/Guardian Angel, the theatre erupted with sounds of celebration. Evil had been slain. I felt a disorienting range of emotions. First, came the relief—I would not have to sit through yet another eroticized rape scene that was justified by a plot trajectory and would end in a cathartic hyper-masculine display of righteous vengeance. Then came an eerie shock at the collisional confrontation: the explosion of blood and brains on the screen; innocent Jujijj thrown to the ground by the shotgun's force; and the gleeful celebration of *Rhymes'* performance of multi-tiered Aboriginal agency.

Despite my relief that Popper was stopped and my desire to join in the celebration, I could not (or did not). More than a character unto himself, Popper was an allegorical stand-in for the all-too-real violence of settler-colonialism—past and present—that lies buried beneath the

shroud of popularized narratives of Canadian nationalism. The blizzard tales of my youth never spoke of malice. There was only the storm, which while dangerous, like the “We are Winter” whiteouts of Canada in Sochi also became a signifier of a (fictively) shared Canadian identity. Filled with stories of selfless camaraderie the blizzard tales of my childhood made no mention of the bodies that lay beneath the snow.

As Dylan Robinson cautions, too often settler Canadians conflate their audience experience of shared affect with the positive affect of reconciliation. I believe my desire to join in the celebration was a longing for the foreclosing catharsis of feelings of reconciliatory affect. But as Robinson asserts, the shared affective experience generated through performance “may have strikingly different efficacies for Indigenous and settler audience members” (278). As a white non-Aboriginal Canadian woman, the moment of Popper’s explosive annihilation, and the eruptive celebratory echo that came in its wake, produced a disorienting rupture. Unlike the forgetful narratives of Canadian settler nationalism, or the foreclosing catharsis of feelings of reconciliatory affect, Popper’s obliteration at the hands of young Jujijj set off an implosion that rendered the violence of structural forgetfulness viscerally palpable.⁸⁸ It was an encounter with the incommensurability of innocence and settler nationalism. It wasn’t a thought encounter, it was an affective moment of unbecoming. Of having my own deeply rooted attachment to innocence unloosed.

In many ways the TRC performs for settler Canadians a kind of comforting commensurability. Apology, truth, reconciliation—are these not precisely the values extolled by dominant narratives of Canadian settler-nationalism? But to presume that the dominance of

⁸⁸ I am drawing from Dylan Robinson’s notion of reconciliatory affect. In “Feeling Reconciliation, Remaining Settled,” Robinson argues that settler Canadians often conflate their audience experience of shared audience affect with the positive affect of reconciliation.

settler nationalist narratives constitutes the TRC may also be considered a colonizing gesture that denies the sovereignty of indigenous communities engaged in the TRC process. Looking at the TRC, not as a cathartic performance of national reconciliation, but rather as a praxis-based rehearsal for an ongoing process of decolonization resists settler-nationalism's demand for the comfortable commensurability of reconciliatory affect.

Sochi 2014 is long past, but there is no reprieve from the stormy spectacles of national and international public relations performances of Canadian white-settler nationalism. With their flag-bearing and anthem singing invocations of nationalism, sporting events—from World Cups, PanAm Games, and Olympics to the more seasonal sports, like baseball, hockey, football—are sites of obligatory patriotism. Days of national pageantry—Victoria Day, Canada Day, Remembrance Day—spill into weeks via government, consumer, military, and media campaigns. With expansionist zeal, Canadian military memorial projects are extending their territory beyond conventional monuments to include ever more expansive swaths of real estate—like the Highway of Heroes, and Ottawa's war-peacekeeping memorial landscape which encompasses the Canadian War Museum (see Chapter Three), the National War Monument, and the Parliament Buildings. And, lest we forget, our institutions of national commemoration—like the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa, or Winnipeg's national Museum for Human Rights—are growing in architectural stature and performance spectacularity.

In contrast to the celebratory zeal of Canada-the-good nationalism, the foreclosing catharsis of reconciliation, the TRC and *Rhymes* produce spaces of unsettlement, spaces that resist closure or completion, spaces that generate openings and invite participation in an ongoing labour of recall. Rehearsal as a praxis of redress offers an epistemological approach for

increasing our capacities to teeter on the unsettling precipice of settler colonialism's incommensurability.

Facing, and the ethical working through of grief

In *City of Refuge: A 9/11 Memorial* Krzysztof Wodiczko extends philosopher Emmanuel Levinas' notion of reintroducing the biblical concept of designating certain cities as sites where the "half-guilty, half-innocent" are given refuge from vengeance by applying it to his vision of New York City as a post-9/11 living memorial (12). While many might argue that Wodiczko's creative manifesto presents an improbable, if not impossible, utopic vision, it is one that is based not only on the historic notion of cities as sites of refuge and critical reflection, but is also inspired by the multiple ways that New York City spontaneously emerged as a contemporary example of an "unintentional city of refuge" in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 (18). Similar to the concept of redress as praxis-based rehearsal Wodiczko suggests that the function of a memorial is "not only to commemorate past events" but also "to mind and remind" (32).

Wodiczko argues that throughout post-9/11 New York City there was a spontaneous emergence of "a massive public forum for passionate ethico-political commentary and discussion" (16). Public discussions about the half-guilt and half-innocence of U.S. national citizen subjects in the production of geopolitical and economic conditions that contributed to the 9/11 attacks were accompanied by calls to resist acts of retribution in what appeared to be the beginnings of a possible ethical working through of mourning. Citizen-generated anti-war efforts were set in motion, including a trip to Afghanistan by some New Yorkers who had lost loved ones in the 9/11 attacks (16-7). Like Wodiczko, Taylor notes how throughout the streets of post-9/11 New York City there was an emergence of a polyvocal meaning making process and a

participatory citizenship: People gathered, asking questions, sharing information, and searching for loved ones. They posted images of the missing, lit candles, and created altars. They turned towards one another. Grief, loss, and vulnerability were shared across gendered and racialized divides. Alongside the altars arose a plethora of community-based artistic and activist responses—signs, murals, “‘live’ performances, installations, and protests [that] showed a far greater range of opinion than the TV coverage did” (*Archive* 257).

But community-based meaning-making and commemorative processes were rapidly brought under state containment and control. Residents of New York City, and in a broader sense, citizens of the U.S. and the world, were re-positioned, cast outside of their own experience and “deterritorialized” as global spectators and consumers (*Archive* 252). New York mayor, Rudi Giuliani, ordered the removal of the altars, and posted signs that criminalized the taking of photos near “ground zero” (258). Directives were issued to “stay out of the way, buy theatre tickets, eat at restaurants, fly on planes” (243). Collective grief was systematically re-directed into nationalistic and patriotic fervor and, within weeks, a nation-wide ad campaign was launched: “America: Open for Business”—with its accompanying image of the American flag as a shopping bag.⁸⁹

Like the TRC’s community-based repertorial process, *City* offers a glimpse of a model for an ethical working through of mourning, one that does not disavow loss, a process of mourning that refuses the psychoanalytic interiorization of grief, with its bifurcation of the (masculinized, rationalized, and political) public from the (feminized, emotionalized, and personal) private, but instead insists on navigating loss as a psycho-social process, and a process that recognizes vulnerability as an elemental and shared condition of life. But embedded in the

⁸⁹ The “America: Open for Business” campaign began in San Francisco and was the brainchild of then Mayor Willie Brown but was quickly adopted by cities and businesses nation wide (Chonin “Nothing”).

very notion of the establishment of a *City of Refuge* as a specific site is a cautionary tale that is by no means new. Sites of resistance, as Findlay points out, are usually “haunted by spectres of cooptation” (217). This is a lesson well known to many involved in resistance struggles throughout the world; there is always a risk, perhaps even a likelihood, that movements will be infiltrated, ideologies co-opted or commodified, leaders imprisoned or assassinated. Fixing resistance to a person, place, or prescribed method is dangerous. This is why I find it so appealing to think about redress and ethical memorialization, through the framework of rehearsal as a multi-genre praxis of resistance. Rehearsal foregrounds notions of practice, fluidity, and experimentation. Engagement in rehearsal as a non-fixed, and non-scripted, practice offers the possibility of enabling capacities and attitudes of risk-taking, agency, and openness to precarity—one’s own and others.

Gilroy argues that peaceful cohabitation with otherness in Britain is inhibited by the melancholic denial or disavowal of the racist violence and the accompanying nostalgic longing for the nation’s colonial past. Similarly, Butler suggests that a more “egalitarian mourning” that insists on the grievability of all lives, a mourning that is based on the recognition that vulnerability is a primary (and shared) condition of life, would require that “the notion of the world itself as a sovereign entitlement of the United States must be given up, lost, and mourned, as narcissistic and grandiose fantasies must be lost and mourned” (*Precarious* 40). Extending Gilroy’s and Butler’s analyses to a Canadian context, one can imagine that if Canadians were to adopt a more egalitarian approach to grieving the lives of those killed in our wars and through the colonial violence on which Canadian settler nationalism is founded, we may have to give and mourn popularized notions of national innocence, benevolent militarism, and moral exceptionalism.

To be clear I'm not suggesting a celebration of precarity in the context of the violent and oppressive precarious conditions produced through colonialism, imperialism, and neoliberalism. Following Butler, I'm proposing the ethical value of apprehending precarity—our own and “others”—as a means of accounting for the value of all lives. Nation states and national identities are constructed to fix the national subject and secure them from vulnerability—to convince them that their security can be achieved through this fixity of subjectivity, and that anything that threatens the national identity is a threat that must be assimilated or annihilated. The unsettling or unbecoming of Canada's dominant white settler identity with its accompanying narratives of humanitarian militarism and moral exceptionalism demands an unfixing of dominant subjectivities.

21 January 2011

Christie Pits Park, Toronto

falls 20,400-20,500

con·front: to meet face-to-face

Embedded within the definition of "confront" is the simple act of facing. Despite Impact's public visibility, for months I've somehow managed to avoid turning toward the very people I seek to engage. I've faced Cassie, whose presence as documenter and intentional witness has helped me confront—or face—my fears of falling in public. But when began falling solo, I tended to arrange myself nearby—but rarely facing—roads, sidewalks, or other pathways. I told myself that this was because I didn't want my act of falling to be perceived as a confrontation. I had (mistakenly) equated facing with the more aggressive act of “getting in one's face.”

After six months of falling, my decision to finally face witnesses was born of a pragmatic logic. With the onset of winter conditions I became concerned that passers-by might think that I

had slipped or injured myself or be suffering from some other kind of weather-induced health crises. So I decided it would be best if, (1) I established a clear relationship between myself and my informational flag and postcard display, and (2) I positioned myself facing passersby so that, if necessary, I could assure them that I was “Okay”.

Standing face-to-face I realize how by not facing I had not only colluded with, but also performed, indifference. The simple act of facing passersby has revealed to me confrontation’s vulnerable underbelly. After months of public exposure I have finally made myself available to the shared vulnerability of encounter. In so doing, I have also invited witnesses to join me in an effort to turn toward the unimaginable vulnerability the people of Afghanistan are confronted with and the vulnerability of all people attempting to live within a war zone or with war’s ongoing effects.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM: IMAGINING THE CANADIAN NATION
THROUGH MILITARY COMMEMORATION



Figure 9. Mural of Claude P. Dettloff's 1940 photo, "Wait for Me, Daddy" at the entrance to the Canadian War Museum's exhibits. Photo by author.

9 August 2013

Canadian War Museum, entrance to exhibitions.

The boy runs. He's located his father among the hundreds of uniformed men marching off to war down this street that just yesterday had a more innocent choreography. Some of the men smile, but only "Dad" breaks rank as he looks back and reaches his hand out to meet his son's outstretched hand. Mom follows, also reaching toward the boy. To snatch him back? To intervene? Is she sorry she brought him to see his father off? Or, is she proud? Maybe she isn't

reaching to pull her young son back. Maybe she nudged him forward. Maybe she and the boy's father are impressed by his fearlessness, his precocious compulsion to enlist.

A larger than life version of the iconic Second World War photograph—"Wait for Me, Daddy"—graces the entry to Ottawa's Canadian War Museum galleries. Taken by Claude P. Dettloff on 1 October 1940 in New Westminster, British Columbia, the image captures the moment when young Warren "Whitey" Bernard breaks away from his mother and runs towards his father—Private Jack Bernard—who is marching with the British Columbia Regiment on the way to war. Marching three abreast, the regiment is so large it disappears over a distant hill. Selected by *Life* magazine as their photo of the week, "Wait for me, Daddy," was accompanied by the caption: "One little fair-haired boy had spotted his father and had broken away from his mother's hand. Without breaking step, the father holds out his hand. The other men smile and the column goes on" (qtd. in Carr 63).⁹⁰

Not all the men are smiling though. In fact, few are. Many look resolute, perhaps even grim. Barely men at all, most are far younger than Private Bernard, somewhere between his age and that of five-year-old Warren. Will Private Bernard, who is leaving behind his own young son, reach out to some of these younger men in the weeks, months, and years to come? Will these stoic men marching off to war comfort one another when they cry out with fear or pain? Will they hold one another as they lay dying? Will it be their grim task to gather the fragmented remains of their dead comrades?

⁹⁰ The resurgent popularity of this image is not unique to the Canadian War Museum. Brian and Terence McKenna used the same image for the opening sequence of their docudrama 1992 *The Valour and the Horror*, and on 4 October 2014 a bronze statue, a commemorative stamp, and special edition two-dollar coin immortalizing the image were unveiled at a ceremony in New Westminster, BC.

But the focus of the image is not the men. It is Warren, one foot off the ground, hand stretched open, as he enthusiastically propels himself toward his father, his mother lagging behind, unable (or unwilling) to halt his momentum. This focus on Warren is further accentuated both through the image's enlargement—Warren, still a child, is now the size of a man—and with the museum's placement of a second image, a ghostly echo, in the wake of the first. The second image is cropped. We no longer see Warren's mother, or father, or the column of marching men. All we see is Warren running, hand outstretched, into the museum itself. Nationalism's fundamental constellation of the heteronormative family—with mother standing for the domesticated home front and father for the militarized battlefront—has receded from view. In casting Warren's mother and father outside the image's frame, the museum relegates the nuclear family to its unmarked and naturalized role in the (re)production of the nation state and its armies of emerging soldiers.

If you spend any time at the Canadian War Museum (CWM) in Ottawa it becomes immediately evident that its primary constituency is children. On weekdays children arrive by the busload, sporadically transforming the museum's otherwise cavernous and conspicuously uninhabited environment—or as one museum visitor put it, “Oh wow, the museum of empty!”—into one that is cacophonously enlivened.⁹¹ On weekends, the museum's population wanes considerably and is reduced to a mere spattering of family groups taking advantage of the two-

⁹¹ The observations this chapter is founded on were made during three visits to the Canadian War Museum between 2012 and 2014. During each trip I spent three-to-four hours a day for three days (a mix of weekday and weekend), and one Thursday evening exploring the various spaces and exhibits throughout the museum, and observing other museum-goers.

museum (“War” and “Civilization”) family-package.⁹² Even the museum’s free Thursday evenings attract only a handful of visitors. In fact, aside from when busloads of children were delivered, the only other time I saw CWM truly abustle was after-hours, when the museum’s LeBreton gallery is abuzz with gala-goers. On each of the four evenings of my May 2013 visit an event was held in the LeBreton gallery amidst the collection of artillery, aircraft, and armoured vehicles. Artfully lit for these occasions, these weapons-of-wars-past become part of the evening’s ambiance as they encircle the diners. To the North, the gallery’s large expanse of windows provide those inside with a skyline view of Ottawa’s Parliamentary precinct and downtown.⁹³

But while the LaBretton gallery might serve as a spectacular backdrop for adults attending gala events, the museum proper is primarily designed for the edification of children and youth. Speaking in 1998 before a Senate committee about the need for the CWM, Donald Glenney, the museum’s former Acting Director General, argued that “young people” in Canada had become ignorant of Second World War history and that “only by education can we ensure that commemoration remains alive” (qtd. in Carr 58-9). As Graham Carr notes in “War, History, and the Education of (Canadian) Memory,” concern that Canadians’ were out of touch with their military “history and evolution” began to be expressed by Canadian military historians, military organizations, and veterans groups in the early 1990s (58). As discussed in Chapter Two, this

⁹² During my visits, the one exception to this pattern was the weekend of 9-11 August 2012 when Ottawa’s Ceremonial Guard hosted the 16th annual Fortissimo celebration on Parliament Hill, which draws military bands from across Canada and around the world. This was the busiest I ever saw the museum galleries. Throughout the weekend busloads of cadets toured the museum, guided by a host of veteran-docents. It was also the time with the greatest mix of adults and children/youth I ever witnessed at the museum and one of the few times when the parking had more cars than busses as tourists who had come to see the Fortissimo also came to see the war museum and its prominently advertised War of 1812 exhibit.

⁹³ During my May 2013 research trip, I stayed nearby the museum and was able to witness these galas as I passed by these large windows upon my return “home” each evening. As my proximity to the museum on my other two trips did not afford me this same opportunity, I cannot attest to the museum’s nightlife at those times.

“unease about the precarious future of social [military] memory” (58) was exacerbated by, or as Howard Fremeth suggests, triggered by, the film series *The Valour and the Horror*. A repeated apprehension expressed by *Valour*’s critics, especially those belonging to military and veterans groups, was that the films, which aired on prime-time television and were to be made available to schools and public libraries, would have a negative effect on “impressionable Canadian children” (58). The CWM is one of a wide range of media- and youth-savvy military memory projects that have emerged out of this concern, and are also part of a broader response on the part of military memory network stakeholders to what General Hillier dubbed the Canadian military’s “decade of darkness.” More than simply a site for the commemoration of past battles and lives lost, the CWM is an ideological battleground for the hearts and minds (and perhaps in the not-to-distant future, the bodies as well) of Canada’s children.



Figures 10 & 11. From left to Right. Busses outside of the Canadian War Museum, and boys gathered around World War I weapon display. Photos by author.

Just as Warren has not magically transported himself across time and space in his enthusiastic dash to enter the CWM, the children and youth who come to the CWM do not come of their own accord. They are brought on school, cadet, community group, or family outings. Once there however, most enthusiastically partake in the museum’s exhibits many of which

invite hands-on exploration—there are buttons to press, games to play, quizzes to take, uniforms to don, trenches to traverse, and weapons to handle. The latter is always a favorite with the boys. One First World War exhibit displays weapons that were used in the trenches. Mounted on one side of the display are Canadian weapons (1907 Patten bayonet, Welby .455 revolver)—and on the other, German (dagger, Luger pistol). Each side has its own collection of truncheons. The one lone “Mills bomb grenade,” seems to beg the question, *Are grenades non-partisan?* At the center of the display a museum label asks: “Which weapon would you choose?” To facilitate their choice, the weapons are made accessible. Unhindered by a glass-panel, they are mounted so that the children can conveniently wrap their small hands around the weapon’s handles, hook their fingers around triggers.

In *Between Hope and Despair*, editors Roger Simon et al argue that the preservation and remembrance of historical violence is guided by two pedagogical imperatives: Remembrance “constituted as a *strategic practice* in which memorial pedagogies are deployed for sociopolitical value and promise”; and, remembrance “enacted as a *difficult return*, a psychic and social responsibility to bring the dead into presence” (3).⁹⁴ Though these dual pedagogical imperatives can be productively deployed in unison to mobilize communities to advocate for human rights they also have important differences. With strategic practice remembrance is used as a means through which reconciliation or “harmonious social relations” are achieved (4). But when the memory of mass violence cannot be integrated into the limiting frames of contemporary social memory or reconciliation, difficult return destabilizes remembrance practices in order to keep alive in the present the psychic and social wounds of “what cannot be redeemed” (5). When positioned under the umbrella of nationalist and militarist agendas, strategic practice frequently

⁹⁴ Emphasis in original.

overshadows difficult return thereby enabling privileged subjects to bypass the sustained labour of critical engagement that is necessary before meaningful reconciliation can begin to take place.⁹⁵

As Parita Mukta's example of the Indian State's militarized funeral for Mahatma Gandhi, and the example of the Highway of Heroes memorial phenomena both illustrated (see Chapter One), when control over processes of commemorating loss come under the domain of the nation state, both the strategic deployment and the accompanying sociopolitical value assigned to performances of remembrance are shaped by the interests of the state. As Schneider argues just as the repertoire performs, so too does the archive. Under the umbrella of state control, archival institutions of military memory like the CWM also perform on behalf of the state. While the dead may well be rendered present through performances of national commemoration—be they repertorial or archival—in death they are strategically deployed by the state.

One way the tension between strategic practice and difficult return plays out in the CWM is in the dissonance that exists between the museum's architectural design and the nationalistic pedagogical agenda conveyed through its exhibits. As Katarzyna Rukszto argues, the CWM's architecture, designed by Raymond Moriyama "to facilitate a critical reflection engagement with history, war and nation," is in conflict with the museum's nation-building agenda, which necessitates the construction of a unifying national narrative that works against the kind of critical engagement that a difficult return demands (743).

⁹⁵ It's important to note that while difficult return may be a critical component of counter-memory processes, it also has risks that are experienced differently depending on one's relationship to the trauma being recalled. For those individuals who have an intimate (individual, familial, or cultural) relationship to the trauma, recall can "threaten to collapse differences across space/time" and can result in the living being caught in the breach of this collapse. I will return to a discussion of the risks of trauma's recall in the following chapter.

What is it that CWM's memorial pedagogy endeavours to teach the thousands of children and youth who arrive by the busload to trek the museum's 2.5 kilometres of exhibits? Other than which weapons they would bring with them into a First World War trench, what is it these children are to learn from their encounter with the CWM's history of Canadians at war? What narratives does the museum construct with these children in mind? What stories are omitted, or subsumed under the larger narrative of Canadian military history and Canadian multicultural nationalism? And what are the forces that shape the museum's message over time? In this chapter I take up these questions through an investigation of the overarching narratives the CWM communicates to the hundreds of thousands of "impressionable Canadian children" who pass through its galleries, play its games, press its buttons, run through its trenches, and make pseudo life and death choices based on the museum's multiple abstracted and interactive scenarios. While the CWM is full of the personal stories of past and present Canadian military personnel, following Sherene Razack, I differentiate "personal story" from "narrative" (*Dark* 18). Like Razack my interest is the cumulative effect of the museum's integration of personal voices, with how they are assembled to construct a larger narrative about Canadian nationalism.

I begin with an overview of the museum—its history, its architecture, and its relationship to new museology's pedagogical approaches. The overarching questions of this first section are: What sociopolitical values shape(d) the museum's construction, mandate, and its pedagogical approach to engaging its (mostly) young charges? How is the museum's use of interactive museology technologies reflective of a broader turn towards embodied engagement, reenactment, and other performance methodologies in managing the transmission of military and national memory? And, concurrent with the museum's use of animating approaches, how does it ensure that elements of both its evocative architecture and its historical exhibits remain inanimate?

Next, taking my lead from Avery Gordon, I share two CWM ghost stories: The first focuses on representations of Canada's "First Peoples" in its opening exhibit—Battleground: Wars on our Soil—and the second, on representations of Somalia and Rwanda in its final exhibit—The Savage Wars of Peace.⁹⁶ As Gordon suggests, to write of those who are marginalized or excluded from the historical archive, or whose narratives have become subsumed under overarching dominant discourses and ideologies, is to write ghost stories. My intent here is not to speak on behalf of these ghosts, but rather to denaturalize the mechanisms through which their ghosting is produced. These two stories illuminate the museum's use of a dual strategy of inclusion, and minimization of racialized "others" as integral to the production of its overarching narratives of 1) a unified multicultural nationalism that has been made possible, and will only be allowed to continue, through the heroic sacrifices of Canada's military, and 2) a celebrated Canadian "peacekeeping" humanitarianism. Taken together these ghost stories reveal how Canada's popular mythologies of happy-multiculturalism, and moral geopolitical exceptionalism necessitate the masking of the racism of white-settler Canadian nationalism, the disavowal of colonial histories and their ongoing neocolonial and neoliberal consequences, and the appropriation of the pain of others as a means of justifying Canada's benevolent militarism and minimizing the crimes of Canadian peacekeepers.

The Canadian War Museum, part I: Guarding history

Canada's new CWM, opened on 8 May 2005—the sixtieth anniversary of VE Day. The expansive new museum, prominently located at Ottawa's LaBreton Flats, was born of

⁹⁶ Throughout its exhibits the CWM uses the term "First Peoples." Nowhere in the museum did I see the term First Nations used. In the context of an official history of Canada's military past, I propose this choice of terminology is highly strategic and political, an issue I will address at greater length later in the chapter when I discuss the museum's representations of First Peoples.

controversy. In 1997, the museum's then director, Daniel Glenny, announced that one-third of a proposed expansion at the museum's existing Sussex Drive location, was to be dedicated to a Holocaust exhibit. As Reesa Greenberg notes, the idea for embedding a permanent Holocaust exhibit within the war museum originated after the museum hosted the well-attended *Anne Frank in the World, 1929-1945* exhibit in 1992 and an accompanying visitor poll showed strong support for the inclusion of a permanent Holocaust exhibit within the museum. In addition to these indicators of local public appeal for a permanent Holocaust exhibit, the museum's directors were further influenced by the 1993 opening of the highly "successful" United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, and the announced plan that the Imperial War Museum in London, UK would dedicate two-floors of its in-progress expansion to a permanent Holocaust exhibit (185-86).⁹⁷

But when plans to situate a permanent Holocaust exhibit within the CWM were made public, Canadian war veterans cried foul.⁹⁸ In part, their response was a well-founded critique of the lack of public and stakeholder consultations on which the museum's decision was based. As discussed in Chapter Two, however, it is also reflective of the growing influence of Canada's network of military memory stakeholders. Despite the defeat of their class action lawsuit against *The Valour and the Horror*'s producers, Canadian veterans had emerged from this earlier controversy over the control of the transmission of military memory, as a mobilized, politically-organized, and media-savvy group. As was the case with the *Valour and the Horror* controversy, at the behest of veterans' organizations, a Senate Subcommittee was formed to discuss the future

⁹⁷ For a discussion of the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC placed within the context of a critical analysis of the politics of archival memory production see Vivian Patraka, "*Spectacular Suffering: Theatre, Fascism, and the Holocaust.*" An interesting parallel between Greenberg's and Patraka's analyses is that both note how surveys are utilized to produce justification for the need for particular museums and pedagogical histories (Patraka 140 n.1).

⁹⁸ Aspects of this a controversy involving different constituents were repeated in debates surrounding the decision to situate a permanent Holocaust exhibit at the centre of Winnipeg's Human Rights Museum (Lewis).

CWM. Veterans and their representatives testified that the museum should be solely devoted to Canada's military history and that designating a portion of the museum to a permanent Holocaust exhibit or to "any display, regardless of space, other than that of Canadian military heritage [...] would be an absolute insult to the Canadian soldiers who participated in the making of that very history" (Parliament of Canada, "Guarding History").

The veterans' appeal was successful on two fronts. First, they prevailed in vetoing the permanent Holocaust exhibit; and second, they planted the idea within imaginations of both the museum leadership, and the general public, that the existing location and scale of the CWM were not commensurate with the vision of a Canadian national war memorial museum. Three among the Senate Subcommittee's twelve recommendations state: "That the Department of Veterans Affairs or the Department of National Defence assume the responsibility for the newly constituted and independent Canadian War Museum"—a point that signals a lack of critical reflection on the notion of what might constitute an independent body; "That a survey of alternative sites for the CWM be conducted by the appropriate government department or agency," and; "That the Government undertake a meaningful and thorough study as to the feasibility of a national holocaust and/or other acts of genocide gallery" ("Guarding").⁹⁹

In May 2001, a new site—the LaBreton Flats—had been found, and by October 2001, the architectural firm Moriyama and Teshima were selected to design and oversee the construction of the new CWM. Far from its humble beginnings as a \$12 million expansion project at 330 Sussex Drive, the new CWM's 440,000-square-foot-structure was built at a cost of \$137 million and occupies an 18.5 acre site. As Greenberg notes, the CWM had "morphed from an addition to

⁹⁹ A Holocaust exhibit figures prominently in Winnipeg's Canadian Museum for Human Rights that opened 20 September 2014. Plans are also underway build a National Holocaust Monument, in Ottawa at a site across from the CWM (Bozikovic).

an existing building, to [...] a prominent addition to the capital's museal, ceremonial, and war memorial landscape" (186).¹⁰⁰ Moreover, the public cost of CWM's original construction pales in comparison to the cumulative costs of its ongoing maintenance. According to the museum's 2014-2015 to 2018-2019 corporate plan, while the CWM generates a little over \$3 million a year in revenue, it receives the remainder of its \$17 million a year operating budget from government funding (Canada "Summary").¹⁰¹

The Canadian War Museum, part II: An architecture of remembrance



Figures 12 & 13. From left to right. Outside Memorial Hall, and headstone of the Unknown Soldier inside Memorial Hall. Photos by author.

¹⁰⁰ My focus in this chapter is limited to the CWM's interior. In contrast, Greenberg's analysis examines how architect Raymond Moriyama's design functions as part of a broader memorial landscape through the creation of a war-peacekeeping walking experience between the CWM, the National War Monument, and the Parliament Buildings. Since the completion of the CWM this route has been used for Remembrance Day and other military commemoration processional ceremonies. On the functioning of the CWM as part of Ottawa's larger military-peacekeeping architectural landscape also see Moriyama's *In Search of a Soul*, and Paul Dubellet Kariouk's "Capital Improvement: The New Canadian War Museum Revitalizes Ottawa's Lebreton Flats, Acknowledges the Parliament Buildings and Provides a Welcome Addition to the Institutional Importance of the Nation's Capital."

¹⁰¹ Since the CWM and the Canadian Museum of History (formerly the Canadian Museum of Civilization) come under the same crown corporation umbrella the actual governmental cost of the CWM can be somewhat elusive. It's also important to note that the amounts listed above are "operating" costs and don't include additional funding allotted to special exhibits and other projects.

10 April 2014

Canadian War Museum, Memorial Hall.

Blocks of monumentalized order; rectangular hard order constructed of concrete, slate, marble and glass; order bisected by a disorienting array of lines. Is this what the inside of a tomb feels like? Is this the weight of monumentalization? The only objects in the room (apart from its cold hard beautiful architecture) are (1) the headstone of the Unknown Soldier (fig. 13); (2) the coins at the bottom of the long shallow rectangular reflection pool; and (3) a surveillance camera.

I like this room. In fact, I've come to like all the cavernous and tomb-like spaces of the museum. Spaces eerily well suited for the contemplation of loss. I am growing increasingly proprietary and resentful of the invasions of school children with their exuberant irreverentiality.

"A pirate gun!"

"Look, a grenade!"

For architect Raymond Moriyama the stakes in designing a museum that could express "the contradictions and ambiguities of war and sacrifice" and compel visitors "to think hard about themselves, the nation, and the world" were high (*Search* 13). Moriyama and his family were among the twenty-two thousand Canadian residents of Japanese descent—most of whom were born in Canada—who were labeled "enemy aliens," rounded up, and sent to internment camps in the aftermath of Japan's 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. After refusing to abandon his pregnant wife and three children to go to an all-male work camp Moriyama's father was arrested by RCMP officers and held as a prisoner of war. Moriyama, his mother and sisters were interned

for two years at a camp in Slocan, British Columbia where Moriyama's mother miscarried. Moriyama was twelve when he entered the camp.

In Search of a Soul, Moriyama's personal account of conceiving, designing, and building the new CWM is a testament to the complexity, not only of the museum's physical architecture, but also of Moriyama's ideological, pedagogical, and spiritual vision. Both the museum's design and Moriyama's memoir reflect his overarching focus on regeneration and reconciliation. But the reconciliation Moriyama endeavors to evoke through his animated architecture is not a simple one. "My objective," Moriyama writes, "is to make [visitors] think, to question, to go through an emotional and physical process and arrive, hopefully, at rebirth" (48). As with Wodiczko's *City of Refuge*, Moriyama's vision of reconciliation and rebirth are non-utopian. Through a "complex system of [jagged] tilting planes that collide with one another, some at dramatic angles, others with almost imperceptible subtlety" Moriyama intentionally sets out to provoke unease (57). Unlike dominant elegiac tropes of military commemoration, through this architectural evocation of precarity Moriyama set out to construct a living memorial that stages an encounter, not with nationalistic heroism, but with the disorienting ambiguity of our half-guilt and half-innocence as national subjects.

From the first time I entered the museum Moriyama's architecture had a disquieting affect on me, but it was one largely akin to haunting, like a seething presence amidst an absence. I had no words for it, no vocabulary to help me make meaning of it. My time spent in Memorial Hall (figs. 12 & 13) marked my first truly contemplative engagement with the museum's evocative architecture. It wasn't until my seventh visit to the museum (during my third trip to Ottawa) that I discovered Memorial Hall.¹⁰² This is mainly because on prior visits I spent the

¹⁰² Memorial Hall was originally called the "Hall of Remembrance" and is referred to as such by Moriyama.

bulk of my time shadowing (in a hopefully not-too-creepy way) groupings of children as they made their way through the museum's galleries. Off the beaten track of the main galleries, Memorial Hall is hidden in plain sight in a corner of the museum's main foyer. A nine-by-nine metre enclosed concrete cube (fig. 12) that can only be accessed through a dimly-lit triangular antechamber, it is easily overlooked as part of Moriyama's war-torn architecture.

In his memoir, Moriyama asks, "Can architecture itself be an exhibit?" (22). While I believe it can, had it not been for my repeated visits to the CWM, the performative power of Moriyama's architecture with its messages of precarity, ambiguity and loss cemented into its tilting walls, its weighty sinking ceilings, and its jagged surfaces would have been lost on me. I attribute this to several factors: First, to a lack of architectural literacy on my part—a lack that I suspect is shared by many of the war-museum's mostly young visitor population. This factor could easily be overcome in a number of ways: The museum could integrate explanatory panels that bring attention to some of Moriyama's architectural features; Information about the museum's architecture could be included among the teacher and student resources that the museum makes available online; The museum's gift shop could stock Moriyama's book, and; The museum's extensive research department (which produces many of the books that are carried in its gift shop) could produce a pamphlet about the museum's architecture.

A second factor that interferes with the potential of Moriyama's architectural vision can be illustrated through an example. Without consulting either Moriyama or any members of his architectural team the CWM directors made the decision "to install a floor tile in the Foyer and other public areas to improve the [museum's] 'look'" (64).¹⁰³ Moriyama writes:

¹⁰³ While Moriyama does not indicate how the decision was arrived at, as the example of struggles over the Bomber Command display illustrates the theme of how and who makes decisions regarding the CWM is a recurring one (*Toronto Star* "War").

The floor was to have been finished in grey motley concrete patterned to point in the direction of the Peace Tower; large, black, elongated triangular concrete patterns at strategic locations would have intensified the sense of compression one experiences on entering the Foyer. The decision to add floor tiles had a seriously negative impact on the symbolic and visual strength of the Foyer and other public areas. (64)

In short, a key reason the CWM's architecture does not function as an exhibit is because its decision-making (or influencing) stakeholders, do not treat it as one. Moriyama didn't design the museum to look good or "to be loved" (48). Nor did he design it as an inert white box to serve as a blank backdrop for the museum's fictively neutral narration of history. Moriyama's dilapidated, weighty, and disorienting architecture was intended to evoke the trauma of war's impact both on the battlefield and in centres of civilian population. But as Rukszto argues, "the relationship between the [museum's] architecture and [its] exhibition[s are] ill-fitting, compromised by divergent pedagogical goals" (743). Whereas, the symbolism Moriyama poured into his jagged war-torn concrete vision was in keeping remembrance "enacted as a *difficult return*," CWM stakeholders were guided by a more strategic approach to educating children about Canada's military history. The museum's emphasis on a military history grounded in Canadian national mythologies of unified multiculturalism and benevolent militarism works against the kind of critical engagement that Moriyama endeavoured to provoke through his architecture. Overshadowed by CWM's ideologically-permeated pedagogical mandate, Moriyama's affectively animating architecture is reduced to serving as a spectacular backdrop and bunker-like warehouse for the museum's exhibits, and a delivery system for the museum's more instrumentalist memorial pedagogy.

The Canadian War Museum, part III: The CWM as ‘contact zone’

In addition to being a product of the increased influence of Canada’s growing military-cultural-memory-network, the CWM’s expansive new digs and its phenomenal architectural design also reflect a broader shift in museology that has taken place over the past three decades. Emblematic of what museum scholar Ruth Phillips calls the “second museum age” (83) the CWM is part of a global twenty-first century museum renaissance that, here in Canada, has seen the construction of museums that are “spectacles of architectural virtuosity” designed to “bring major economic benefits to Canadian cities” (85).¹⁰⁴

Characterized by a “new museology” approach “that promotes education over research, engagement over doctrine, and multivocality over connoisseurship” the second museum age is a move away from the museum as a temple of knowledge and towards the museum as an inclusionary and collaborative “contact zone” (Boast 64). Through its use of interactive methodologies, the new museum does more than engage its visitors in a collaborative process. Visitors are cast as actors in the process of what Schneider would call “making belief” (*Performing* 127).¹⁰⁵ Through the process of trying on military uniforms, running through faux trenches, playing online “adventure” games, and proffering pre-scripted (multiple-choice) opinions, the CWM’s young charges are enlisted in the construction of an ideology of a

¹⁰⁴ Other examples of this investment in Canadian museums includes the Royal Ontario Museum, the Art Gallery of Ontario and most recently, Winnipeg’s Museum of Human Rights.

¹⁰⁵ Here Schneider departs from Richard Schechner’s delineation between performances that “make believe” and those that “make belief” by asserting that historical reenactments deploy “make believe” as a means of “making belief” or the “making of ideological investment” (*Performing* 127).

pluralistic Canadian nationalism.¹⁰⁶

In “Neocolonial Collaboration: Museum as Contact Zone Revisited,” Robin Boast undertakes a critical examination of the celebratory ways museum scholars, directors, and curators have taken up the concept of the museum as a contact zone. In his influential 1997 essay, “Museums as Contact Zones,” James Clifford reflects on a particular interaction between Tlingit elders who were consulted by Portland Museum of Art to provide information about artifacts in the museum’s collection. He writes:

What the museum thought was going on was an elucidation of additional context and information that would enrich the collection. What the people representing the Tlingit were doing was much broader. The objects represented, for them, “ongoing stories of struggle,” an opportunity to remind the museum of its responsibilities over its stewardship of clan objects, and an appeal to the museum to be accountable in ways that went beyond “mere preservation” and contextualization. (Clifford qtd. in Boast 61)

Boast argues that post-Clifford descriptions of the museum as contact zone paint an overly rosy picture of the contemporary museum as a space of transcultural exchange and dialogue. What Clifford was describing was less an orchestrated and mutual exchange and more a performed *détournement* of the museum as a temple of Western knowledge. Coined by the

¹⁰⁶ In her use of the concept make-believe as a means of interpellating participants into a process of constructing ideologies Schneider is specifically addressing the trend toward military and other historical re-enactments. Like Schneider, performance studies scholars Scott Magelssen and Natalie Alvarez have also taken up this turn toward participatory engagement in the making of meaning. Magelssen examines how embodied immersion in simulated performance environments—or “simming”—has become a highly popularized technology in historical re-enactments (*Simming*). Magelssen’s emphasis is on the productive potential of simming to create embodied scenarios in which contemporary subjects can engage in a surrogated encounter with inapprehensible “others” across time. Alvarez, on the other hand, analyzes the use of immersive technologies to facilitate “dark tourism” thrill seeking encounters, and the military’s use of simulated performance immersion in its production of tactical training scenarios. In the former, tourists can immerse themselves “in the role’ of illegal migrant” by participating in a “*caminata nocturna* or ‘night walk’” (“*Fronteras*” 1). In the latter, as part of their pre-deployment tactical and cultural intelligence training, Canadian and British soldiers encounter Afghan actors in mock Afghanistan villages.

French Situationists, a *détournement* refers to a kind of hijacking—or detouring—of a dominant media representation. Through their use of oral history and story-telling the Tlingit elders gave the Portland Museum curator’s more than they asked for when they requested “information” about archival objects in its collection. Refusing to adhere to the dominant and dominating logic of archival knowledge production, the Tlingit elders used the objects to reveal how past and present inter(in)animate one another. Theirs was not only an exercise in archeological cataloging strategically undertaken towards the securing of “harmonious social relations” (Simon et al 4). It was also a modeling of remembrance as difficult return wherein stories the dead are brought into the here and now in order to unsettle dominant social memory.

While Clifford proposed that the contact zone could serve as a model for de-centering and democratizing museums, museum scholar Tony Bennett argues that, in practice, the contact zone has become “an instrument of governmentality, expressed as multiculturalism” (qtd. in Boast 59). Boast similarly asserts that the real lesson of the contact zone is that in the process of setting up a system of pluralistic exchange, it frequently masks the asymmetrical power relations that ensure that control remains in the hands of the museum and the museum’s key political and economic stakeholders. I propose that the commanding roles played by the Canadian Government, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of National Defence, and other military-cultural-memory-network stakeholders in the construction of the CWM’s overarching mandate reflects what Boast calls “the dark underbelly of the contact zone” (56). Some overt examples of the power of CWM’s military-memory-network stakeholders include the vetoing of plans for a permanent Holocaust exhibit within the CWM; overriding Moriyama’s foyer design plans; and the successful bid to change to the museum’s representation of the World War II

Bomber Command display (see Chapter Two).¹⁰⁷ Like Boast, however, I'm equally concerned with how the contact zone can mask less overt, but "far more fundamental asymmetries, appropriations, and biases" (67). In an instrumentalist celebration of unified multicultural nationalism the CWM strategically deploys the contact zone as an interactive pluralistic meeting-ground. Many voices, one nation.

The task of making the history of Canadian militarism palatable to a broad range of children and youth, with attention spans that have been shaped by an era of interactive multi-media saturation, requires a range of techniques of engagement. In keeping with its new spectacularly expansive home, when the CWM moved from Sussex Street it dusted off its old museology approach to imparting military history. While military historians are welcome to visit the museum's Military History Research Centre with its archive of 500,000 military-related objects, for the general public the museum serves its carefully constructed multicultural Canadian military education through an engaging range of interactive and media-savvy exhibits accompanied by sound-bite explanatory display panels. Interestingly, then, though the majority of the CWM's exhibits engage new museology's interactive approaches, in the two exhibits I will discuss in the following sections—those that focus on First Peoples and on Canadian peacekeeping missions to Rwanda and Somalia—there is no invitation for interaction. The museum's opening First Peoples exhibit adopts an old museology natural histories approach with

¹⁰⁷ In some cases the influence of this stakeholder network is clearly visible. Two such examples are 1) the struggle against the inclusion of a permanent Holocaust exhibit within the museum, and 2) the changes made to the Bomber Command display. In other cases, such as the changes to the museum's foyer design, what role, if any, Canada's broader military-cultural-memory stakeholder network had in the decision is less clear. As Fremeth suggests, this is in part the brilliance of the network. Because it is not a simple top-down structure its influence is not always traceable, and its activities often look like grassroots advocacy on the part of a particular group of citizen stakeholders. I will return to the slipperiness of the influence of this network later in this chapter in my discussion of the museum's final exhibit—The Savage Wars of Peace.

its use of dioramas, and the museum's final "peacekeeping" exhibit is dominated by a spectacular video montage projected onto three massive screens and narrated by children.

Just as veterans recognized the effectiveness of the *Valour and the Horror*'s use of docudrama as a method "of populariz[ing] the past and mak[ing] it aesthetically pleasing for the public and, in particular, for youth who had trouble relating to military history" (Fremeth 65), CWM stakeholders have integrated docudrama audio-narratives and oral histories into many of their exhibits. Similarly, many of the museum's onsite and online displays also use a form of interactive docudrama. For example, in its online World War I "Over the Top," "adventure" game, actors perform readings of trench warfare scenarios that enlisted players must then respond to by selecting from the pre-scripted multiple-choice options. Wrong choices—like removing one's helmet to use as a step-stool to help retrieve a pack of cigarettes from no-man's-land—result in the email delivery (to the player) of an imitation telegraph death-notice addressed to one's faux parents. Performance is used both as entertainment and as an affective delivery system through which the CWM conveys its message of Canadian multicultural nationalism that is born of, and reliant on, a strong military.

If the CWM has gleaned tactical approaches from new museology's handbook, in its layout it appears to have borrowed from Ikea's retail-marketing floor-plan. The museum's four main galleries—"Battleground: Wars on our Soil: Earliest times to 1885"; "For Crown and Country: South African and First World War, 1885-1931; "Forged in Fire: Second World War, 1931-1945; and "A Violent Peace: The Cold War, peacekeeping and recent conflicts, 1945 to the present"—are devoid of easily-accessed exits, or straight isles through which one can walk quickly. While visitors can choose to skip a gallery in its entirety, once they enter one, the only way out is through. Each gallery is a serpentine maze designed to bring visitors into face-to-

display-contact with the museum's myriad of exhibits. Throughout the journey, visitors are kept busy taking in exhibits, reading brief explanatory plaques, pressing buttons, answering quizzes, listening to dramatized audio docu-narratives, watching museum-produced mini-docu-dramas, and playing games. So busy in fact that they may be unaware of the ghosts that abound.

Ghost story I: Colonialism in the “contact zone”



Figures 14 & 15. Images from the opening display in the CWM's "Wars on our soil: Earliest times to 1885 exhibit. Photos by author.

4 May 2013

Canadian War Museum, Battleground: Wars on our soil: Earliest times to 1885

Entering the museum's first gallery I feel an uncanny disconnect. Have I taken a wrong turn, somehow crossed the river and landed in Gatineau's Museum of Civilization? In front of me is a mural. The scene is eerily bucolic. The backdrop is a forest of black trees silhouetted against a haze-green sky. In the foreground stands a family. Mom holds a swaddled infant. Dad, standing slightly behind, has a bow and a quiver of arrows slung over his shoulders. In front of Mom and Dad are a girl—holding a basket of corn—and a boy—wielding a lacrosse stick. Like

Mom, the girl is covered, head-to-toe in a fringed deer-hide dress. Like Dad, the boy is bare-chested and wears a breech-cloth draped over deer-hide pants. Mom and Dad gaze lovingly at their children. It is the girl and boy who face the museum visitors. It is their eyes we look into.

Except for the costumes, props, and hair—dark strip in the centre of Dad’s otherwise-shaved head, and braids for Mom, daughter, and son—this could be the quintessential Hallmark image of a nuclear-Canadian-family-in-the-wilderness. Incongruously then, next to this happy-family portrait is text, in large, slightly oozy-yellow font, that reads: “Families at War” (fig. 14). And below, in smaller white font—“In Iroquoian communities in what is now southern Ontario, every man and woman had a military role.” Is this what the girl and boy are communicating with their stern, not-quite-so-happy gazes? That war is imminent and we all have a necessary role to play? These children have none of young Warren’s plucky momentum. They are not the protagonists of military adventures in far-away places. The museum’s display informs us that, for Canada’s First Peoples, war was a way life. Moreover, it illustrates to visitors not only that the familiar western nuclear family is at the heart of Iroquoian life, but also that the family is essential to war’s re-production.

Above, and to the left, on a ledge constructed of wooden stakes that extend over the gallery’s entrance, stands a mannequin (fig. 15). His skin is an odd grey-hue. He wears shin-guards, a breast-plate, a frontal skirt-like shield, and a cone-shaped hat that are made of thick woven grasses and decorated with ochre dye. He holds a bow and arrow—not drawn, but with arrow notched at the ready. Like the two-dimensional adults in the mural, his gaze is averted—signaling that he is not part of our world. He is of another time and place. Explanation for his hovering presence is communicated through a display panel with a quote attributed to the

eighteenth-century Kahnawake Mohawk chief, Tecaughretanego: “The art of war consists in ambushing and surprising our enemies, and in preventing them from ambushing and surprising us.” Two small images are also part of the display. One, of an Iroquoian village with rows of longhouses ringed by protective palisades set in front of a field of crops, and a second, of warriors approaching through the woods. The exhibit’s supplementary text explains that the two sections of the exhibit illustrate an “Iroquoian community in peacetime and under attack” and that the two best-known of the Iroquoian groups—the Huron League and the Iroquoian Confederacy—“fought a long war over control of hunting grounds north of the St. Lawrence.”



Figure 16. “Comrades in Arms.”
Photo by author.

Having established that Canada’s First Peoples were a warring people who had fought among themselves long before the arrival of the French and the British, and that the family is foundational to the workings of war, the focus of the museum’s narrative moves on. A new diorama has two more grey-hued mannequins. One is an Ojibwa warrior, the other, a French militiaman. The Frenchman crouches in the snowy landscape. He rests his matchlock musket on a tree-stump and takes aim along its long wooden barrel. The

Ojibwa warrior stands behind and above him, his musket at rest in one hand while he points yonder with the other. The display tells us that the two are allies in the war against the Iroquois League. It also tells us that the Ojibwa warrior is “teaching” the Frenchman about warfare, and

that it is the Ojibwa warrior who “speaks,” the Frenchman who “listens.” We have not only entered the militarized world of men, and of masculine camaraderie.

The positioning of an Ojibwa warrior standing above a squatting Frenchman is citational in the history of debates over Ottawa’s monumental iconography of Canadian First Nations-European “contact.” In 1997, then Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Ovide Mercredi, led a successful bid to remove the kneeling life-size bronze Anishinabe scout from his subservient position at the base of the iconic Parliament Hill monument of Samuel de Champlain (B. S. Osborne and G. B. Osborne). Whereas Champlain continues to reign heroically-larger-than-life atop a pedestal overlooking the Ottawa River, his “Indian scout” has been relocated to Ottawa’s Major’s Hill Park (Tunbridge). While the CWM might be commended for their decision not to replicate the imperial power dynamics of the original Champlain monument, they fail to make visible the critical role of First Nation’s communities in challenging those representations. Instead, the museum uses their more equitably positioned mannequins to paint a reductively uncomplicated picture of a respectful and reciprocal relationship between the French and their First Peoples’ “allies,” a relationship of two peoples united through shared interests and shared enemies. It is through their trading of “tactics and technology,” the display tells us, that the First Peoples and the French survived the “post-contact wars.”

Somehow, in the course of a few short steps on the museum’s meandering path, we are transported from the pre-contact wars of First Peoples, to post-contact wars fought by a French-First Peoples alliance. In the contact zone of the CWM there is no mention of “contact wars.” Here, there is only the early “long war” of the Huron League and the Iroquoian Confederacy and the post-contact wars in which the “Algonkians, Iroquois from Kahnawake and Kanesatake, Hurons, and the French formed a powerful alliance that fought the Iroquois League until 1701

and the British until 1760.” Here, displays celebrate a transcultural exchange between the First Peoples and the French of all manner of expertise, equipment, and other accouterments—tomahawks, muskets, snowshoes, moccasins, canoes, beads, furs, European textiles.

Though throughout most of its galleries the CWM embraces new museology approaches—like interactive displays—these opening dioramas and diorama-like exhibits are akin to an old museology throwback.¹⁰⁸ Most often associated with natural history museums, dioramas have historically been used, as Amy Lonetree argues in *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*, to “fix [Indigenous] cultures in a romanticized, static past” (62). By presenting Canada’s First Peoples in this kind of “evolution-oriented” model, the CWM reinforces the “vanishing Indian” stereotype (15-16). Together with representations that show the land as a vast and relatively uninhabited wilderness, the portrayal of Indigenous populations as a dying race helped to legitimate European encroachment and to mask the brutality of the colonization of the Americas. As Sherene Razack asserts in “When Place Becomes Race” in the national mythology of white settler societies, “Aboriginal peoples are presumed mostly dead or assimilated. European settlers thus *become* the original inhabitants and the group most entitled to the fruits of citizenship” (2).¹⁰⁹ The denial of European conquest and colonization supports Canada’s national mythology that ours was a nation that was “peacefully settled and not colonized” (2).

With its dioramic allusions to the vanishing Indian, the museum’s portrayal of a reciprocal relationship between the First Peoples and the French takes on new meaning. If

¹⁰⁸ Not all of these displays meet the precise definition of a diorama—as a three-dimensional scene constructed in front of a painted background. For example, the first mural is more like a painted representation of a diorama, in which the foregrounded two-dimensional family act as stand-ins for their three-dimensional diorama counterparts. I propose that it is their two-dimensionality that bequeaths them their Hallmark-card aura.

¹⁰⁹ Emphasis in original.

Canada's First Peoples are cast as part of a dying culture, then the French—with their sharing of modernity's miraculous bounty of metals, guns, beads, and cloth—become cast as rescuers who help usher their allies into a new age. While the museum also glosses over the colonial violence of the British-First Peoples' relationship, their portrayal of the early contact between Canada's French and Indigenous populations is almost celebratory. As one display unequivocally sums up the French-First Peoples encounter: "Neither side dominated the other; both First Peoples and the French remained *entirely* independent."¹¹⁰ To confirm that this feeling of mutuality was a shared perspective, the museum offers these words from a nameless seventeenth century Abenaki chief: "Know that the Frenchman is my brother [...] we dwell in the same cabin at two fires, he is at one fire and I am at the other fire." The one concession that the museum makes is that, in addition to their alliance, the French also brought with them "epidemics and new technologies that disrupted the balance of power among First Peoples groups."

While a central tenet of new museology's contact zone is the production of multi-vocal exhibits curated in collaboration with community representatives, the Indigenous voices that are included in CWM are largely those of the dead. As in other forms of military commemoration, these dead are not called on to speak on their own behalf. Rather, they are enlisted by, and put in service to, the Nation. Unlike the narrative interventions performed by the Tlingit elders in their consultations with curators at the Portland Museum of Art, neither Tecaughretanego's words, nor those of the nameless Abenaki chief, are used as a means of inter(in)animating past and present in such a way as to remind the museum and its visitors of their responsibilities in regards to Indigenous peoples' ongoing struggles. Nor does the museum provide any context for how the words of these Indigenous leaders from centuries past became part of this Canadian military

¹¹⁰ Emphasis is mine.

archive. Instead, the inclusion of their words is used to support the museum's narrative of a longstanding multicultural nationalism that has been, and continues to be, made possible through militarism.

Having been brought into modernity's fold by the French, the narrative of First Peoples' military history need no longer languish in the dioramas of a vanished culture. Across the snaking isle from our Ojibwa and French comrades, on a flat-screen monitor, a video montage shows us images of "First Peoples warriors, soldiers, sailors, and air force personnel" who have "from the beginnings of war in Canada up to the twenty-first century [...] shaped Canada and the world." In the course of a few twists and turns of the gallery, Canada's First Peoples have time-traveled 5000 years and are now integrated into Canada's contemporary military, and the museum's modern display technologies.

Later in the exhibit, a small series of display panels accompanied by maps briefly addresses Britain's colonizing of Vancouver Island (1849) and British Columbia (1858). (Interestingly, this is the only time the museum uses the term colonization in relation to either Canada's First Peoples, or to the founding of Canada as a nation-state.) "The Prairies" also have their moment with a panel titled "Settlement and Accommodation" that explains: "In 1870, First Peoples controlled the Prairies. By 1880, Canadian settlers dominate the region." While the display makes no mention of First Peoples' resistance to the incursion of these settlers, it does acknowledge, "many First Peoples resented the Canadian settlers." Despite these resentments however, the museum assures us, that the First Peoples of the Prairies "worked to convert their economies from hunting to farming [and] relied upon negotiations to resolve their differences with Ottawa." Manitoba is allotted its own panels. After crediting Louis Riel and the Métis with securing Manitoba (from the Hudson's Bay Company) for Canada, the next panel explains that

Métis and Native grievances led to an insurrection in the Northwest to which Ottawa dispatched 8000 regular and militia troops. Over 100 died in the battle and Riel was hung for treason, “an act,” the museum informs its visitors, “which severely damaged *linguistic* relations in Canada.”¹¹¹

In addition to the museum’s regression to an old-museology approach, two things stand out about the First Peoples’ exhibits: The first is the limited space allotted to the colonial encounter of the French and the British with Canada’s First Peoples, and the second, the haunting absences within the narrative the museum constructs of this encounter. Though the gallery, “Battleground: Wars on our soil: Earliest times to 1885” purports to cover “First Peoples pre-contact conflicts (over 5000 years ago)”; “First Peoples’ contact with the French and the British”; the “Seven Years War”; and the “War of 1812”—in its entirety, it is less than one-third the size of each of the other three main galleries. And to the extent that “contact” is addressed, it is predominately in the context of alliance, reciprocity, and negotiation—not in terms of colonial aggression, land and resource appropriation, or Indigenous resistance.¹¹²

When Raymond Moriyama traveled across Canada to seek input for his architectural design he had this to say of his meetings with First Nations communities: “Many of them were very interested in the museum, though many also feared their stories would be ignored. I assured

¹¹¹ Emphasis is mine.

¹¹² Given the CWM’s exalted narrative of French-First Peoples alliances, the absence of any exhibits about the 1990 “Oka crisis” is a simultaneously glaring and understandable omission. The Oka crisis tells a very different story of French-First Nation relationships. The historical roots of the 1990 confrontation took place 150 years before Confederation when the French aristocracy appropriated land west of Montreal that was part Kanestake Mohawk territory and gave it to a group of Catholic priests. Months after a land claim filed by the Kanestake was rejected for failing to meet legal requirements, the Mayor of Oka announced that a golf course and resort expansion would extend onto Kanestake territory and Mohawk burial grounds. A blockade was set up that became a twentieth century rallying point for Indigenous sovereignty struggles in Canada. It also became a highly militarized site as hundreds of armed Canadian troops were brought in to put an end to the protests. As Razack notes, “without a trace of irony” Canadian military historians J. L. Granastein and David J. Bercuson argue that the “unique skills possessed by Canadian peacekeepers [were] honed while subduing Canada’s native populations, most recently at the siege of Oka” (*Dark* 34-35). Also see Alexa Conradi, “Uprising at Oka: A Place of Non-identification.”

them that would not be the case. Some were cynical, and for a few, the idea of inclusion was a distant fantasy. Some may have considered me an Uncle Tom” (24). Based on the museum’s limited real-estate allotment to Canada’s First Peoples; the absence of any discussion of colonial violence; and the near-absence of Indigenous voices in the museum, it appears the cynicism Moriyama encountered was well placed. And perhaps, the reason Moriyama fears that he may have been seen as an “Uncle Tom” by some First Nations community members, was because while Moriyama was passionately committed to an architectural design that spoke the hard truths of war, the hard truth of Canadian colonialism was nowhere on his, or the CWM’s, agenda.

While it is a common Canadian truism that Canada’s emergence as a nation on the global stage was forged in World Wars I and II, more recently, the War of 1812 has been pitched as Canada’s new military multicultural origin story. This previously under-recognized origin story was brought to life through a \$28 million Department of Canadian Heritage investment that funded a plethora of War of 1812 Bicentennial Commemoration events. Elements of the CWM’s celebrated special exhibit—“The War of 1812”—which ran from June 2012 through January 2013 have been integrated into the museum’s permanent galleries.¹¹³ Both the number of War of 1812 aesthetic productions—operas, plays, festivals, exhibits, and re-enactments—and the funneling of arts and culture funding dollars into “branches of the Department of Canadian Heritage” are indications of the increasing relevance of Alan Filewod’s assertion that there is a thin line between Canadian cultural nationalism and Canadian military nationalism (Bradshaw “Study”).¹¹⁴ The museum itself, as well as its war art program and many of the video

¹¹³ For examples of some of the interactive technologies the museum used as pedagogical tools to teach the history of this reclaimed Canadian origin story see the CWM’s online “micro site” at <http://www.warmuseum.ca/1812/>.

¹¹⁴ Also see Alan Filewod, “National Theatre, National Obsession.”

presentations that feature prominently in its exhibits are supported through this kind of blurring of the line between arts and military funding categories.

Conspicuously absent from these birth-of-the-nation narratives, however, is the violent impact of Canada's colonial history on Indigenous populations. Not simply a denial of a catastrophic historical event, this erasure of Canada's violent colonial origins from dominant social memory is integral to the continuing dispossession of Canada's Indigenous populations. I propose that at the CWM, there is a necessary parallel between the absencing of Canada's violent colonial history and the absence of the term "First Nations." As Diana Taylor argues, one of the mechanisms through which the archive produces, legitimates, and stores knowledge is through systems of classification or naming. Within archival structures, how and what can be known, depends on its being named. As a rhetorical act of exclusion, the CWM's decision not to use the term First Nations in its exhibits is understandable given the museum's overarching narrative of multicultural nationalism. Since the state is the governing body by which sovereignty is bestowed or legitimated, for the CWM to include a *First Nation*'s perspective in Canadian military history would have necessitated including questions of sovereignty, treaty-rights, and land-claims.

Political science scholar Tom Flanagan argues that despite the generally accepted principle, throughout the West, of temporal priority—or first come, first served—there should be an exception in relation to Canadian Indigenous populations (Asch 34). While Flanagan concedes that it is undeniable that Indigenous populations occupied the land now known as Canada prior to the arrival of the French, the British, and subsequent waves of European settler populations, he nonetheless asserts that temporal priority only applies to political communities

that are organized as what we call “the state” (35).¹¹⁵ Taken together, the museum’s absencing of the term First Nations, and its dioramic representations of the First Peoples’ family suggests (despite its normatively hetero-nuclear motif) that Canada’s First Peoples community structures are part of an otherized past, a past that predates contemporary notions of the nation-state. If there were no states, France and Britain’s presence was not that of invading nations. In absencing the term “First Nation,” the museum also conveniently disappears ongoing First Nations struggles for sovereignty. And, in replacing French and British colonial violence and with the notion of contact, the museum lays the foundation for its birth-of-the-multicultural-nation meta-narrative.

Just as Britain’s privileging of its involvement in the great anti-Nazi war facilitates what Paul Gilroy calls a postcolonial melancholic disavowal, the CWM’s narrative of Canada as a multicultural nation born of reciprocity, veils from contemporary memory the genocidal brutality of Canada’s colonial history. In failing to bring—its mostly young—visitors face-to-face with the colonial violence on which Canadian settler nationalism is founded, the museum rejects the path of critical engagement and difficult return. Instead, the museum adopts an instrumentalist pedagogical approach that uses a multiculturalist discourse of national identity toward the production of a unifying Canadian identity grounded in national innocence. In absencing colonial violence from its opening exhibit, the CWM also sets the stage for an unfolding narrative of Canadian benevolent militarism and moral exceptionalism that reaches a crescendo in the final of the museum’s exhibits, “The Savage Wars of Peace” where Canada’s celebrated role as a peacekeeping middle-power is delivered with spectacular allure.

¹¹⁵ See Michael Asch, *On Being Here to Stay: Treaties and Aboriginal Rights in Canada* for a detailed contestation of Flanagan’s thesis. Also see Peter Kulchuski’s *Aboriginal Rights are Not Human Rights: In Defence of Indigenous Struggles* for an articulation of the significance of the legal distinctions between the concepts of Human Rights and Aboriginal Rights.

Ghost story II: Rwanda and Somalia, Canadian peacekeeping's “Devils” and martyrs

11 August 2012

Canadian War Museum, The Savage Wars of Peace.

The machete and the wooden club—with a crude metal dagger jutting from its end at a ninety-degree angle—appear to float of their own accord (fig. 17). Past these weapons of the Rwandan genocide, on the other side of their see-through enclosure, a painting acts as a backdrop (figs 17 & 18). Thinking at first that it is a canvas completely covered in camouflage, I'm confused. But then, I make out the white painted outline of a man's face buried behind his camouflaged hands. A thin red cross etched into the lines of his forehead (fig. 18).



Figures 17 & 18. From left to right. Weapons of from the Rwandan genocide in front of *Dallaire #6*, a painting by Gertrude Kearns. Right, *Dallaire #6* (photos by author).

Having trekked the CWM's circuitous trail, I've arrived at "The Savage Wars of Peace," the final exhibit in the last (and largest) of the museum's four main galleries—"A Violent Peace: The Cold War, peacekeeping and recent conflicts, 1945 to the present." Ahead, strung across the path leading to the gallery's exit, are three massive video screens with rows of empty benches in front of them. The Savage Wars of Peace occupies one large round room and comes with a trigger "WARNING" informing visitors that the video that dominates room—*My World: Hope and Peace*—"contains images of cruelty, violence, human suffering, and death, and may not be appropriate for all viewers."

The disappearance of the snaking-trail, the WARNING, the dimmed lighting, the incessantly chaotic activation of the room by the video, and the absence of interactive displays—all signal a shift. We have left behind the CWM's new museology contact zones where children were invited to learn about Canada's pluralistic military history by listening to dramatized personal stories, playing "adventure" games, testing their knowledge through computer-generated multiple-choice quizzes, and touching weapons. As with the tomahawk and bow-and-arrow in the First Peoples' exhibit, the weapons on display here—machete and club—are untouchable. These are not weapons deemed appropriate for children's hands or banquet ambiance. These are not the weapons of contemporary nation-states. These are "other"-worldly weapons (fig. 17). Weapons of tribal conflicts past and present.

If in the First Peoples' exhibit the museum retreated to old museology's natural history methodology of static dioramic display, here in The Savage Wars of Peace, the museum has adopted the spectacular approach of what James Der Derian has dubbed the "military-industrial-

media-entertainment-network” (*Virtuous*).¹¹⁶ The video’s cacophonous soundscape is an orchestrated mix of affect-generating cinematic scores juxtaposed with a news-media mash-up that includes sound-bites from politicians and newscasters, gunshots, explosions, sirens, shouts, screams, wailing. The only voices that speak directly to us are those of the video’s child-narrators. Just as we were ushered into the museum by the echoing image of ethereal young Warren, now, prior to leaving, we are detained by the haunting and disembodied appeal of a chorus of children who speak the following refrains throughout *My World*:

My world started with hope, hope for peace, hope for life.

But my world was not free from war.

My world was filled with violence and death. My family was safe but my world was not.

My world is filled with heroes, they make choices too.

It's your world now, how does it start.

Each line is repeated three times in English, three times in French. Each, spoken by a child of a different age. Because the video’s soundscape can be heard in neighbouring galleries, their ghostly appeal is unsettlingly familiar. The children’s repeated phrases act as an affecting accent to the video’s narrative arc as it progresses from the celebratory but fleeting “hope” of the fall of the Berlin Wall—*My world started with hope, hope for peace, hope for life*—to an

¹¹⁶ The roots of the various terms—“military-cultural-memory-network (Fremeth); “military-industrial-media-entertainment-network” (Der Derian); “military-entertainment-complex” (Lenoir and Lowood)—can all be traced to former U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s 1961 farewell address to the nation in which he warned of the dangers of a “military-industrial-complex” whose growing power could assert undue influence on U.S. public and foreign policy. The continuing growth and innovations of media industries has led to an expansion of the military-industrial-complex to include a broader range of entertainment and cultural production stakeholders. Fremeth’s emphasis on “military-cultural-memory” rather than “industrial-entertainment” or “media” is particularly significant in Canada, because it recognizes the critical importance of memorialization in shaping Canada’s collective memory of military history. While Canadian military-memory has become increasingly media-savvy, much of that production continues to rely on long established tropes of memorialization and remembrance.

increasingly frenetic audio and visual display of sites of global violence (most from the global south—some from Eastern Europe)—*But my world was not free from war*—that peaks with dramatically enlarged black-and-white photographs of ash-covered New Yorker’s fleeing the twin towers—*My world was filled with violence and death. My family was safe but my world was not*. The video’s final montage—*My world is filled with heroes, they make choices too*—is of Canadian “peacekeepers” patrolling war-damaged streets, carrying children, tending to the wounded, distributing food, and grieving fallen comrades.¹¹⁷ The video closes with the children’s final interpellating appeal—*It’s your world now, how does it start?*—then back to the beginning, as the twelve-minute video loops throughout the day.

The video’s erratic illuminations animate the machete, the dagger-club, and the man’s face shrouded in camouflage. The painting—*Dallaire #6* (fig. 18)—by Gertrude Kearns, is of Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire, commander of the failed United Nations (UN) mission to Rwanda in 1994. “Traumatized by the event, and by the international community’s unwillingness to prevent it,” the display explains, “General Dallaire became a passionate advocate of humanitarian intervention and the protection of children affected by war.” *Dallaire #6* was part of Kearns’ series, *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda*, which exhibited at Toronto’s Propeller Centre for the Visual Arts in 2002 and featured ten large-scale works painted onto camouflage fabric—four paintings depicting scenes of the Rwandan massacre and UN helplessness, and six portraits of Dallaire. Of the exhibit’s reception, Razack writes: “Viewers of the exhibition congratulated

¹¹⁷ The CWM’s *My World* video focuses almost entirely on peace-keeping rather than peace-enforcing aspects of Canadian Forces engagements. For example, the video has no footage of Canadian Forces personnel engaged in combat or even aiming weapons. In contrast, in the new recruitment ad campaign that aired during the Super Bowl the Department of National Defence emphasized the more overtly aggressive aspects of Canadian peace-enforcement with its spectacularized display of an aggressive warrior aesthetic (24-Seven).

Kearns in the gallery's book of comments for her depiction of what it is to be 'powerless in the face of colossal evil'" (*Dark Threats* 26).

While it is unlikely that most of the CWM's visitors have seen *UNdone*, they are undoubtedly familiar with the story of Dallaire's traumatic encounter with his powerlessness in the face the "colossal evil" of the Rwandan genocide. Dallaire's story has been disseminated through a range of Canadian popular cultural productions including Dallaire's best-selling and award winning memoir, *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (2003)—available in the museum's gift shop; the documentaries, *Witness to Evil* (1998), produced by the Canadian military; *The Unseen Scars: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*, produced by CBC in 1998 and rebroadcast on numerous occasions since; *The Last Just Man* (2001), by Steven Silver, and *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Journey of Roméo Dallaire* (2004), by Peter Raymont; and the 2007 Canadian feature film, *Shake Hands with the Devil*. These are just a sampling of the multitude of popular media productions that feature Dallaire's story and are, at least in part, a product of Fremeth's Canadian-military-cultural-memory network. All of these multiple iterations of Dallaire's story by Canadian media producers reflect Canada's unique approach to "military-entertainment" in that they convey Canada's popularized national-identity-trademark as a nation of humanitarian militarists.

Through these, and other popular media sources, Canadians have learned how Dallaire was called upon to lead the UN peacekeeping mission in Rwanda. How he desperately tried, but failed, to halt the unfolding genocide. How his hands were tied by "an inflexible UN Security Council mandate" and an indifferent world (Dallaire *Shake Hands* 6). How he returned a broken man. How, suffering from PTSD, he attempted suicide. And how he emerged a "passionate advocate of humanitarian intervention." In her analysis of Canadian peacekeeper trauma

narratives, Razack interrogates the way the suffering of “others” is transformed into spectacles for our national consumption and into opportunities “to contemplate our humanity” (“Stealing” 382).¹¹⁸ This process of “stealing the pain of others,” she argues, is “supported by a racial logic and a material system of white privilege” that, despite our much-celebrated multiculturalism, is deeply ensconced in Canada’s white settler-nationalism (389). Put another way, whereas the “we” of Canadian identity and values—democracy, compassion, civility, humanitarianism—is, as Razack points out, understood as a “white category,” the “they” who are in need of Canadian peacekeepers’ compassionate and civilizing interventions, are understood to be racialized “others” (*Dark Threats* 13-14).

Just as evidence of the CWM’s material and institutionalized system of white privilege can be seen in its narrative of the European settlement of Canada as existing almost entirely outside of the frame of European colonialism, it is similarly evident in the museum’s construction of the Rwandan genocide as an “event” without context. The museum foregrounds Dallaire’s suffering while simultaneously absenting any information about the long colonial history that produced the “Hutu and Tutsi as political identities of native and settler respectively” (*Dark Threats* 47).¹¹⁹ By Dallaire’s own admission, when he was appointed to command the UN peacekeeping mission in Rwanda he neither knew “where Rwanda was [nor] exactly what kind of trouble the country was in” (*Shake Hands* 43). The fact that the UN Security Council would put someone who had no prior knowledge of Rwanda’s geopolitical context—born of a history of colonialism—in charge of a peacekeeping mission reflects an institutionalized and

¹¹⁸ Razack is extending Susan Sontag’s analysis in “Regarding the Pain of Others.”

¹¹⁹ For a critical analysis of how the dehistoricization of historical trauma facilitates processes of “structural forgetfulness” and “removed witnessing,” see discussion of Allan Feldman’s analysis of South Africa’s TRC in Chapter Two. Also see Stef Craps *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds* for a critical analysis of how trauma discourse and events-based models depoliticize historical violence and “risk obscuring the continuing oppressive effects of the traumas of colonialism” (6).

structurally-supported disavowal of the significance of the role of Western colonialism and imperialism in producing the conditions whereby contemporary global violence is made manifest. This disavowal is further amplified and disseminated through Dallaire's book, and the documentaries and feature films which situate Dallaire as the martyred hero, and portray the Rwandan genocide as a dramatic, bloody, and irrational descent into the barbaric realms of Hell.

Whereas, in the documentaries and films about Dallaire, the suffering of Rwandans is reduced to a spectacular backdrop for the story of Dallaire's heroic and selfless martyrdom, in the assemblage of artifacts that the CWM has brought together for its final cathartic exhibit, all that remains of the Rwandan's suffering is their nightmarish weapons and a haunted Dallaire. There are no Rwandan voices in *The Savage Wars of Peace*. The Rwandan genocide is a story conveyed entirely from the perspective of Dallaire, the traumatized Canadian peacekeeper and courageous humanitarian. The video's chaotic soundscape and violent images serve to amplify a sense of the Apocalyptic world into which Canadian peacekeepers heroically enter. In keeping with Dallaire's association of Rwanda as the place where he shook hands with the Devil, the museum reproduces "a biblical narrative of a First World overwhelmed by the evil of the Third World" (*Dark Threats* 22).

If the absencing of Canada's colonial history in the museum's First Peoples' exhibit contributed to the production of a narrative of multicultural nationalism that came about as the result of peaceful European settlement, here in *The Savage Wars of Peace* the erasure of colonialism from its Canadian peacekeeping narratives serve several intersecting purposes. First, it helps produce a narrative of Canada as a morally superior humanitarian military middle-power. Second, it re-produces colonial narratives of Africa as a barbaric *Heart of Darkness*, in need of

the civilizing intervention of benevolent Western nations like Canada.¹²⁰ Like Marlow—the protagonist-narrator-witness of Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*—despite having shaken hands with the Devil, Dallaire emerged from Hell, not unscathed, but with his humanity intact.¹²¹ As Razack writes: “In evacuating the specificities of the Rwandan genocide, the Rwandans themselves simply come to stand in for the worst that is human, while we in Canada, stand in for the best [...] Genocide, far from depressing us, uplifts us. It uplifts us because the hero in the story is us” (“Stealing” 384-85). Having established in its opening exhibit that Canada—as a peacefully-settled settler-nation—is not implicated in the geopolitical histories of colonization, here in its closing exhibit, the CWM extends this narrative to support the Canadian military’s branding of itself as the exalted bearers of the contemporized “white man’s burden,” of humanitarian intervention.¹²²

If Rwanda is Dallaire’s dark heart of Africa, it is one he returned from a martyr-hero. Somalia is another story. Hanging beside Kearns’ portrait of a traumatized Dallaire is a framed

¹²⁰ *Heart of Darkness* (1899) by Joseph Conrad tells the tale of Ivory exporter, Charles Marlow’s travels by steamship down the “snaking” Congo River into the dark heart of Africa where he discovers the Ivory Export Company’s accountant has gone mad and is worshipped by a group of “savage” natives. Despite coming under criticism in the 1970s (Nigerian post-colonial writer, Chinua Achebe denounced the novel as a racist and dehumanizing representation of Africans), in 1979 Francis Ford Coppola adapted the novel by setting the story in Vietnam in his film *Apocalypse Now*.

¹²¹ “Rwanda—This must be Hell” is the title of a chapter in Sheila Enslev Johnston’s *Canada’s Peacekeepers: Protecting Human Rights Around the World*—a book the museum’s gift shop carries. Like most of the books sold at the CWM, *Canada’s Peacekeepers* tells a story of Canadian sacrifice and heroism. The only critiques the book offers Canada’s Somalia mission include (1) Somalia’s status as hellish “failed state” in which power was in the hands of “traditional clans [and] mafia-like local warlords” (58-9); (2) misunderstandings on the part of the Canadian public regarding the dangerous nature of the “peace-enforcement” mission (83); and (3) “underfunding of the Canadian Forces, which has resulted in an [overstretched] and underequipped [military who are] often thrown into untenable circumstances with unworkable mandates” (131-32). Like many of the books on sale in museum’s gift “boutique,” *Canada’s Peacekeepers* and its highly affective narrative of praise is directed at primarily at children. As author, Johnston makes no qualms about her pro-Canadian Forces biases. In fact, Johnston’s embeddedness with Canadian Forces is used as a kind of credibility-indicator. Johnston’s author bio explains that she is “proud military brat” from a family that has served for generations in the Canadian Forces, and that she has served as a “communications officer,” an “artillery officer,” and a “defence analyst” with the Canadian military (136).

¹²² Like Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, Rudyard Kipling’s poem “The White Man’s Burden” was published in 1899. Razack draws parallels between these turn of the twentieth century colonial cultural productions and contemporary Canadian Peacekeeping narratives (*Dark*).

charcoal sketch by Allan Harding MacKay titled, *Canadian (UN) Armoured Personnel Carrier, Somalia* (1993) (fig. 19). It is accompanied by a display panel that reads:

From 1991 to 1993, Canada contributed 1,200 service personnel to a United Nations military intervention to relieve the suffering caused by famine and civil war in Somalia. Canadian soldiers escorted relief convoys to villages affected by famine, disarmed the population in the region surrounding their camp, and searched for bandits in patrols [...] The torture and death of a Somali teenager at the hands of Canadian troops marred the otherwise successful deployment and led the government to commission a public inquiry into the mission.

MacKay drew his sketch while he was under contract as a Canadian civilian war artist and embedded with the Canadian Peacekeepers on their Somalia mission—Operation Deliverance. It is a strangely innocuous image for a mission that garnered much (albeit fleeting) public notoriety. While MacKay was immortalizing Canadian soldiers patrolling for Somali “bandits,” some of Operation Deliverance’s peacekeepers were busy creating their own mementos in the form of “trophy photos.”¹²³ One such image graces the cover of Razack’s book *Dark Threats and White Knights*—which is not available in the museum’s gift shop. In it, Captain Mark Sargent, a Canadian military chaplain stands guard over four blindfolded and hog-tied Somali children. Their heads are drooping in the hot mid-day sun, and hanging around their necks are signs (handwritten in Somali) that identify them as thieves. But, lest anyone hastily assume this image demonstrates an abuse of power on the part of the Chaplain, according to the

¹²³ See Sara Matthews, “‘The Trophies of Their Wars’: Affect and Encounter at the Canadian War Museum” for a discussion of the affective impact of CWM exhibits that depict war trophies. Matthews’ research juxtaposes readings of two such exhibits—Hitler’s bulletproof Mercedes-Benz limousine and Kearns’ *Somalia # 2 Without Conscience* (which was on exhibit at the museum when Matthew’s conducted her original research but was no longer there when she returned in May 2012). In her essay, as a “thought experiment” Matthew’s proposes a fictive exhibit that brings together Kearns painting and Hitler’s parade car to “consider how the embodied subjects of war are constructed in the presence of memorial space” (272).

percepticidal spin of Canadian peacekeeping nationalism, the “truth” of the image—revealed by the military ombudsman for whom Captain Sargent was later employed as an investigator—is that Sargent was “protecting” the children from greater harm at the hands of local elders (*Dark* 5). This public relations spin endeavours to shift the public’s gaze from the violence (in plain site) that is perpetrated by Canadian peacekeepers, and onto a discursively produced or “imagined Africa” that is seething with an ever-present threat of violence. In Somalia, it is not only bandits who are to be feared, it is community elders as well.



Figures 19 & 20. From left to right. *Canadian (UN) Armoured Personnel Carrier, Somalia*, a sketch by Allan Harding MacKay (photo by author), and *Somalia # 2 Without Conscience*, painting by Gertrude Kearns. Image from CCCA Canadian Art Database.

The surfacing of a series of trophy photos documenting the perpetration of additional atrocities against Somali civilians, of videos documenting the violent racism of the peacekeeper’s hazing rituals, and of evidence of Canadian military-cover up all led to an inquiry into “The Somalia Affair” and the eventual disbanding of the Canadian Airborne Regiment. One of the most disturbing photos to surface is reproduced in a painting by Kearns (fig. 20). The

painting is large—nine feet by four feet. In the background is a black and white abstraction, some kind of hybrid of dilapidated machinery and a large animal skull. In the foreground is a soldier. Between his legs sits a smallish blindfolded figure whose head hangs forward and is covered by a checked-hoodie. His arms disappear behind his back and his slight legs are outstretched—limp and covered in an oozing mix of bruises and blood. The soldier wears an army-green t-shirt that shows off his bare buffed arms. In his hands he holds a stick that he has pressed up against the neck of the limp figure between his legs. The soldier's eyes look up and out, into those of the viewer.

Kearns' painting—*Somalia # 2 Without Conscience* (1996) (fig. 20)—once occupied the place where MacKay's inoffensive sketch now hangs. The photo on which it is based is one of sixteen taken by Private Kyle Brown throughout the night of 16 March 1993 when sixteen-year-old Shidane Arone was brutally beaten and murdered by Operation Deliverance peacekeepers. It shows Master Corporal Clayton Matchee posed in the act of torturing Arone, the Somali teenager whose murder “at the hands of Canadian troops marred the otherwise successful deployment.” But, as the photograph of Captain Sargent standing over the four blindfolded and hog-tied Somali children illustrates, the atrocities perpetrated by Canadian peacekeepers were not limited to the “torture and death of [one] Somali teenager.” Two weeks prior to Arone's murder, Canadian peacekeepers shot two unarmed Somali men—Abdi Hamdare and Ahmad Aruush—for what the military called a “perimeter” breach (McKay and Swift 199). Both men were shot in the back while fleeing and “Aruush was finished off at close range” (200).

While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to fully explore what came to be dubbed The Somalia Affair, my interest here is in the museum's reductive representation of Arone's torture and murder, as an isolated incident, barely worthy of mention, and of Arone as invisible

and nameless.¹²⁴ Though Roméo Dallaire is a name recognized by most Canadians—Shidane Arone remains a mostly anonymous anomaly in our national collective memory. But what might Kearns’—once present, now absent—painting reveal about the politics that underpin the CWM’s construction of our collective memory of Canadian peacekeeping?

In “War, unvarnished,” an article published in the *Ottawa Citizen* seven days before the CWM opened its doors to the general public in 2005, the author points to the museum’s inclusion of Kearns’ *Somalia #2* within its exhibits as an illustration of how Canada’s new war museum “will present a bleaker, more brutal and complex picture of war” (“War”). The author celebrates the commitment on the part of the new CWM’s directors to “shy away from heroism” and the glamorization of war. Then museum director, Joe Guerts is quoted as saying that the CWM is committed to “including elements we may not be really happy about exposing” (“War”). In addition to commending the museum for its inclusion of Kearns’ painting of Arone’s torture and murder at the hands of Canadian peacekeepers, the article also applauds the museum for including other controversial aspects of Canada’s military history like the “Allied bombing campaign during the Second World War, the conscription debate during the First World War and the execution of Louis Riel.” But the *Ottawa Citizen*’s celebration of the museum’s representation of the World War II bombings of German civilian populations proved premature. After a two-year battle, Geurts resigned from his position as the CWM’s director when a Senate Committee report advised the museum to change the Bomber Command display to reflect the wishes and concerns of veterans groups. And as noted previously in this chapter, while the

¹²⁴ For additional information about The Somalia Affair see Razack—*Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping and the New Imperialism*. Also see Ian McKay and Jamie Swift, *Warrior Nation: Rebranding Canada in an Age of Anxiety*. And for the Canadian Peacekeeping version of the Somalia mission, see Sheila Enslev Johnston’s *Canada’s Peacekeepers: Protecting Human Rights Around the World* (available in the CWM gift shop).

museum credits Riel with his role in securing Manitoba for Canada, the consequences of his execution at the hands of the state are reduced to “severely damag[ing] linguistic relations in Canada.”

The Ottawa Citizen article also cites the museum’s war art curator, Laura Brandon, who points out that prior to the opening of the museum there was no controversy over the inclusion of Kearns’ paintings in the museum’s art collection—that, in fact, the painting was donated by Friends of the Canadian War Museum, a group made up predominantly of veterans (“War”). As it turned out, controversy was waiting in the wings. Two days after the Ottawa Citizen published its article celebrating the CWM’s embrace of an unvarnished approach to military memorialization, they received a letter to the editor from World War II veteran Cliff Chadderton, then head of the National Council of Veterans Associations and the War Amps of Canada. Chadderton wrote that Kearns’ Somalia paintings were “trashy” and an “insulting tribute”; that they had no place in a museum dedicated to honouring Canada’s military history; and, that unless they were removed he would boycott the museum’s opening ceremonies (CBC “War museum’s”).¹²⁵

Chadderton’s public stance against the inclusion of Kearns’ Somalia paintings was neither the first, nor would it be the last, battle he fought over representations of Canada’s military memory. Chadderton was instrumental in both the 1992 fight to keep the CBC from rebroadcasting *The Valour and the Horror*, and in the bitter battle that forced the museum to change the wording of its “Bomber Command” panel, and led to Guerts’ resignation. While

¹²⁵ It’s important to note that not all of Canada’s military-cultural-memory-network stakeholders concurred with Chadderton. For example, in response to Chadderton’s letter, while the Canadian Legion expressed their dislike of one of the representations, they nevertheless supported the CWM in its “responsibility to tell the full and accurate story of our military history” and pointed out that the paintings that Chadderton objected to were among a “war art collection of 13,000 other pieces of art that help emphasize our magnificent history of courage and commitment” (Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 322, “Paintings”).

Chadderton did not succeed in his bid to have Kearns' paintings removed from the exhibit, both Kearns and Brandon "received abusive email directly stemming from the Internet debate that waged on the site www.army.ca for over five months" (Matthews 282).

In 2010, the museum removed *Somalia #2* from the The Savage Wars of Peace exhibit so that it could be included in the traveling exhibit *A Brush with War: Military Art from Korea to Afghanistan*. Curated by Brandon, *Brush with War* toured Canada from December 2010 through March 2011. When I inquired by email whether the controversy surrounding the painting had any bearing on the museum's decision not to return *Somalia #2* to its original place beside Kearns' *Dallaire #6* I received this response from Andrew Burtch, the museum's Acting Director of Research:

The decision not to return the painting was not related to the controversy that surrounded the painting in 2005. It was in response to the long duration of *Brush with War*'s run, and the need to revisit the exhibition space/content from time to time. [...] That said, we are looking at a full renovation of the concluding sections of Gallery 4, which would entail new exhibitions about Somalia, Rwanda, Former Yugoslavia, and Afghanistan, and may include *Somalia #2* and other works in the new space.¹²⁶

The controversy over Kearns' paintings makes visible the tensions between stakeholders who embraced "difficult return" and critical engagement in the museum's approach to Canada's military history, and those for whom military history demands elegiac commemoration. Military memorial strategies that require praise as their central organizing trope necessitate both the omission of narratives that threaten to mar the image of Canadian military personnel as "just warriors" and the instrumentalist deployment of a psuedo-polyvocality towards the manufacture

¹²⁶ Email communication, 20 October 2014.

and maintenance of Canada's national identity as a multicultural nation dedicated to humanitarian militarism abroad.

The controversy also exposes the “deep politics” that shape the CWM's exhibits over time and that, in a broader context, shape Canada's collective military and national memory. Coined by Peter Dale Scott “deep politics” is a term that explains 1) the way societies collectively suppress facts when the costs of their exposure may be considered detrimental to the social order, and 2) the way political decision-making takes place hidden from the public sphere (*American*). Just as Fremeth cautions that Canada's military-cultural-memory-network cannot be reduced to a simple top-down propaganda mechanism, but rather, is a porous system made up of a complex assemblage of stakeholders with divergent interests and goals, Scott differentiates “deep politics” from “conspiracy,” a term that suggests a centrally agreed-upon plan. Both Fremeth and Scott assert that it would be a mistake to consider this lack of a centralized, or top-down, organizing structure as an indication of weakness. The absence of clearly defined power-structures produces an accountability vacuum. Further, in the case of Canada's military-cultural-memory-network, the diversity of the range of stakeholders generates an illusion of democratic pluralism. Canadian artists, and other cultural producers, occupy a perilous position in this network. As the power of Canada's military-cultural-memory-network has grown exponentially since the Canadian Forces “decade of darkness,” and more arts funding has been funneled into “heritage” commemoration projects, the line between cultural nationalism and military nationalism has become increasingly blurry. For example, the very existence of both MacKay's and Kearns' art work within the CWM's collection, is a consequence of the Department of

National Defence's funding of the Canadian Armed Forces Civilian Artists Programme (CAFCAP).¹²⁷

A pedagogy of interpellation: I fear (for) those who fear nothing

As Talad Asad illustrated in his study of suicide bombings (see Chapter Two) the legitimacy and illegitimacy of acts of geopolitical violence is determined not by the act itself, but by the location of the actor. Dallaire's much exalted—and much belaboured—personal story of being driven to the brink of madness by his encounter with the “Devil” contributes to the production of a larger meta-narrative of traumatized Canadian peacekeepers struggling to do good, while maintaining their sanity in the face of barbarism. If Africa is indeed home to the Devil, it stands to reason that when Canadian peacekeepers become perpetrators of torture and murder, their acts, however unacceptable, are nevertheless understood as a consequence of their encounter with the “colossal evil” of African nations-states who have descended into (or returned to) stateless tribalism. This narrative is evident in the museum's minimization of Canadian peacekeeper's crimes, which is disturbingly similar to the strategies of denial, minimization and justification used by the Canadian military in its efforts to gloss over the Somalia Affair.

The equation of state-sanctioned acts of violence as “just,” and acts of violence by non-state actors as barbaric, is constructed through a variety of discursive framing mechanisms—from popular culture productions that include novels, films, plays, news media, to more overtly pedagogical approaches like those delivered through educational curricula and museums. Since

¹²⁷ For a detailed history of Canada's War Art collection and a nuanced analysis of the complex relationship between institutional military memory stakeholders in managing Canada's war art see *Art or Memorial?: The Forgotten History of Canada's War Art* and *Art and War* by CWM's war art curator, Laura Brandon. Brandon was also the curator of *A Brush With War: Military Art from Korea to Afghanistan*, a Canadian War Museum exhibit that traveled across Canada from December 2010 through March 2011.

much of the curricula focused on military memory that is used in Canadian schools is developed by veterans groups and other military memory stakeholders, it privileges elegiac reverence over critical engagement.¹²⁸ These framing mechanisms also require upkeep to ensure that delivery systems can effectively address contemporary circumstances and target specific audiences.

The CWM's integration of a range of new interactive museology approaches has been instrumental in making the museum a place that does more than engage children and youth, it also interpellates them as citizens in a nation whose military actions are understood as legitimized and just. Through their participation in war games, through the pseudo choices they are asked to make, through the questions that are put to them on the plaques that cover the museum's walls, the children are hailed. They are asked to and identify through a process that facilitates the assimilation of some differences under the category of a unified Canadian multicultural nationalism, while casting "other" differences to the realm of barbarism. The museum's use of an instrumentalist memorial pedagogy with its emphasis on remembrance as a strategic practice towards the construction of a unified national ideology, comes at the expense of the kind of critical engagement that would invite its young charges to question the "justness" of all acts of violence—not only those of enemy "others", but also those perpetrated at the behest of the Canadian state.

Just as the museum was born of controversy, since its opening, stakeholders have continued to battle over the museum's pedagogical approach. Moryama, Geurts, and Brandon (among others) have advocated for a museum that stages remembrance not only as a strategic

¹²⁸ See Graham Carr, "War, History, and the Education of (Canadian) Memory," for a discussion of the role of the Department of Veterans Affairs in the development Remembrance Day school curricula. Carr also notes that the Department of Canadian Heritage collaborates with the Royal Canadian Legion to produce CD-ROMs for Canadian schools (68). The CWM also writes its own teaching guides. Also see "Learning to Commemorate: Challenging prescribed collective memories of war" (by Gillian Fournier et al) a critical analysis of how Ontario school children are taught to remember past and current wars, through Remembrance Day curriculum documents and national government guides.

practice but also as a difficult return—or what Wodiczko might call a living memorial. Chadderton and other military stakeholder representatives, on the other hand, have (with significant success), pushed for a more conventional approach in the production of elegiac narratives of remembrance and nationalist praise. But however diverse the stakeholders in this struggle over the museum's increasingly performative representation of Canada's military memory may be, the stage on which the battle is waged is not neutral.

As a governmental institution one of the CWM's primary mandates—which is evident throughout its exhibits—is the promotion of a unified Canadian nationalism. The CWM's twofold agenda—military commemoration and nation-building—is disseminated through a narrative of a unified Canadian multiculturalism nationalism at home, and Canadian humanitarian militarism abroad. Whereas the public practices of traditional women's lament discussed in Chapter One invited not only multiple voices, but also multiple narratives and a range of emotional expression, placed under the umbrella of Canadian nationalism, at the CWM polyvocality is largely reduced to “an instrument of governmentality.” To the extent that multiple voices are present within the CWM they are in service to an ideology of nationalism, in which statehood is a signifier of civility, and in which Canada's military state-actors are cast as “just warriors.” When states go to war, however horrific the effects, they are not framed as “savage” wars. Military commemoration in this context becomes both a celebration of Canadian multicultural nation and a justification for its ongoing and necessary military defence.

Just as the rough edges of Moryama's foyer were paved over to improve the museum's “look,” in the “contact zones” of the CWM, Canada's military encounters, past and present, are given a feel-good shine. The two exhibits discussed in this chapter—*Battleground: Wars on our Soil: Earliest times to 1885* and *The Savage Wars of Peace*—act as colonial and neocolonial

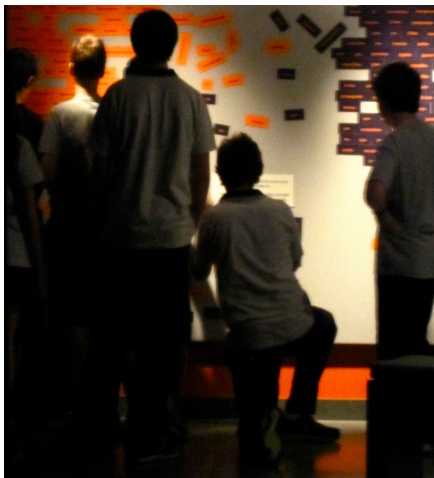
bookends for the museum's main galleries. As a framing device the opening gallery sets the stage with its depiction of Canada as a pluralistic nation that came into being through mutually beneficial encounters between Canada's (already warring) "First Peoples" and its (civilizing) European "settlers." Having established Canada as a nation born in innocence, in its closing gallery the museum extends the narrative of national innocence to serve its contemporary geopolitical military interests. Through its spectacular display of a world that is threatened by the chaos of non- or failed-state violence the exhibit's video builds a case for the necessity of Canada's ongoing engagement in acts of benevolent military intervention. This message is most directly communicated by the video's narration—*My world is filled with heroes, they make choices too*. It is *My World*'s child narrators who—like dashing young Warren, and the intently gazing Iroquois siblings—deliver the museum's final cathartic and interpellating peer-to-peer address to the CWM's young visitors.

Though the Savage Wars of Peace is not a space where children linger, this doesn't mean they escape its interpellating message. There is a small chamber between the large screens onto which *My World* is projected and the main galleries' final exit. The space has two round tables surrounded by chairs and a metal board with rectangular black-on-orange-word-magnets. Shelves on either side of the room are stocked with postcards and pencils—one side of the card is blank, the other addressed to the Prime Minister, members of parliament, world leaders, veteran's groups, and museum curators. As the children and youth gather in this space to compose their reflections they do so enveloped by the chaotic din of *My World*'s soundscape, which vacillates between Apocalyptic foreboding and heroic fervor. The beseeching plea of the disembodied children who narrate the video—*It's your world now, how does it start?*—is echoed on the signs that line the walls enlisting visitors to share their reflections:

What will you do? Is there something you would like to say to the museum or others? The postcards here are pre-addressed for your convenience to public figures in Canada and around the world. There is no time like the present.

*Sufficient postage can be purchased from the boutique in the museum's lobby.*¹²⁹

On each of my visits to the museum I sit on one of benches to watch *My World*, and to watch the activity in the small room beyond. I'm not sure whether teachers and group leaders have instructed the kids to leave a message here, or whether they choose to participate of their own accord, but it is definitely place where youth linger. When school groups pass through, the kids tend to distribute themselves according to gender. The girls cluster around the tables, and the boys huddle together in front of the magnetic board. The position of the three large screens blocks my view of the two tables, so it's mostly the boys I watch as they jostle to collectively compose haikus from the Canadian-peacekeepers-at-war themed magnets (fig. 21).



Figures 21 & 22. From left to right. Boys gathered in front of magnet board, and “heroes” magnet (photos by author). In an effort to trouble the centrality of the notion of heroism within military memorialization I removed the “heroes” tile from the exhibit’s lexicon.

¹²⁹ Emphasis is mine. I am fascinated by the signs’ progression from its opening enlistment to action, to its pragmatic closing sentence directing visitors to the museum’s “boutique” where they can manifest their communicative act in the world through the purchase postage. After exercising their civil voice, they can choose from a wide array of war souvenirs including war games and toys, camouflage t-shirts and tank-tops (military green or pink), helmets (camouflage, army green, or peacekeeper blue), gun power candy, grenade shaped implements (erasers and screwdriver kits), as well as more reverential (but equally lucrative) commemorative items.

Before I leave, I always peruse the messages left by the youth. There are an array of hand-drawn and written postcards posted on display boards that line the two side walls. Despite the overwhelming presence within this room of *My World's* soundscape with its message of the urgent need for Canadian military humanitarian intervention, it is one of the few spaces within the museum where participant responses are not predetermined through pre-scripted computerized game and quiz selection processes. However, most of the postcards reflect the museum's overarching message of national praise and elegiac reverence. There are penciled poems of mourning; stories of great-grandparents, and grandparents who fought in the First or Second World War, or of grandparents and relatives who were killed in concentration camps; sketches with Canadian flags, soldiers, poppies, and tombstones accompanied by the words "remember," "lest we forget," "for us," or "for freedom"; statements of nationalistic pride, and accolades to the museum. But on occasion, there are also traces of a more critical engagement with, and resistance to, the museum's dominant narrative of a unified Canadian multicultural nationalism in support of humanitarian militarism:

"I broke out, never returned." (signed, "Trenton")

"I am happy I am gone from Trenton and I won't let you make me." (signed, "Stranger")

"I'm not going to draw a happy soldier like some because nothing about war is happy. No one should have to go through it. Wether (sic) your (sic) attacking or being attacked. There is no good side or bad side. Our generation should stop it. Or, eventually there won't be anything to fight over." (unsigned)

"Louis Riel, hero for First Nations in regards to their fights." (unsigned)

Because of my time spent watching the negotiated meaning making process of youth at the metallic message board, I am most intrigued by the black-on-orange-magnetic-tile dispatches. Despite—or perhaps because of—the limited vocabulary provided by the museum, these magnet messages have a way of inviting dialogue as visitors add or subtract words and word phrases to alter a message’s original meaning. When I’m at the museum I stop by several times a day to witness the fluctuating magnet generated discourse. On my last visit to the museum someone had put together the tiles “I fear” and “nothing.” What does it mean that at the end of a visit to a war museum that one walks away fearing nothing? Should war not frighten us? Surely for those who lived through a war, or those who have loved ones either fighting or attempting to live in combat zones, fear must be ever-present. Fear born of the relentless knowledge of one's own precarity, and of precarity as our shared condition. The message

haunted me as I continued with my investigation of the museum’s more peripheral galleries.

When I returned a few hours later, I found the message altered. To the original two-tile- message— “I fear”-“nothing”—someone added the following four magnetic words—“but,” “the,” “abandonment,” “of.” Then, refusing to allow their contribution to the discourse to be limited by the words made available by the museum, they ad-libbed by writing— Conscience—on a postcard and tucking it under final magnetic word, thereby constructing the phrase: “I fear nothing but the abandonment of Conscience.

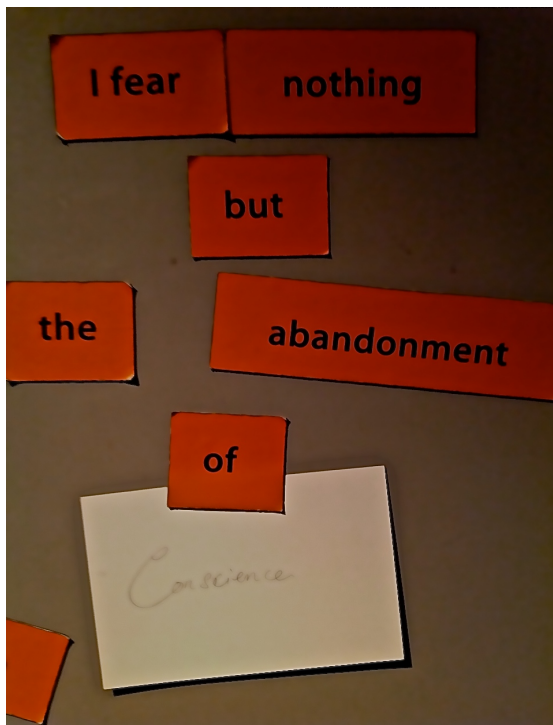


Figure 23. Expanding military commemoration’s limited lexicon (photo by author).

CHAPTER FOUR

UNRAVELING THE UNIFORM'S AMBIGUOUS MEANINGS & UNBECOMING CANADIAN NATIONALISM'S FORGETFUL NARRATIVES

“The logical conclusion of the attitude that produces an isolated rape in England is the rape camps in Bosnia and the logical conclusion to the way society expects men to behave is war.”

Sarah Kane, on her play, *Blasted*.¹³⁰

19 October 2010¹³¹

I finally sat down to read one of the Toronto Star's daily reports on the trial of Canadian Forces' Colonel Russell Williams for the rape-murders of Marie-France Comeau and Jessica Lloyd. Like many, I'm deeply disturbed not only (and obviously) by Williams' acts of violation and murder, but also by the media's coverage of the trial. Williams' crimes—and by association all acts of sexualized violence—are treated as the anomalous actions of a pervert. The Star's front page image of Williams dressed in women's underwear functions as a code for his depravity—as though cross-dressing is a precursor to torture, rape, and murder (“Depraved”).¹³² Little attention is paid, on the other hand, to Williams' (until now) elevated status as a highly respected Colonel in the Canadian military; or of his conditioning in a nationalistic and militarized hyper-

¹³⁰ Quoted by Clare Bayley in, “A Very Angry Young Woman.”

¹³¹ A version of this opening italicized section appeared on my *Impact Afghanistan War* blog. It is an example of how *Impact*, as a daily memorial meditation facilitated a reflection that resisted containment within commemoration's limiting parameters of historical “event,” or even the pre-set intention of the meditation.

¹³² The *Toronto Star* did not invent this code. In fact, the effectiveness of the trope of queerness as an indicator of violent sexual pathologies relies on its prolific circulation throughout popular culture mediums.

*masculinity; or of the well-documented historical relationship between war and rape.*¹³³

By treating Williams' crimes as spectacular anomalies, Comeau and Lloyd's rape-murders are framed as isolated events. But what of the multitude of acts of sexual violence routinely perpetrated in Canada and beyond? What of the 1,181 missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada?¹³⁴ And—given Williams' status as a Colonel in the Canadian Forces—what of the hundreds and thousands of violent sexual assaults against women soldiers within the military or against civilians in conflict zones around the world? While there has been a call to open up "cold cases" of women who have gone missing or been found murdered in Canadian locations where Williams was stationed, I have heard nothing of similar investigations being launched in conflict zones where Williams has served.

Also disturbing is the juxtaposition of the Star's sensationalized reporting of the rape-murders of Comeau and Lloyd with its scathing review—by theatre critic, Richard Ouzounian—of Buddies in Bad Times Theatre's presentation of Sarah Kane's play Blasted (2012). Ouzounian's main beef with Blasted is that it's "too much." He critiques Kane for her "maniacal excess" and argues that the play goes "too far" in its portrayal of violence. Moreover, Ouzounian also critiques Buddies for their decision to stage Blasted arguing that it has nothing to do with "queer theatre" and that it doesn't offer "a special view of male sexuality [but rather]

¹³³ See Zainab Salbi's *The Other Side of War: Women's Stories of Survival and Hope*, and *Gender, War, and militarism: Feminist Perspectives* edited by Laura Sjoberg and Sandra Via.

¹³⁴ When I wrote this journal/blog entry the "official" number of missing and murdered women Aboriginal women was 500. A Royal Canadian Mounted Police report, "Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operational Overview" released on 16 May 2014 placed the official number at 1,181. The report came after decades of sustained and painstaking labour on the part of an assemblage of Aboriginal (and ally) community activists, artists, and scholars who worked to bring the issue of Canada's murdered and missing Aboriginal women to the arena of public discourse and consciousness.

it's simply Sarah Kane's uniquely twisted view of the world."¹³⁵

I couldn't disagree more. I applaud Buddies for their inclusion of Blasted in its season and only wish they had gone further and hosted a community discussion of the larger question of what is/isn't a "queer" issue. Though watching Blasted was undeniably a jarring experience, as a lesbian/queer feminist, I found it queerly refreshing to see a play (on the stage of a queer theatre) that raises important questions about the relationship between society's production of attitudes of hyper-masculinity and their brutally logical conclusions.



Figure 24. Cover image, *Toronto Star* 19 October 2010. Image from News Photographers of Canada website.

On 22 October 2010, Colonel Russell Williams was sentenced to two concurrent life terms for the rape-murders of Corporal Marie-France Comeau and Jessica Lloyd. At the time of his conviction, Williams had served twenty-three years with the Canadian Forces where he had climbed high in the military's ranks. Colonel Williams was an esteemed and decorated officer who flew Canadian Forces VIP aircraft carrying dignitaries like Canada's Prime Minister and Governor General, and Queen Elizabeth

II and Prince Philip. At the age of forty-six he was awarded command of Canada's largest military airbase—Canadian Forces Base Trenton.

Like Master Corporal Clayton Matchee (see Chapter Three)—who had souvenir “trophy”

¹³⁵ Ouzounian was not alone in his assessment that *Blasted* did not belong on Buddies stage. As he writes in his review, “Some members of the gay community have been complaining that this show has nothing to do with their concerns.”

photos taken of him torturing Somali teenager Shidane Arone—Colonel Russell Williams documented his crimes in the form of hundreds of photos and videos. It is from this collection that the *Toronto Star* took its front page image of Williams dressed in women’s underwear (fig. 24).¹³⁶ But whereas Matchee’s trophy photos—once they were publicly disclosed after an attempted cover-up by the military—launched a Senate inquiry and became part of the Canadian Forces’ “decade of darkness,” Williams’ proved to be a godsend for the Canadian Forces. One day prior to Williams’ sentencing, while at a St. John’s press conference announcing a \$100 million military investment, Prime Minister Stephen Harper did more than absolve the Canadian military of any accountability for Williams’ crimes, he positioned the military—alongside Comeau and Lloyd—as his victim:

This is just a horrific event [...] Our thoughts go out to all the members of the Canadian Forces who knew the commander and who have been very badly wounded and betrayed by all of this. Obviously, this in no way reflects on the Forces [...] The Canadian Forces are the victim here, as of course are the direct victims of these terrible events.

The image of Williams dressed in ill-fitting women’s under-garments became a cypher. The link made between his “queer” fetish and the violence of his crimes eclipsed the association of Comeau and Lloyd’s rape-murders with Williams’ long, and highly rewarded performance of

¹³⁶ In addition to the torture-rape-murders of Lloyd and Comeau, Williams was convicted of 82 fetish break-and-enters and thefts and two sexual assaults. During the break-ins Williams took photos of himself dressed in the underwear belonging to the women and girls whose homes and rooms he violated. During the two sexual assaults he was convicted of, Williams held his victims blindfolded and captive for hours as he directed them to pose for photos. Laurie Massicotte, a then-neighbour of Williams was one of his victims. According to Massicotte, the police did not believe her account of the assault and treated her case as a faked copy-cat of a previous sexual assault that had been perpetrated in the neighbourhood. Williams eventually confessed to both assaults, the one he perpetrated on Massicotte, and the one she was presumed to be basing her faked “copycat” assault on (*Huffington* “Victim”).

military masculinity.¹³⁷ Unlike Kane's assertion that rape is not an isolated event, but rather—like war—is the “logical conclusion” of attitudes of hyper-masculinity, the media colluded with the Canadian Forces in framing Comeau and Lloyd's rape-murders as anomalous acts, that were more a product of a deviantly feminized masculinity, than of a nationalistic and militarized hyper-masculinity. Women's underwear became Williams' new uniform, conveniently replacing the Canadian Forces uniform that Williams wore for over two decades, and that may well have shielded him from suspicion during a three-year crime spree in which he burgled homes—some two and three times—in the immediate neighborhoods of both his Cosy Cove Lane (Tweed, Ontario) and Ottawa residences.¹³⁸

On 18 November 2010, in a final gesture of purification, the military incinerated all of Williams' military uniforms.¹³⁹ If under the binary dictates of our dominant global gender order masculinity is what femininity is not, Williams trophy photos provided the Canadian Forces with the tactical rationale to cast Williams not only out of the realm of militarism, but also outside of masculinity itself. Similarly, through its choice to publish sensationalized images of Williams dressed in women's underwear on its front page, the *Toronto Star* helped to distance Williams and his crimes from both the military and from masculinity. Rather than launching, as Kane might have proposed, an interrogation of the relationship between hegemonic masculinity, sexual violence, and war, within the public imaginary Williams' crimes became associated with the

¹³⁷ Neither the media nor the Canadian Forces used the term “queer.” However, the *Star*'s posting of images of Williams wearing women's underwear precipitated a deluge of derogatory adjectives—shocking, deplorable, disgusting, repulsive, depraved, deviant, perverse. Incongruously, the most abject of these adjectives are primarily associated with Williams' perverse “crime” of dressing in women's clothes (and the *Star*'s decision to publish them), not with his crimes of rape, torture and murder.

¹³⁸ While male neighbours of Williams were questioned for the break-ins, sexual assaults and murders, despite his proximity to the victims police did not question Williams until they matched a tire tread imprint found at Lloyd's home to Williams' SUV (Appleby).

¹³⁹ Three weeks earlier, on the day of Williams' sentencing the Canadian military officially disowned him. He was stripped of his commission, his senior military rank, and his awards. The Canadian Forces also shredded Williams' commission scroll, cut his medals into pieces, and crushed and scrapped the Pathfinder SUV he used to kidnap Jessica Lloyd.

“crime” of gender-deviance.

Camouflage fatigues—as the most generic of military uniforms—are one of militarism’s most recognizable objects.¹⁴⁰ They are also one of its most ambiguous. On one hand, the uniform sits in intimate contact with the precarious flesh of its wearer and is tasked with safeguarding the vulnerable body in its charge. It protects by concealing, by rendering its wearer invisible, by allowing them to blend into the surrounding environment. On the other hand, the uniform performs a critical role in the production of a privileged national identity that grants its wearer the right to kill and to perpetrate other acts of violence in the name of the state, and—if killed—a guaranteed place at the top of nationalism’s geopolitical hierarchy of grievability.

As performance studies scholar Laura Levin proposes, however, military camouflage functions as more than simply a protective cloaking devise or a signifier of privileged national identity. It is also a “performance strategy” through which identities become located “within a larger environment or picture” (*Performing Ground* 4-5).¹⁴¹ The proliferation of images of camouflage-clad soldiers in news and pop-culture media produces a bigger picture, one that supersedes both individual and national identities. Through its pervasiveness, the image of hegemonic global military masculinity becomes naturalized. The maintenance of this naturalized

¹⁴⁰ Soldiers wear a range of uniforms including those worn for ceremonial purposes, service uniforms, mess dress, and operational uniforms or combat clothing and the signifying meaning of each these uniforms varies depending on context—geopolitical, popular culture, ceremonial. Despite these differences, throughout this chapter I will use the term “uniform” interchangeably with “camouflage fatigues.” Several factors inform this choice. As I wrote above, camouflage fatigues are one of militarism’s most generically recognizable signifiers. But more significantly, throughout this dissertation I am foregrounding camouflage fatigues because of how they are used as an object of reverentiality within the context of Canadian military commemoration. For example, though during official Remembrance Day services, officers and veterans dress in ceremonial uniforms, on the Canadian Forces “Fallen Canadians” webpage, the vast majority of the images of Canadian soldiers who were killed as part of the war in Afghanistan are depicted in desert fatigues. I will revisit this discussion of the role of military fatigues as both a symbol of military masculinity and as an object of reverentiality later in this chapter.

¹⁴¹ While acknowledging that “blending in” can be read “as evidence of assimilation or erasure,” (14) Levin’s emphasis is on camouflage as a performance practice that productively reveals the “multiple, differentiated bodies that constitute the invisible ‘ground’ of performance practice” (24).

backdrop necessitates the purging of individual identities and acts that cannot be readily absorbed into militarism's larger (self) image of just warriors fighting righteous wars.

It's not surprising then, that within Canadian performances of military memorialization there is little space for the uniform's ambiguity. The uniform that serves as the symbol a soldier's remembrance is not the one that bears the bloody traces of his annihilation. Dead soldiers are not remembered as vulnerable victims of violent acts—but as exemplars of heroic masculinity. Nor is there space within commemorative performances of elegiac remembrance for militarism's inconvenient dead, or its inconvenient killers. The inconvenient dead—those who take their own lives; those killed by comrades; those who have openly criticized a military mission; or those who die in “unfortunate incidents”—are all assimilated into heroism's homogenizing discourse.¹⁴²

And the military's inconvenient killers are deemed either lone bad-apples or, as in Williams' case, deviantly depraved “Others.” The incineration of Colonel Williams' uniforms was an exorcism of ambiguity. It was an act of annulment, not only of the Colonel's affiliation with the Canadian Forces, but also of the entangled relationships of militarism, hyper-masculinity, and violent nationalisms and their role in the production and maintenance of a hegemonic global gender order.

This chapter weaves a reading of the uniform as an object that is instrumental to the production of privileged national identities and geopolitical hierarchies, with reflective threads from *Unravel: A meditation on the warp and weft of militarism*—a durational and task-based

¹⁴² See “Soldier Killed at CFB Petawawa” for a recent example of a Canadian Forces soldier killed in an “unfortunate incident” (Wetsellaar). During the Afghanistan war a significant number of the Canadian Forces casualties who were assimilated into the “heroic” fallen warrior discourse were killed in training accidents and a range of other non-combat related incidents. In addition to bolstering the homogenizing “fallen soldiers” narrative, this kind of assimilation of the dead shields the Canadian Forces from criticism of its overarching training practices and their effects on enlisted personnel.

performance meditation in which I deconstruct military uniforms (fatigues) seam-by-seam and thread-by-thread. In its exploration of the uniform's messy entanglements in militarism's geopolitical fabric and its place in an assemblage of military memorialization's nationalistically inscribed objects of obligatory reverentiality this chapter asks a number of questions. Does violence have a gender? Does war? Does peace? Do nationalism and militarism? Does vulnerability? How does the military uniform function as one of the mechanisms through which our gendered lexicons of violence, war, and peace are constructed, maintained and, when necessary, purged of ambiguity?

Constructed as a contrapuntal exchange, this chapter explores the tensions between the uniform's role in the gendered lexicons of violence and military memorialization's unambiguous—or fixed—agenda, and *Unravel*'s queer labour of unproduction as a vehicle for embodied, sustained, and unfixed critical engagement. To be clear, I am not using “queer” here to signify a first-world identitarian position that, as Schneider (following Jasbir K. Puar) writes, “relies solely on a binary opposition between homosexual and heterosexual practices” (*Performing Remains* 173). Rather, I'm interested in queer as a process—an “always becoming,”—a deviation from, or perversion of, a norm (173). This “always becoming” also signals an always unbecoming. Unbecoming, as in deviant and deviating. Unbecoming, as in undoing. Unbecoming, as in becoming undone. Unbecoming, as in unsettling normalizing narratives of gender and nationalism.

I begin with an examination of the gendered lexicons of war, peace, and sexual violence and their relationship to the feminized tropes of violent nationalisms. I explore how our binary gender lexicons leave us without a language for understanding either female aggression or male vulnerability. Returning to *Blasted*, I argue that Kane productively queers the gender binary of

sexual assault in a way that, unlike the military's queering of Williams, critically interrogates the logic of hegemonic and military masculinities. Moreover, I argue that with its queer staging, Buddies production of *Blasted* challenges limiting constructs of queer theatre that promise a *special view of male sexuality* that relies not only on identification notions of a homo/heterosexual divide, but that also casts concerns regarding sexual violence outside of its celebratory embrace of a (predominantly) masculinized queer sexuality.

In the chapter's second section, I investigate how the uniform constructs identities of privileged national subjects and functions as an object of both obligatory reverentiality and national melancholia. I argue that the uniform—in tandem with a larger assemblage of nationalistically inscribed reverential objects—plays a critical role in the production of nationalism's hierarchy of grievability. Then, drawing on José Esteban Muñoz's theory of disidentification, I propose that *Unravel* embraces unproduction as tactile tactic through which to unfix the traditional gendered lexicons woven into the uniform's cloth and into the warp and weft of militarism and nationalism. I suggest that *Unravel* acts as a queer lament in its unleashing of ambiguities. Through its task-based performance of undoing, *Unravel* unbecomes the privileged subject of military commemoration's eulogizing narratives. Through its performance of a process of always unbecoming, *Unravel* unsettles Canada's dominant nationalist narrative of humanitarian militarism, leaving in its place the threads of war's unfurled and haunting remains.

Troubling the gendered lexicons of war, peace, and sexual violence

When I began Unravel I was especially daunted at the thought of the thread-by-thread deconstruction of the fatigues. I anticipated boredom, backaches, and frustration. I assumed that

the repetitive labour of the task would generate impatience in me. The pinching of each individual thread between finger and thumb. The pulling—slowly so as not to break the thread—through the fabric’s weave. Retrieving those threads that do break, sometimes with a violent snap, other times with a disintegrating poof. Tasks my thick fingers are ill-suited for. Paradoxically, I’ve found that the visceral engagement with such an aggravating, yet necessarily care-filled task simultaneously triggers and de-fuses my frustration. Through the doing—or undoing—I discover a kind of peace. Not a simple or static peace. Not a guaranteed peace. Not a peace innate to the affectively feminized lexicon of cradling cloth in lap, holding thread in hand. Not a romantic or nostalgic peace. A peace born and reborn—thread-by-thread—of the struggle with the ambiguity and ambivalence of the task. A peace requiring the constant negotiation and renegotiation of frustration, empathy, boredom, anger, resignation, hope, and despair.



Figures 25 & 26. From left to right. Apart at the seams. September 2011, Latitude 53 Contemporary Visual Culture, Visualeyez 2011 (Photo courtesy Latitude 53 Contemporary Visual Culture). Thick fingers, fine threads (Photo by Cassie Scott).

Unravel: A meditation on the warp and weft of militarism began as a weeklong performance installation at Edmonton’s Visualeyez Performance Art Festival in September 2011. During the festival’s first three days I took a set of camouflage fatigues apart at the seams and

laid the fragmented pieces out on the gallery floor (fig. 25). Visitors were then invited to join a porous (un)sewing circle in which they could participate in the thread-by-thread deconstruction of the uniform. Following the festival's completion I continued *Unravel* as a daily meditation practice and have hosted occasional (un)sewing circles in my home and at festivals and conferences throughout Canada and in the UK.¹⁴³

As with *Impact Afghanistan War*, *Unravel* began as a task-based performance meditation designed to focus attention on the differential grievability that is produced through nationalism, militarism, and war. Curiously, however, though this dissertation is grounded in theoretical and historical investigations of the gendered dynamics of militarism, war, and military commemoration, I did not intentionally devise either *Impact* or *Unravel* as gender-based inquiries. Nor did I anticipate how the focus of their meditations, rather than being contained by the performance of set tasks, would become unloosed through their daily reiterations. As *Impact* and *Unravel* unfurled along an ambiguous array of affective trajectories, they unsettled me. Their impressions—remembrances of light, texture and architecture, of sound and sensation, of ghostly inter(in)animations—continue to expand and challenge my understanding of the gendered lexicons of war and peace, and the tangled extent to which the binary notion of hegemonic masculinities and femininities are deployed as ideological weapons of militarism and nationalism.

Another important similarity between *Impact* and *Unravel* is that both projects engage a labour aesthetic. *Impact*'s is most visible in the performance of the tasks of falling and of

¹⁴³ In the UK I hosted a three-day *Unravel* (un)sewing circle at Armley Mills in Leeds, as a joint project of the Ludus Festival and Performance Studies international conference (2012), and in Toronto I've hosted participatory *Unravel* (un)sewing circles outside of the gates of Fort York and at the following venues: Festival of Original Theatre (2012); Feminist Art Conference (2013); Culture Days, Walnut Contemporary Gallery (2013); WIAprojects: Babble/Babel, (2013); and the Cross Sections Art Exhibition, Ryerson University (2014).

counting.¹⁴⁴ The repetition of *Impact*'s falls with its accompanying ritualized *accounting* take on physical labour-like quality. And while evocative of the regimentation of militarism (as well industrialized labour regimes), unlike military commemoration's sanitized and public performance of mourning, *Impact* makes visible the difficult, sweaty, and frequently messy labour of remembering. Though I didn't conceive of *Impact* as a masculinized performance, when falling (especially in the winter) I noticed that most of the other people performing physical labour in public outdoor environments (hydro work, construction and road work, snow removal, landscaping, etc.) were men. *Impact*'s masculine aesthetic can also be partially attributed to the fact that I am frequently mis-read as male. This is especially true during the winter months when the combination of my size (somehow big bones and broad shoulders are deemed male) and my pragmatic attire (also considered male) seems to leave people without the required social signifiers to mark me as female. Thus—despite biology, identity, or intent—I either revert to the dominant norm of unmarked masculinity, or paradoxically, I become marked as queer.

In contrast, *Unravel*'s labour evokes, a decidedly (if not a deliberate) feminized aesthetic, one that is grounded in the longstanding historical association of women and cloth. According to Elizabeth Wayland Barber, the gendered nature of women's long history in the invention and development of textile production can be attributed to the fact that historically women were also the primary caretakers of young children: "Spinning, weaving, and sewing," explains Barber, are "repetitive [tasks], easy to pick up at any point, reasonably child-safe, and easily done at home"

¹⁴⁴ *Impact* also involved an array of less visible labours. These included transporting *Impact*-related supplies (a change of clothes, flag and stand, information postcards, and digital video camera), downloading documentation footage, blogging, and cleaning my mud-spattered "falling gear." While these labours were not so much a part of *Impact*'s performance aesthetic, they deeply informed the project's meaning. For example, my daily experience of rinsing and hanging clothes to dry during the muddy months of spring thaw, became a profound reflection on the immense labour that the hundreds of thousands of Afghans living in displaced persons camps must be confronted with in just trying to perform the simple tasks of living—cleaning clothes, keeping warm and dry.

(30). For a millennia, this rationality of caretaking was inextricably woven into cloth's production logic until, as Barber notes, the Industrial Revolution moved textile work "out of the home [and out of the control of its producers] and into large (inherently dangerous) factories" (30). More recently, as the result of "technological, political and economic developments" multinational corporations have largely abandoned factory-based apparel production in favour of global economic networks of subcontracted supply chains (Hale and Wills 4). "Homeworkers" are at the end of the chain, the bottom of a bottom heavy pyramid (or iceberg). The majority of them work for sub-minimum wages with no benefits and no protection. Health and safety hazards long associated with the garment industry are now part of the homeworkers' home environment. Predominantly women, and largely from the global South or from the global North's internalized third world of immigrant and poor women, homeworkers are an isolated and invisible workforce, distanced from both retailer and consumer through long complex chains of subcontracting that are legitimated through discourses of neo-liberal economic rationality. But regardless of the radical shifts in the logics that drive textile production—from home, to factory, and back to home—the labour relationship between women and cloth remains largely intact.

These are buttons and seams that do not easily give way. Pocket corners are especially well reinforced, girded against actions that might cause them to be torn from the uniform's body. Even with the tools intended for their undoing, it is difficult. As I struggle with a particularly well-affixed corner my seam-ripper slips, leaving a small gash concealed by the uniform's camouflage. A wounding. A violation. A reminder. No matter how ingeniously designed, how painstakingly constructed, no uniform is up to the task of protecting its wearer from weapons intent on destruction.

Despite the rise of women in the military, combat fatigues remain an iconic symbol of what Connell calls “military masculinities.” The masculinized symbolism of the military uniform is produced not only by and through war, but also through the myriad of representations that constitute the larger military-industrial-entertainment-complex—from toy soldiers and G.I. Joes, to blockbuster movies, to performances of mock military maneuvers at sporting events, to an ever-expanding plethora of video games including *America’s Army* (discussed in Chapter One). And, just as militarism has a gendered lexicon, so too does peace. For decades, women-led and women-only anti-war and anti-militarist movements have employed essentialist—sometimes strategically framed, other times not—notions of “woman” or “mother” together with their accompanying signs and symbols: From Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo (who wore white scarves representing baby’s diapers as poignant signifiers of the loss of their disappeared children); to the Women’s Peace Camp at Greenham Commons (where feminist peace activists drew upon the historical associations of women with cloth and caring when they wove themselves to the fence surrounding the base); to Women in Black whose use of public symbols of women in mourning together with their unrelenting call for peaceful solutions challenges the state’s use of memorial for militaristic and nationalistic aims.

From a historical perspective, the gendering of war and peace may well be rooted in the “fact” of the gendered construction of both militaries and (to a lesser extent) peace movements. But as more and more women enlist in national militaries and serve in combat-related positions, feminists are being forced to grapple with the too-easy linkage of women with peace. As Coco Fusco argues, while U.S. feminists have focused on how women within the military have become victims of sexual harassment and sexual violence at the hands of their male comrades,

they have been less vigilant in taking seriously female soldier's participation in the perpetration of sexual violence (*Field*). For example, when trophy photos of U.S. Army reservist Lynndie England sexually abusing Abu Ghraib detainees went public, feminists were quick to emphasize England's subordinate relationship with her male superior (and lover)—U.S. Army Specialist Charles Graner—who had a documented history of violent domestic abuse. While Fusco is not suggesting that England was not under pressure from Graner, she argues that by focusing almost exclusively on England's gendered-naïvete and institutionally supported gender-subordination, feminists contributed to the reproduction of a problematically essentializing gender narrative in which women can only be understood as sexual violence's victims, and never its perpetrators.

Meanwhile, within the simulacrum of popular media, with its prolific display of sexual exhibitionism and images of the sexualized female body, England's story unfolded like a racy military soap opera. Through the lens of the dominant media, England's "participation [in] and witnessing of sexualized torture [read] as something else: erotic play and illicit pleasure, for both the viewers and those viewed" (*Field* 55). Taken together, feminists' downplaying of England's role in the perpetration of sexual aggression, and the media's representation of women as sexual objects, not actors, served to "limit the understanding of sexual torture as a calculated practice"—one in which female sexuality is being increasingly strategically deployed by the U.S. military (51). Equally significant was the astounding extent to which debates over England's innocence and/or guilt diverted attention away from the Arab men in the images who were undeniably the victims of sexual aggression and assault. Dominant (white) feminism's undifferentiated gender narrative masks the degree to which sexual violence is perpetrated on racialized Others.

If our gendered lexicons of war and peace do not, as Fusco asserts, provide us with a language to understand “female sexual aggression as rape” (54)—nor do they provide us with a language for comprehending men as victims of sexual violence. In fact, as human rights scholar Lara Stemple writes, “There are well over one hundred uses of the term ‘violence against women’—defined to include sexual violence—in U.N. resolutions, treaties, general comments and consensus documents. No human rights instruments explicitly address sexual violence against men” (618). One explanation for the lack of attention to male rape is that women are disproportionately far more likely to be raped than men. But the statistically higher number of women than men who are raped, neither accounts for, nor excuses, our collective participation in the willful denial of men as victims of sexual violence.

With *Blasted*, Sarah Kane defies the taboo surrounding male-on-male rape and in the process disrupts the naturalized backdrop of hegemonic military masculinity. Also, by setting the rape of *Blasted*’s female protagonist—Cate—offstage, she resists reproducing the eroticization of violence against female-sexed bodies that has become commonplace in both pornographic and popular media.¹⁴⁵ Instead, Kane complicates conventional narratives that posit rape as an act of sexual assault perpetrated (almost) exclusively against women and girls and reminds us—through excruciatingly affective means—that the sexualized feminization of the other is also a weapon of war and familiar trope of violent nationalisms. For example, as Diana Taylor asserts in her analysis of Argentina’s Dirty War, the military junta’s torture scenarios were “organized as [...] sexual encounter[s]” in which both “[m]ale- and female-sexed bodies were turned into

¹⁴⁵ Like Kane, despite the many explicit portrayals of violence in *Rhymes for Young Ghouls*, director Jeff Barnaby refuses to place the all-too-familiar image of an Aboriginal woman or girl being raped onto the screen. There is, however, an element of femiphobia in the way *Rhymes* addresses the male-on-male sexual abuse of young boys at St. D’s. I attribute this less to homophobic messaging within the film, than to a representation of the limited possibilities available for addressing male on male rape within colonialism’s imposed heteronormative system.

the penetrable, ‘feminine’ ones that coincided with the military’s idea of a docile social and political body” (*Disappearing* 152).

As a nationalist scenario, military commemoration can be seen as simultaneously masculinizing and feminizing the dead. Through its elegiac narratives of heroism the dead are remembered as (masculinized) “just warriors.” On the other hand, by denying individual voice or narrative to the dead, they are rendered not only physically dead, but also politically docile and manipulable (or feminized). Without individual voice or agency, they are but pixels in the big picture of both military masculinity and nationalist narratives. Looked at this way, rather than honouring the dead, those who shape military commemoration’s highly emplotted narratives, may well be viewed as “having their way” with the dead. The dictates of hegemonic masculinity—which demand from its male subjects the adamant disavowal of any attributes that are considered “feminine” within dominant masculinity’s ideological frameworks—ensure that there is little protest from veterans about the manipulation of their fallen comrades.

Violence’s feminized sexualization also makes its aesthetic representation risky. As Taylor notes, in their efforts to represent the eroticized and feminized violence perpetrated by the Argentinean military junta some post-junta theatrical productions problematically reproduced the violent narratives they sought to critically expose. In her analysis of Eduardo Pavlovsky’s *Paso de dos*—performed by the playwright and (his wife) Susan Evans—Taylor argues that while the production exposed the junta’s eroticized and feminized perpetrations of violence, it did so by staging “torture as a love story” (*Disappearing* 5).¹⁴⁶ Unlike *Paso de dos*, with *Blasted*, Kane

¹⁴⁶ Taylor is not proposing that artists should not attempt to represent violence that has been eroticized, only that they need to be careful that they are not reproducing the feminized and sexualized violence that they are endeavouring to critique. Taylor situates Griselda Gambaro’s *Information for Foreigners* in contrast to *Paso de dos* as an example of a performance that effectively represents the terror and torture perpetrated by Argentina’s military junta without eroticizing it.

effectively represents the terror of sexualized acts of violence without reproducing the erotic feminization of the violence that she is critiquing. In so doing, Kane exposes rape both as a mechanism of violent domination and as a mechanism of control that uses the sexualized feminization of the other as a weapon. And staged in the context of a queer theatre, *Blasted*'s male-on-male rape further reminds us that sexual violence cannot be reduced to a "feminist" issue. Rather, it is part of the warp and weft of hegemonic masculinity.

While I concur with Ouzounian's assertion that Buddies presentation of *Blasted* was rife with violent excess, I take issue with his dismissive characterization of Kane as "maniacal." In an all too familiar gesture of misdirection, Ouzounian diverts attention from the excesses of violent masculinity and war by conjuring historical echoes of women who are "too much" and go "too far"—like "man-hating lesbians," "radical feminists," and all manner of "hysterical women." Unlike Ouzounian, I applaud both Kane, and Buddies, for their unflinching representation of the excesses of militarism's normalized violent masculinity that is camouflaged by narratives of heroism and righteous militarism. In a way, it's odd how disturbing it is to see a dramatic portrayal that affectively conveys violence in our era of both real and media hyper-violence. For me, this was the play's brilliance; it portrayed violence as horrific, not as the "death pornography" Gorer writes of (see Chapter One), and it represented sexual violence as a terrorizing act of war, not as an eroticized "fantasy of reciprocal desire" (Taylor *Disappearing* 20).

Blasted also shed light on how sympathy for victims of sexual violence is differentially allocated. Despite the affectively disturbing quality of his rape, Ian—*Blasted*'s male protagonist—does not come across as a sympathetic character. Within the context of the play, this has to do with his raping of his much younger girlfriend—Cate—and his general

unpleasantness. It is also reflective of sexual violence's victim hierarchy. As Stemple notes, at the top of the hierarchy are "innocent victims"—women (ideally either virginal or monogamous) who struggle frantically (but futilely) to resist the assault of a stranger. Women who know their assailant(s), or who are sexually active and non-monogamous rank lower, poor women of colour and sex workers lower yet, and homosexual men who—like sex workers—are seen as "asking for it," even lower.

Heterosexual men who are raped are altogether off the chart of sexual violence's victim hierarchy. They are caught in the brittle bind of hegemonic masculinity where, since "'real men' should be able to prevent their own rape," to speak of being raped is to contribute to one's own feminization (Stemple 632). Just as Williams dressing in women's clothes has cast him outside of the realm of hegemonic masculinity, and thereby absolved military masculinity of his crimes, so too through their feminization are male rape victims "queered" and therefore cast outside of the realm of masculinity. The brittle fragility of our hegemonic gender binary dictates that masculinity can only be "achieved by the constant process of warding off threats to it" (633). Since being male does not make one impervious to rape, the only means heteronormative men who are raped have of warding off the threat of sexual violation's feminization is through the denial of their rape. Male-on-male rape then becomes a method not only of violation but also of rendering men perverse or queer, of unbecoming their masculinity, and in the process, of rendering them socially unbecoming.

Moreover, as Stemple notes, since the highest prevalence of male-on-male rape occurs in settings that are not considered sites of "innocence"—like prisons and conflict zones—there is even less sympathy for its victims. Men belonging to at-risk subgroups or otherized populations are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence. These include "refugees, the internally displaced,

migrant workers, disabled men [and men from] a particular racial or ethnic group during armed conflict” (624). The vulnerability of these otherized men is amplified through their interactions with state-sanctioned authorities and associated institutionalized structures of control. Cast outside of the privileged (and unmarked) subjectivity of hegemonic masculinity and nationalistic norms, these are abjected (and marked) others—“illegal aliens,” “criminals,” “terrorists.” Like the male prisoners in Abu Ghraib, the abuse perpetrated on Shidane Arone by his Canadian Forces captors, bears a remarkable resemblance to the scenarios of the violent perpetration of feminized sexualization discussed by Taylor.

There are also similarities between Colonel Russell Williams and Master Corporal Clayton Matchee’s crimes—forced confinement, torture, rape, murder. Perhaps the most obvious similarities between Williams and Matchee are that both were members of the Canadian Forces, and both wore a Canadian Forces uniform. Despite these similarities, the status of Williams and Matchee’s victims within the imaginary of Canadian social memory varies radically. Whereas Marie-France Comeau and Jessica Lloyd rank high on the sexual victim hierarchy—with their innocence paradoxically heightened and overshadowed by Williams’ spectacularized depravity—Shidane Arone, to the extent that he ranks at all, does so as a signifier of Canadian shame. Within the Canadian commemorative imagination, Arone has been reduced to the inconvenient dead body that “marred the [Canadian Forces] otherwise successful deployment” in Somalia (see Chapter Three).

Why this difference? Whereas Comeau and Lloyd were white Canadian women, Arone was a black Somali teenager. Williams’ perpetrated his assaults in the bucolic setting of Ontario’s cottage country, on streets with names (like Cosy Cove Lane) coined to convey safety and comfort. Matchee, together with other members of his company, perpetrated their assault in

a Canadian Forces camp in Belet Huen, Somalia—deep in the “dark heart” of Africa. Though—like Comeau and Lloyd—in addition to being tortured and murdered Arone was also raped, his assault is not framed as a sexual assault.¹⁴⁷ Arone is understood neither as an “innocent” victim, nor as a victim of rape. Unlike Comeau and Lloyd, Arone’s forced confinement is not framed as a kidnapping but as an act of authorized imprisonment—which marks Arone as suspect. Nor was there any need for a team of forensic detectives and a months-long investigation to find Arone’s abusers and murderer. After all, it is estimated that approximately eighty soldiers could hear Arone’s screams throughout his night of torture and abuse.¹⁴⁸ The public outrage over Arone’s abduction and rape-murder and its military cover-up has been largely eclipsed by outrage over the defilement of Canada’s imagined (and much beloved) national innocence.

While I seek to resist essentialist notions of the “nature” of both “women” and “men,” along with Kane, I believe it behooves us to consider the extent to which rape and war are logical conclusions of men’s conditioning in performances of hegemonic masculinity. This is not a question of “blame.” In fact, as feminist scholars Fusco, Taylor, and Stemple—among others—argue, it is crucial that we look not only at the ways in which militarism enforces male dominance through its construction of a normalized backdrop of hegemonic masculinity, but also to how women and men are both effected. Connell likewise insists upon a plurality of masculinities. Even within the military, Connell argues, masculinity takes many forms: While some soldiers are trained to obey, or to kill on command; some are trained to command others to obey and to order others to kill. And, as has become increasingly evident in recent years, not all

¹⁴⁷ According to witness accounts Matchee sodomized Arone with a stick (Razack *Dark* 97). As both Fusco and Stemple note, Abu Ghraib detainees were similarly sodomized by their male captors.

¹⁴⁸ See Sharene Razack’s *Dark Threats and White Knights* for a detailed account of testimony from soldiers who heard and witnessed Arone’s torture and abuse. For the most part, these soldiers did nothing to stop the abuse. In fact, taken together, their testimony reveals how the (often sexualized) torture and abuse of the otherized Somali population at the hands of Canadian Forces personnel was disturbingly normalized.

soldiers who are trained to obey, to kill, or as Fusco points out, to torture or perpetrate acts of sexual abuse, on command—nor those who command others to obey, to kill or to torture—are men.

We must find ways to undertake *the aggravating, yet necessarily care-filled task*, of unraveling the dominant and dominating social norms of hegemonic masculinity, that are harmful to us all, and that are most harmful to those feminized and racialized Others who are positioned lower on the our hierarchical world gender order. I propose this task be understood as a queer kind of labour. A labour of unbecoming, of perverting Canada's popularized scripts of enlightened multiculturalism at home and humanitarian militarism abroad. A labour of remembering beyond the regimented confines of commemoration's elegiac narration. A messy labour of lament that demands sustained engagement and collective reckoning.

Threads: From Vibrant Matter to Ghostly Disassemblage

As I took the uniform apart at the seams and laid each piece out I found myself involuntarily overcome by feelings of tenderness for the body that bore its weight, for the iconic and iconically grievable soldier. But, the moments that most break my heart come later. When the final weft thread is pulled out and the warp threads remain as ghostly reminders of the hundreds, thousands, millions of history's nameless and forgotten dead who have been rent from the fabric of family, friends, and community, from the weave of life, through the violence of militarism and war.



Figures 27 & 28. From left to right. “Jacket”: Ninety-four component parts: sixty-four cloth pieces; fifteen buttons (eleven small, four large); six pieces of Velcro (of varying sizes); six grommets; two cords; and one label (Photo by the author). “Ghostly remains” Latitude 53 Contemporary Visual Culture, Visualeyez 2011 (Photo courtesy Latitude 53 Contemporary Visual Culture).

For the past three years I’ve been deconstructing military uniforms—seam-by-seam, thread-by-thread. The first two of the uniforms I unraveled were desert-issue camouflage fatigues. I chose these fatigues as reference both to Canada’s engagement in the U.S.-led (and NATO-supported) War in Afghanistan, and to the Canadian Forces’ use of the uniform in the images it posts of its Afghan War fallen soldiers.¹⁴⁹ But despite this association—which is also reflected in mainstream media reports of Canadian’s killed in Afghanistan—most Canadians who witnessed and participated in *Unravel*’s (un)sewing circles associated the uniforms with the U.S. military. I was disturbed at the thought of *Unravel* contributing to the popular narrative of Canadian geopolitical exceptionalism, with its positioning of Canada as morally superior to our militarized southern neighbour. So for *Unravel*’s third uniform—which is still in process—I selected the more distinctive Canadian Disruptive Pattern (CADPAT), the computer-generated digital temperate woodland green camouflage currently used by the Canadian Forces at home.

¹⁴⁹ See “Fallen Canadians,” National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/honours-history-fallen-canadians/index.page>.

The tangled remains of the first uniform (unravelling September 2011 - May 2012) sit in a wooden bowl in my living room, the remains of the second (unravelling June 2012 - March 2013), in a bowl on my porch. From the reverential object of the soldier's uniform, war's effects have become reconstituted in and through the assemblage of materials that went into its construction; in and through the conglomeration of actants involved in the production of thread, cloth, camouflage design, and the military and national identities they once constituted; in and through the tangled mass left in war's wake (fig. 32). From the singularity of the uniform as signifier of the privileged subject of national mourning has come "a polyvalence of sign and symbol" a ghostly disassemblage that makes strange the ritualized familiarity of war's loss, a tangled plurality that beckons one "to imagine the nonmeaning, or the true meaning, of the Thing" (Kristeva qtd. in Schwenger 12).

In *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* Jane Bennett theorizes a vital materiality through which to unsettle, or unmake the meaning of things, and of the relationship between human and non-human vibrancies. Bennett's central provocation is that matter has its own intrinsic vitality and that life is not bifurcated into animate and inanimate, nature and culture, human and non-human, but is instead made up of a "heterogeneous monism of vibrant bodies" (121). In her insistence on matter's intrinsic vitality Bennett "detach(es) materiality from the figures of passive, mechanistic, or divinely infused substance" (xiii) and forgoes critical theory's methodology of demystification arguing that however "indispensable" it may be as a tool "demystification tends to screen from view the vitality of matter and to reduce *political* agency to *human* agency" (xv).¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ Emphasis is Bennett's.

Bennett adopts Bruno Latour's concept of "actants" as that which is "neither an object nor a subject but an 'intervener'" (Latour, qtd. in Bennett 9), and following Deleuze and Guattari, uses the notion of "assemblage" to explore the ways in which vibrancy resonates not only through isolated things but also through heterogeneous groupings or confederations. Emphasizing "the agentic contributions of nonhuman forces [...] in an attempt to counter the narcissistic reflex of human language and thought" Bennett differentiates her vital materialism from historical materialism as a mechanism for exploring the ways in which matter, human, non-human and the non-human within the human, coexist and inter-animate (xvi).

I find myself simultaneously enamoured with and troubled by Bennett's *Vibrant Matter*. Enamoured with the agency she affords to all matter of matter—and by her project of resisting both modernity's disenchantment of the world, and critical theory's demystifying reduction of matter to that which is acted upon by human agents. I appreciate as well what Bennett posits as the "political goal of a vital materialism" the move towards a "polity with more channels of communication between its members" a move that necessitates an "extend(ed) awareness of our interinvolvements and interdependencies" (104).

Unravel, became a method of extending my conceptual awareness of the uniform through an engagement with it as an assemblage of vibrant matter. Through the uniform's undoing the codes woven into the fatigues as a symbol of the every-warrior were also undone. Unloosed from the uniform's dominant codes the intrinsic vitality of the assemblage of materials—threads, buttons, Velcro, zipper, grommets—became more accessible to me. Through the process of unbecoming, the uniform began to assert an agency that refused the narcissistic control and limitations of my critical analysis. In the process of unravelling the uniforms I too became undone. I was no longer the thinking human agent, and the uniform the object of my analysis.

The longer I unravelled the more interconnected I became with the uniform's unfurled and unfurling warp and weft.

But while indebted to Bennett for her productive theorization of the vitality of matter, I am also troubled by the absences produced by and through her methodological and perspectival approach rooted exclusively within western theoretical and literary archives. While I empathize with (what may have been) the desire to avoid the troubling traps of primitivism and essentialism that haunt western scholarship of non-western "others," Bennett's near wholesale omission of the multiple non-western archival (theoretical and literary) lineages and repertorial practices in which matter's inherent vibrancy as well as its human-non-human inter-animation is evident, reproduces a western narrative of newness (by now quite old) and originality, and re-performs what Taylor calls the "scenarios of discovery" that are so endemic to both western scholarship and western imperialism (64).

Unlike the vibrant matter of Bennett's new materialism, the "Thing" of Julia Kristeva's psychoanalytic analysis, is the abject experience that exceeds language's capacity for symbolic representation and therefore requires literary innovation to communicate its true meaning. Extending Kristeva's theorizations of the abject through an analysis of visual and literary accounts of the Holocaust Nicolas Chare argues that for survivors of Auschwitz, memory is a dangerous "threat to self," and that through the process of recollection, the self collapses into the abject horror of the experience producing a state of "semiotic excess" in which the experience overwhelms language's symbolic capacities (107). Chare argues that it is only through the use of stylistic innovations that language is able to transcend its limitation as a medium of purely symbolic or "efficient" communication and therefore to facilitate the transmission of the true meaning of trauma's abject horror.

But what of abject experiences that exceed not only language's representational capacities, but which have also been cast outside of the frame of our collective social memory? What of what Gordon calls the "not there" of an "occluded and forgotten past" (195)? What of the "lost subjects of history" who have been banished from the realm of grievability, cast outside of the territory of an empathy bound by and to national borders and discourses? (195) Gordon suggests that we live in a world in which matter is haunted. Gordon uses Raymond William's concept of "sense" to evoke "the structure of feeling [that is] perhaps the most appropriate description of how hauntings are transmitted and received" (18). For Williams, this haunting, this structure of feeling, "is a social experience which is conceivable only when social experience itself has been categorically (and at root historically) reduced" (as qtd. in Gordon 201).

When I first read the title of Bennett's book—*Vibrant Matter*—it reminded me of a line—"Listen more often to Things than to Beings"—from a song by the African American feminist a cappella group *Sweet Honey and the Rock*. The song—"Breaths"—is based on the translation of a poem by Senegalese poet Birago Diop. "The dead are not dead," writes Diop:

They are in a woman's breast
In the wailing of a child
And in the burning of a log
In the moaning rock
In the weeping grasses
In the forest and the home.

Diop tells us that the ancestor's breath can be heard in the voices of fire, water, and wind and in the "sobbing of the bush." Like Bennett, Diop insists on the need to cultivate an expanded sensory discernment in order to listen to the voice of things without their being overshadowed by

Beings. Unlike Bennett, however, the things to which Diop draws to our attention defy notions of Western theoretical newness. They are things cross-temporally inter(in)animated by the spirits of the ancestors as a means by which the past speaks to and through the material present.

I do not doubt the value of Bennett's theorization of vibrant matter for the cultivation in *privileged* subjects of an increased sense of interdependency with things, and "to counter the narcissism of humans in charge of the world" (xvi). But what of the world's majority of non-privileged subjects, especially those living in states of war, or other states of extreme dispossession and violence? For these populations—populations for whom western notions of human sovereignty do not apply—the sense of distance between their human subjectivity and the world of things is not nearly so vast.

After Foucault, Achille Mbembe argues, "the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die" (11) and that historical considerations of modern terror must "address slavery, which could be considered one of the first instances of biopolitical experimentation" (21). The slave's value as property and as an instrument of production means that the slave was reduced to a thing whose object price and productive value required that they be "kept alive *but in a state of injury*, in a phantom-like world of horrors and intense cruelty and profanity"(21).¹⁵¹ Just as Chare argues that as a result of their subjection to extreme abject conditions Auschwitz survivors experienced the obliteration of language as a means of symbolic communication Mbembe notes how, from within and "in spite of" this abject state of exception, the slave generates the agency to communicate and create:

¹⁵¹ Emphasis is Mbembe's.

Treated as if he or she no longer existed except as a mere tool of production the slave is nevertheless able to draw almost any object, instrument, language, or gesture into a performance and then to stylize it. Breaking with uprootedness and the pure world of things of which he or she is but a fragment the slave is able to demonstrate the protean capabilities of the human bond through music and the very body that was supposedly possessed by another (22).

Mbembe's description of the slave's relationship with things and with the body as a "thing" possessed is very different from that of Bennett's *humans in charge of the world*. It is a relationship that demands a heightened and intimate sensory awareness of matter, and of all matter of interdependency, while simultaneously requiring means to break from "the pure world of things."

Bennett's absencing of spirit as an animator of matter is similarly troubling for those whose histories are not archived and monumentalized but who look to cross-temporal inter(in)animation as a mechanism for the transmission of cultural memory. As Roach argues, for the dead of modernity's "diasporic and genocidal histories" (4) cross-temporal cultural transmissions functions as "restored behavior against a historical archive of scripted record" (11). Just as frames of war can be seen to derealize populations whose narratives have not made their way into the frame discursive legitimacy, and military commemoration can be understood to be productive not only of social memory but also of structural forgetfulness, a theory of vibrant matter rooted exclusively in a western theoretical lineage risks foreclosing against mechanisms critical for the transmission of cultural memories that do not fit within the archival frame of western theory.

While, like the military uniform, the things Diop beckons us to listen to are imbued with a reverentiality, unlike the uniform, Diop's things do not have a singular or fixed identity onto which nationalism has inscribed meaning. Diop's things call for a different reverence, a reverence for that which reaches beyond language's symbolic and archival capacities to accurately represent experience, a reverence that enables the transmission of cultural memory across temporal and geospatial territories, a reverence that seeks to engender an attitude of hospitable reception for the ghosts of the forgotten dead of history. Diop proposes that true meaning involves listening to the material world of things for the voices of the past as they live on, in, and through the present.

Unloosing obligatory reverentiality

Since my visit to the war museum my unraveling sessions have been filled with rage. Gone is the pretense of a peace—however ambiguous. I unravel with a vengeance. The impossible task of deconstructing militarism has taken on an oppositional relationship to the impossibility of its deliberate construction and its eradicating omissions. Yesterday, as I was washing the dinner dishes, I heard a CBC news report about the Parliament Hill “celebration” of Canada's "successful" military engagement in Libya. There was a twenty-one-gun salute. Officials—military and government—were downright agog with their congratulatory military display. The Canadian Press has called the mission "a rarity in modern armed combat [...] quick, neat and painless."

I hear the words "no casualties" and I'm dumbfounded. How is it possible that Canadian Forces dropped 600 bombs and there were no casualties? Then I understand. There were no Canadian military casualties. As with the Afghan war, we don't waste either our air-time or our

grief on the casualties of other nations (unless, they are being killed by our "enemies," and can be used as ideological fodder).

Unraveling does nothing to sooth my anger—it merely continues regardless of it.

Unlike the Canadian Forces' incineration of Colonel Williams' uniforms, *Unravel's* performance of always unbecoming is not an act of exorcism or erasure. It is a cross-temporal evocation of the uniform's signs and symbols. It is a calling forth of the ghosts that haunt military commemoration's dominant nationalist narratives. And it is a sticky vehicle for the communication of that which exceeds language's symbolic capacities. Working intimately with the uniform, as one of war's ideologically infused material instruments, provides a process through which to experience, imagine and reimagine, the vitality and agency of the uniform's assemblage of actants, the hauntedness of its threads, the multiple meanings and nonmeanings of the "Thing."

Though for the soldiers who wear them, as well as for their families and many members of the general population, military uniforms undoubtedly have multiple, even conflicting, meanings, the overarching narrative inscribed onto the various uniforms worn by Canadian Forces personnel through military memorialization is one of heroism, benevolent militarism and altruistic nationalism. The uniform is essential to military commemoration's production of a hierarchy of grievability and discourses of righteous militarism, with those wear the uniform under the banner of the Canadian flag, elevated to the top of the hierarchy. Military uniforms constitute identities of national authority and reverentiality signifying that their wearers have been granted not only a license to kill (and perform other acts of violence) on behalf of the state but also a guaranteed place at the top of the nation's hierarchy of grievability—privileges that,

together with a steady pay-check and promises of a post-service college or university education, may be particularly appealing to communities of relatively limited privilege.

Within the realm of the dominant nationalist and heteronormative nation state, it is considered unbecoming or deviant to refuse the call to prescribed norms. For example, Sara Ahmed argues that the family sustains its place as a foundational, obligatory “happy object” of western culture by casting those who refuse to take up its prescriptions of happiness as “affect aliens” (30). “Feminist kill-joys, unhappy queers, and melancholic migrants” are cast as destroyers of the family’s happiness when they expose its unhappy sexism, heterosexism, and nationalistic racism (30). Similarly, I propose that those who dare defy military commemoration’s code of patriotic silence by questioning the geopolitical conditions that resulted in the loss they are being called upon to reverentially (and unquestioningly) mourn, become re-cast as violators of the nation’s heroic dead.

Military commemoration, in this sense, does more than cast certain bodies beyond the realm of grievability, and entire histories and historical events to the margins of collective memory. It also obliges us to collude in the violence of nationalism’s monumentalized and institutionalized forgetfulness. Instead of being called to participate in a polyvocal chorus of lament and critical reflection, military commemoration interpellates us with its fixed narrative of the nation’s archetypal “fallen hero.” Because of its role in Canada’s reiterated performance of military commemoration for selective losses in selective wars, I propose that the uniform—as a signifier of the heroic warrior—acts not only as an object of obligatory reverentiality but also as an object of national melancholia. The uniform bears the sticky trace of a nationalistically inscribed grief that can never be allowed closure, a grief that must be continually re-performed for the ongoing constitution of the nation state. Moreover, through its participation in the

performance of national mourning, the uniform simultaneously bears the affective impressions of the nation's *disavowal* of grief for the lives of "others" killed in the name of the state.

As Butler and Gilroy argue, the inability to apprehend, and to therefore give up and grieve, the loss of the disavowed other results in a melancholic identification with the nation-state's disavowed object(s) of mourning. The dominant national community must then project this disavowal of loss, or ungrievability, onto the lives and losses of the nation's internal and external others, thereby producing the frames that justify the waging of new wars and that obscure the neoliberal continuations of Canada's violent colonial past. Those bodies that do not serve nationalist discourses of righteous militarism are cast outside of military commemoration's frame of grievability. Within the context of Canadian military commemoration such bodies include (among others) the thousands of Afghan civilians who have died either as a direct result of military action or, indirectly, as a result of the effects of their violent displacement; Somalis who were tortured to death, or shot and killed by Canadian "peacekeepers"; the 600,000 German civilians who were targeted and perished in the World War II allied bombing campaign in which 50,000 Canadians took part; the twenty-five World War I Canadian soldiers who were shot by firing squads; the Aboriginal populations who have perished as a result of the European "settlement" of Canada (and who continue to perish as a result of institutionalized policies of cultural genocide and resource appropriation).

To successfully bestow its wearers with such troubling but nevertheless exalted privileges citizen populations must both recognize and be obliged to relate to the uniform as part of a larger assemblage—flag, cannon, poppy, yellow ribbon—of nationalistically inscribed reverential objects. Read in association with the cannon's ritualized ear-splitting twenty-one gun salute, and the poppy—with its blossoming on lapel jackets of newscasters, politicians, and citizens

populations—the uniform interpellates Canadians into an annual season of obligatory reverentiality. Situated as part of an ensemble in the performance of national mourning, camouflage fatigues worn by Canadian Forces, become differentiated from their role in other decidedly less reverential public displays as an object of entertainment, fashion, or even as an object of anti-military resistance.¹⁵²

This differentiation of the uniform's performance as a reverential object from its myriad of other popular cultural performances allows for the management of a range of affective relationships to the uniform. For example, at the Canadian War Museum, in some contexts—like the museum's Royal Canadian Legion Hall of Honour—the uniform is definitively positioned as an object of obligatory reverentiality. In the museum's spectacular and cathartic video—*My World: Hope and Peace*—camouflage fatigues are the uniform of choice throughout. This is the uniform worn by the soldiers we see bearing arms in peacekeeping missions, serving local communities, and grieving for fallen comrades. In other contexts, however—like the gift boutique or the area where children are invited to try on military attire—the uniform is transformed into an object of consumption and play. As Sara Brady notes, the management of the uniform's reverential affect has also been effectively re-deployed by anti-war veterans who have used their uniforms and other symbols of national military reverentiality in their anti-war struggles.¹⁵³ And throughout the U.S. and Canada, the presence of homeless veterans wearing their old military fatigues can also be read as a performance that if not anti-militarist, certainly

¹⁵² See Howard Fremeth ("Searching"), A. L. McCready ("Tie"), and McKay and Swift (*Warrior*) for discussions of the growing incursion of Canadian military displays into a range of public cultural arenas including radio dramas, Hollywood-style movies, and military shows at sporting events and community festivals. See Jennifer Craik (*Uniforms*), and Bonami et al (*Uniform*), for historical analyses of the relationship between military uniforms, popular culture, and the fashion industry.

¹⁵³ See Chapter Two for a brief discussion of the "winter soldiers" campaigns organized to expose military atrocities in Vietnam, and more recently, in Afghanistan and Iraq.

challenges the state's discourse of reverential regard for its "just warriors" by exposing the irreverential treatment it affords its discarded veterans.

Despite their reduction to ashes, traces of Williams' uniforms live on as ghostly echoes. In our age of digital memory images of Williams in both casual and formal military dress circulate on the internet—saluting, standing next to the Queen Elizabeth II and Prime Minister Harper, in conversation with Defence Minister Peter MacKay. But while complete erasure was not possible, the Canadian Forces have succeeded in ensuring that Williams' physical uniforms will never be part of commemoration's processes of reflection. That its threads will never be dragged through the weave to animate the silenced voices and stories, of living and dead, from past and present.

The queer art of craft and the temporal drag of unproduction

Armley Mills, home to the Leeds Industrial Museum, was once the world's largest woolen mill and the primary producer of the cloth used by militaries throughout Europe. According to Barrie, the museum's gifted storyteller-guide, the women who worked at the mill, in a quiet act of sabotage, once neglected to "set" the dye of a batch of cloth that was to be used to make uniforms for France's troops. When it rained the nation's military colour—blue—bled from the soldier's coats.

Nestled within a circle of chairs, the table sits across from the massive industrial carding machine in the museum's sunny foyer. The threads from Unravel's first—now fully unraveled—uniform are at its center. They are surrounded by the 191 component parts of the newly fragmented second uniform: 141 cloth pieces; 22 buttons (thirteen small, nine large); ten Velcro pieces; twelve grommets; three cords; one zipper; and two labels. From around the corner we

can hear Barrie as he alternates his spinning of anecdotal yarns with the spinning of dozens of spools of white thread on the mill's 100-year-old spinning mule, deftly dragging narrative threads from the mill's past into the corporeal present (figs. 29 & 30). For three days, accompanied by the clattering din of the mule, a small and shifting group of (un)sewers unraveled.



Figures 29 & 30. Barrie, spinning a yarn & Barrie spinning yarn, Armley Mills, Leeds Industrial Museum (Photos by author).

In June 2012, as part of the Performance Studies International (PSi) conference #18 and Leeds' LUDUS Festival, *Unravel* ventured into the public arena and hosted a three-day—*Thread-by-Thread*—(un)sewing circle at Armley Mills, the Leeds Industrial Museum. As with *Unravel*'s inaugural public performance in Edmonton, *Thread-by-Thread* was a porous event that invited participants into an experiential, collective and conscious reengagement with the processes, products, and consequences of our collective labour through the task-based performance of its unproduction.

Constructed not only of armies of men (and increasingly women), of weapons and their delivery systems, militaries are also made up of the mundane objects needed to nurture and

sustain life. Textiles and their manufacture from raw material into cloth, uniforms, bedding and shelter are an integral component of the military-industrial-complex as are the gestures of globalized industrial labour through which they are produced; gestures shaped through a transnational choreography of technologically enhanced and Taylorized production with its accompanying ensemble of sub-contracted supply chains of increasingly precarious labour; fragmented and abstracted gestures that alienate maker, not only from the process and product of their labour, but also from its geopolitical consequences.

Despite radical shifts in the logics that drive textile production the association of women with cloth has remained largely intact. The gendered structuring of transnational globalization on the other hand, is often masked by dominant discourses that frame economics as gender-neutral. Connell argues that not only are global markets not gender-neutral, they are “inherently, not accidentally, arenas of gender formation and gender politics” that together operate to produce a “world gender order” (*Men* 40-1). Connell is not suggesting that this gendered world order is based in a biologically essentialized binary of fixed and universalized masculinity and femininity. Rather, he argues that it has been produced by, and is reflective of, the gendered historical processes of Imperialism and colonialism that today continue to be manufactured and maintained through networks of economic neo-colonialism interwoven with military and paramilitary expansionism. Our “current growth of world markets and systems of financial control” Connell posits, “has seen gender divisions of labour remade on a massive scale in the ‘global factory’ (Fuentes & Ehrenreich), as well as the spread of gendered violence alongside Western military technology” (41).

As with the too-easy gendered linkages of war, peace, and piece work, the resurgence of crafting and its use as an alter-globalization and anti-war tactic have stirred feminist debates.

While Germaine Greer argues that engaging the gendered lexicon of craft as a political tactic may be counter to feminist goals and that crafting itself is “an exercise in futility [and] heroic pointlessness” (as qtd. in Robertson 191), Kristy Robertson suggests that unlike their feminist predecessors of the 70s and 80s today’s “radical knitters and the Stitch n’Bitcher’s [have] a sophisticated understanding that the making of any textile is connected to the capitalist system” (198). And drawing on José Esteban Muñoz’s theory of disidentification as a performative tactic for “queering traditional identities”—like the gendered identities associated with crafting (and textile manufacturing)—Lacey Jane Roberts proposes a “critical craft theory” that rethinks crafting as a “tactic of ambiguity” and uses queer theory as a framework for negotiating contemporary craft’s “identity crises” impasse (245-46):

By flipping and displacing denigrating and confining stereotypes through tactics of performance and appropriation, craft can reimagine itself [...] Through the dismantling and reconfiguration of its own stereotypes, craft is positioned as a potent agent to challenge the very systems that create and proliferate stereotypes to maintain hierarchies of visual and material culture. (247-48)

Anti-militarist crafters enlist craft’s gendered lexicon to produce a queer range of crafty challenges to militarism and war: With *antipersonnel*, a series of hand knit and stuffed replicas of anti-personnel mines, Barb Hunt “juxtaposes the mindfulness and time dedicated to a knitting project with the contemplation of ‘knowledge that is otherwise too difficult to bear’” (qtd. in Black and Burisch 210); For her disarming *Pink Tank* project Marianne Jørgensen collaborated with members of the Cast Off Knitters as well as individual crafters from around the world to “knit and [assemble] over four thousand squares into a covering for a World War II era combat tank as a protest against the [...] war in Iraq” (207); And craft artist Liz Collins’ Knitting Nation

labouriously deploys craft “to question ideas of nationhood through parody” (Roberts 253). In a “spectacle of craft” Collins and her ensemble of workers labour at knitting machines to produce large-scale installations like the gigantic and unwieldy American flag they produced as part of *The Muster* (2005), performance artist Allison Smith’s queer civil war reenactment (251-53).

Knitting, crochet and other handcrafts also stubbornly resist the temporal sensibilities of transnational production. The sedentary hours Hunt spends constructing her pink-hued landmines facilitate a meditation on the ambiguity of production in the face of destruction: “[I will] sit and knit for a few hours and enjoy it a lot, then suddenly realize that during that time about half a dozen people were injured or killed by a land mine somewhere in the world” (qtd. in Black and Burisch 209). The temporal vulnerability of the materials in Jørgensen’s pink-squared blanket when set in intimate proximity with the hard metallic contours of the tank, brings attention to the precariousness of the body in its encounter with military weaponry. And as participants in Smith’s queer call to arms, Collins’ army of knitters deploy their craft with technical skill, in a “spectacle of slowness [that] offers a time-out to the audience to observe acts of making usually sequestered from the public gaze” (Roberts 253).

In her analysis of Smith’s *Muster* as an example of the “double-edged politics [...] of *affiliating* battle reenactment with decidedly Left-wing art practices” Schneider “questions what it means to *protest* then, now” (*Performing* 2).¹⁵⁴ Schneider is interested in temporality’s sticky slip and slide—the way time and the consequences of its passing (and not passing) “give lie to the Enlightenment mandate that *we head into our futures undetained*” (174).¹⁵⁵ If performative re-doing or reenactments drag time through time, or make visible the past’s present, and if craft’s “spectacle of slowness” creates a time out of time, what of the temporality of undoing, of

¹⁵⁴ Emphasis is Schneider’s.

¹⁵⁵ Emphasis is Schneider’s.

uncrafting, of the unbecoming performance of unproduction?

On the second of Unravel's three-day unsewing circle at Armley I met "Mike" a British military veteran who had served in Bosnia and, at the time of our encounter, was employed as a private contractor for the British Army in Afghanistan. Examining the disassembled uniform Mike spoke of the many "civilian" deaths in Afghanistan we don't hear about in the media. It took me a moment to realize that the civilians Mike was talking about weren't those I usually associate with the term collateral damage. Mike was talking about contracted civilian employees of the British, U.S, and NATO ally militaries. Workers who, according to Mike, are made up of a confounding mix of nationalisms—British, Afghan, Filipino, Turkish, Russian, Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian—an army of dispossessed not-so-former "enemies" reassembled to service a war against a newly constituted enemy.



Figure 31. Carrie, Helene and Kim, Armley Mills (Photo Marlis Schweitzer).

For three days participants and witnesses passed through *Unravel's* Armley Mills *Thread-by-Thread* (un)sewing circle. Some unravelled. Some witnessed. Some spoke. Some were silent. Some simply passed by. They were PSi conference goers who made the trek from Leeds University. They were museum visitors who happened upon *Unravel*. They were members of the museum's staff who spent their breaks with us. And they were individuals who learned of the (un)sewing circle through local arts and craft listservs. Those who participated shared stories, reflections, and associations—about war, about peace, about death, about cloth and thread, about labour and art, about pasts, presents, and possible futures.

Though I hadn't (yet) considered redeploying the threads, many participants and passersby inquired about my plans for the threads. In fact, this is the question I have most frequently been asked since I began unraveling. People offered visions of possible transformations of the threads—a crocheted tablecloth, a nest, friendship bracelets. Members of the knitting circle we shared the museum's sunny craft room with one afternoon, expressed their unanimous (and almost lusty) desire to re-spin the threads into yarn. Others were not so interested in the threads. Mike wondered if I'd considered unraveling with veterans as a way of processing their war experiences. And Katja, who I sat side-by-side with for three hours on *Thread-by-Thread's* final day at Armley, was more interested in what the task of unraveling engendered:

Thread-by-Thread goes far beyond the produced or un-produced threads [...] Its temporality is the time spent un-producing them; the time of being together and being at times alone with your own thoughts; the minute affects, sensations, reflections, conversations that emerge during this time of creative un-production, which re-appropriates (even if temporarily) the cognitive and affective territories

from the dictums of production. (Katja Čičigoj)

I come from a long line of unravelers. Sweaters undone, yarn rewound and re-knit. Wearers—past, present, future—uncannily connected through yarn’s intimate encounter with skin, and through the hands that heroically make, unmake, and make again. So I share with many of *Thread-by-Thread*’s participants and witnesses the impulse to redo, to remake, to construct anew. But I was wary of the symmetry the idea of remaking evokes—as though it is possible to *head into our futures undetained* by the messy geopolitical tangles of past and present. Like Katja, I believe that “undoing an economic and military product” is an endeavour potentially requiring an infinite amount of time—a task both born of and also seeking to resist “the infinite nature of capital’s expansionist logic [which] reveals itself in its most absurd and paradoxical light: we could say that capital needs to produce more wars in order to produce more uniforms in order to produce more wars, etc., etc., ad infinitum” (Čičigoj). Also like Katja, I do not think of *Unravel* and its *Thread-by-Thread* (un)sewing circles as a “road to some other place” but rather as a commitment to a way of passing time in “revolutionary (unproductive) labour” (Čičigoj).

Rather than re-doing, *Unravel* has nurtured my belief in the productive potential of undoing, and unbecoming. Like Mike, I imagine an (un)sewing circle of veterans. Each with a fragmented segment of their own military uniform cradled in their lap. Each engaged in the ambiguous task of pulling thread, after thread, after thread from the fabric’s weave. There is conversation. Reflections are shared. There is also silence—or near silence—when all that can be heard is the hiss of threads as they exit cloth’s weave. I also imagine (un)sewing circles as durational grieving rituals where spouses, children, parents, friends, and comrades of the deceased gather to collectively dismantle their loved one’s uniforms. Sometimes I imagine *Unravel* as a global tactile chorus of lamenters unraveling military uniforms from across a

transnational range of violent nationalisms. Unlike the obliging demands of military commemoration's regimented and scripted rituals of remembrance, *Unravel* does not demand of its chorus of (un)sewers a disavowal of the polyvocality of either affect or narratives associated with death. It does not demand the grief's allegiance to temporal or geopolitical boundaries.

What if, instead of incinerating Colonel Williams' uniforms, people had been invited to take them apart, seam-by-seam, thread-by-thread? What conversations might such an aggravating yet necessarily care-filled task engender? What if, as part of his sentence, Williams was made to sit and engage in the painstaking task of dismantling his own uniforms? What if institutions dedicated to remembering war—like Ottawa's Canadian War Museum—set up participatory tasks, less geared toward entertainment and indoctrination, or “transformation” and “reconciliation” and instead focused on facilitating a difficult return through undoing, through an engagement in the critical process of unbecoming? What might be gained by exposing rather than exorcising the war wounds of not only the nation's privileged warriors, but of all those who are wounded by war? What if, rather than preserving selected trophies from selected wars (while destroying others), we set up dismantling stations as sites of collective reckoning? If, instead of dining in the midst of the LaBretton Gallery's artillery, aircraft and armoured vehicle display, museum guests were invited to take screw-drivers and metal-files in hand? What if the time and resources that we currently invest in constructing and maintaining memorialization's spectacle of our perpetually dehistoricized present, we instead invested in the infinite and haunting labour of unproduction?

From the perspective of military and transnational production rationalities, or of history as a dialectical forward momentum, *Unravel* and its (un)sewing circles are undoubtedly queer endeavours. Through its unbecoming, the plurality of the uniform's assemblage is made visible.

Undone, the uniform is freed from the obligatory reverential rule of military commemoration's homogenising discourse and liberated from the burden of elegiac praise and nationalistic loyalty. Through the tactile corporality of the task of dismantling the uniform, thread's past inter(in)animates the tangle of thread in the political present. Relationships and histories are "temporally dragged"; participants and witnesses hailed, as thread though weave; the fixedness of militarism, of nationalist identities and ideologies, and of binarized masculinized and feminized lexicons unloosed; pasts are unraveled into a present busy with the infinite piece/peace work of unproduction; of unweaving the shroud of militarism's future.



Figure 32. "Threads," Festival of Original Theatre 2012, Toronto (Photo by Isabel Stowell-Kaplan).

From the unloosed uniform's skein-like tendrils came the idea of reusing the threads in an embroidery project. Because of the way I unravelled the uniforms—always pulling the long threads out from the shorter weave—the spiralled threads, the ones that could be easily doubled

or tripled for strength, are too short and can only accommodate a few stitches before the needle requires re-threading.

The teardrop is unrecognizable. It sits like khaki blob embroidered onto the left of the two vertical red strips that frame the flag's snow-white center-panel with its bold red maple-leaf. The tear was to be one of 1,181—each intended to memorialize one of Canada's missing and murdered Aboriginal women whose deaths have been made possible because their lives were rendered disposable, women whose deaths have a history in the violence of Canada's disavowed colonial past.

EPILOGUE

IN CLOSING (AND NOT):

LAMENT FOR THE STAINS OF A NATION



Figure 33. *Flag of Tears* embroidery circle at the opening night of the Feminist Art Conference's *You're Not Here* exhibit at Daniels Spectrum, Toronto, photo by Cassie Scott.

Arguably, few of the world's flags emit the aura of wholesomeness that Canada's does. Inaugurated in 1965, under the reign of Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, Canada's flag with its distinctive (and distinctively friendly) red Maple Leaf replaced the old Red Ensign with its British Union Jack. As then Speaker of the Senate, Honourable Maurice Bourget, announced on the day of the Maple Leaf's inauguration: "The flag is the symbol of the nation's unity, for it, *beyond any doubt, represents all the citizens of Canada without distinction of race, language,*

belief or opinion” (Government of Canada, “National”).¹⁵⁶ Canada’s new flag symbolized the birth of a “new” nation, a Canadian nation unstained by its colonial pasts (British and French), and the dawn of a new era of enlightened multi-cultural democracy.

Like the omissions of Canada’s colonial violence in the Canadian War Museum (CWM), its erasure from the Canadian flag and other national symbols has been integral to the continuing dispossession of Canada’s Aboriginal peoples. During the past thirty years, under the reign of Canada’s friendly Maple Leaf, an “officially” documented 1,181 Aboriginal women have been murdered or gone missing.¹⁵⁷ For years these murders were met with either denial or wholesale indifference on the part of authorities and the general public. It is only because of decades of sustained and painstaking labour on the part of Aboriginal (and ally) community activists, artists, and scholars that the issue of Canada’s murdered and missing Aboriginal women has finally made its way to the arenas of public discourse and consciousness. But despite increased awareness and growing national and international pressures, Prime Minister Stephen Harper continues to refuse calls for an inquiry.

The vision of Canada as a model of an enlightened, equitable, unified, and multi-ethnic community is contested by populations (within and outside of Canada’s borders) whose sovereignty has been, and is, disavowed by past and present actions of the Canadian state (and corporations that operate under the legitimacy of the nation’s laws and transnational trade agreements). Despite these contestations, it is difficult to deny the success of Canada’s flag as a

¹⁵⁶ Emphasis is mine.

¹⁵⁷ I am using the word “official” here to differentiate it from actual or factual. The *fact* that the “official” number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls more than doubled in the course of one year is an indication of the reluctance on the part of Canadian government and law enforcement bodies to disclose information they have on record. The RCMP’s May 2014 release of the newest official figures only came after sustained pressure on the part of Aboriginal community activists. It also came less than half a year after researcher Maryanne Pearce completed her thesis, *An Awkward Silence: Missing and Murdered Vulnerable Women and the Canadian Justice System*. Using public sources, Pearce documented 824 missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, over 300 more than previously recognized “official” figures (Kielburger np).

brand that promotes a purified version of Canada both nationally and internationally. Since its inauguration, the Maple Leaf has played the role of Canada's most beloved and identifiable signifying mascot in an ever-expanding array of national and international public relations performances of pseudo-inclusive Canadian nationalism and geopolitical moral exceptionalism: Who can forget the 2010 Winter Olympics with its broadcast of downtown Vancouver's (Coca-Cola-sponsored) gigantic Maple Leaf billboard, its waving sea of maple-leaf mittens, and its opening ceremony that projected globally an image of Canada as holding its indigenous populations in the highest esteem?

More than any other of military commemoration's assemblage of objects, it is this purified Maple Leaf flag that most unequivocally situates the uniform, and the soldier who wears it, in relationship to the Canadian nation. Sewn onto the uniform (or, more recently, attached via Velcro) the flag is the banner under which the soldier both engages in war and performs their role of ritualized reverentiality in national ceremonies of remembrance. In fact, it is not their service as soldiers that elevate them to the top of Canadian nationalism's hierarchy of grievability—we don't after all mourn the deaths of our ally military casualties—it is their service in the name of Canada, as an enlightened nation of humanitarian militarists. And whereas the uniform needs the flag to signify the state's approval, the flag also needs the uniform to endow the state's spectacles of military memorialization with the affective and totemic power to cast the spell of national melancholic disavowal. For the iconically grievable soldier, service to the nation does end at death.

Despite my initial reluctance, the thought of repurposing *Unravel*'s threads eventually seduced me. I became attached to the idea of their poetic redeployment in a newly constituted memorial project—*Flag of Tears: Lament for the Stains of a Nation*. Unloosed from their service

in the construction of dominant narratives of Canadian humanitarian militarism and settler-nationalism, I would re-enlist the threads to serve in a counter memorial. From their place in the weave of the iconically grievable soldier's uniform, to their haunting presence as a tangled remains left in war's wake, the threads would now be used to embroider tears onto the Maple Leaf—each tear in honour of one of Canada's missing and murdered Aboriginal women. When the threads refused my call, the project was cast into a state of ghostly suspension. I wanted to insist on the poetic and political rightness of the cause. To press the threads into service. Then I thought: *Perhaps this new flag needs new threads. Red—like its leaf. Red—like blood. Red tears to bleed time through time. Red to re-mark and re-mind a forgetful nation of its stains past and present.*

Flag of Tears takes its name from the Highway of Tears—an 800 kilometer stretch of Highway 16 in Northern British Columbia where an estimated forty (mostly Aboriginal) women and girls have gone missing or been found murdered. The name—Highway of Tears—makes a connection between settler-colonialism and its ongoing institutionally legitimizing mechanisms, which have contributed to the conditions under which the violence against Aboriginal women in Canada occurs and is allowed to persist. With “Highway of Tears,” Aboriginal community activists evoke the Trail of Tears, the name given to the death marches of the Cherokee, Muscogee, Seminole, Chickasaw, and Choctaw nations. Just as the forced removal of Aboriginal peoples throughout the U.S. was institutionally legitimated by the passage of the U.S. Indian Removal Act of 1830, the Canadian Indian Act mandated the forced removal of Aboriginal children in Canada from their families and communities. Canada's Indian Act has served as a tool of settler-colonialism and is deeply implicated in the introduction and institutionalization of racialized forms of gender discrimination against (and within) Aboriginal communities. As

critical race and Indigenous studies scholar Amber Dean points out, the Indian Act “led to loss of status for many Aboriginal women (and subsequent loss of land and property rights, including the right to live on reserves)” (191). Their diminished legal status within the community has placed a disproportionate number of Aboriginal women in precarious economic and social circumstances. Combined with the ongoing legacies of colonialism’s use of sexualized violence, this precarity has proved to be a lethal for many Aboriginal women in Canada (and throughout the Americas), and needs to be recognized as part of the ongoing violent effects of settler-colonialism.

Like the Highway of Tears, in naming *Flag of Tears*, I too seek to draw connections between the murders of Aboriginal women and the long history of settler-colonial violence and its institutionalization through the mechanisms of the Canadian nation. But there is another connection. If this dissertation’s point of departure was Highway of Heroes, it seems (disturbingly) fitting that my journey would bring me to the Highway of Tears. Both highways are spaces of commemoration, and both are lined with signs informing those who pass through that they are traversing a memorial landscape. But the similarities end there.

The Highway of Heroes is a site of celebrated public grieving for those elevated to the top of the Canadian nation’s hierarchy of grievability. It is a space where grief spins loss into a national tale of elegiac heroism. Like the CWM and other (archival and repertorial) performances of military Canadian commemoration, the Highway of Heroes constructs a narrative of the Canadian nation as an exemplar of humanitarian militarism and enlightened multicultural inclusivity. It is a narrative that relies on the erasure of Canada’s history of colonial violence in order to sustain the popular settler-colonial myth of Canada as a nation born in innocence. Just as the CWM presents a narrative of “first contact” as a story of mutual alliances

between Canada's already warring First Peoples, and their French allies, the Highway of Heroes memorials are draped in a Canadian flag from which symbols of Canada's violent colonial origins have been purged.

The Highway of Tears reveals a far more unbecoming account of white-settler Canadian nationalism and exposes the violence of national forgetfulness. When the bodies of women are found, sometimes decades after having gone missing, there are no state-supported processions along the Highway of Tears. The roadsides are not lined with citizens gathered to honour these women who died in the ongoing war against Aboriginal women that takes place at the intersection of settler-colonialism's racialized and gendered violence. Their families and communities do not know the condolence of a nation that stands with them in their grief. And whereas at the Highway of Heroes military personnel, police, and other uniformed representatives of national authority stand at attention as the bodies of repatriated soldiers pass, along the Highway of Tears there is a long and notorious history of disregard on the part of law authorities for the missing women and their families.

Flag of Tears began as a solo undertaking. From the start, I had a difficult time getting the project going. Even once I accepted the threads' refusal, and embraced the idea of sewing the tears with red embroidery floss, I couldn't seem to establish a rhythm. Despite my years of sustained engagement with *Impact* and *Unravel*'s task-based meditations, I seemed unable to summon the self-discipline to sit down and embroider on a regular basis. Months would pass between embroidery sessions. I grew critical of my lack of commitment to the project and became increasingly unsettled by how my own behavior might be reflective of the disinterest on the part of Canadian authorities and the general public to the disappearances of Aboriginal

women and girls. Critical of how it was reflective of a return to the collective default mode of settler-nationalism's forgetfulness.

Though I had embroidered several hundred red tears onto the flag, *Flag of Tears* (and its halting process) didn't start to make sense to me until I saw a call for proposals for an International Women's Day exhibit at Daniels Spectrum that was being curated by the Feminist Art Conference (FAC). The show's title—You're Not Here—was designed to address issues of displacement that are so palpable in the gentrification of Toronto's Regent Park area where Daniels Spectrum's fancy digs are both located and implicated. The theme also spoke to the historical and ongoing processes of displacement of indigenous populations across Canada that generations of settler-Canadians are implicated in. I felt called by FAC's call, and began to better understand why I had been so unmotivated to embroider.

Unlike *Impact* and *Unravel*, I had been approaching *Flag of Tears* more as a product than a process. I had a goal—to produce a flag with 1,181 red embroidered tears. FAC's call helped me to remember how this goal was fundamentally at odds with the entire concept of a living memorial as a site of critical reflection and afforded me an opportunity to re-situate the project as an act of collective reckoning. I contacted several feminist performance art colleagues who worked with textiles as a performative medium and asked if they would join me as guest artists. To my great delight, Thea Fitz-James, Paula John, and M. e. Lepp agreed to embroider with me, and to help me host a series of embroidery circles as part of the You're Not Here exhibit. We came together to embroider several times prior to the exhibit and, at the opening launch, facilitated a porous embroidery circle where participants and witnesses visited. Some embroidered. Some watched. Some ran their fingers over the flag's tears. Those who sewed did so with patience and expertise, with clumsy care and awkward unknowing.

Like its khaki predecessor, the tear is a messy abomination amidst the drops of carefully embroidered tears. It's not the sewer's "fault." It's we who failed in our task as the embroidery circle's facilitators. We all stepped away from the table to watch some of the evening's performances. By the time I returned, it was too late to offer guidance. Too late to delicately lay down embroidery's rules of engagement. The sewer went rogue. Their offering is a sloppy explosion of red thread. I am too off-centre to inquire in earnest. Too consumed by the effort to maintain the inviting tenor of my embroidery circle hostess demeanor. All I can manage in the moment is an abrupt assurance to the sewer that their contribution is just as it should be. It's a false offering, one I make despite my inner recoil and the obviousness of the globule-like tear's misalignment with the hundreds of other tears that have already been sewn onto the flag.

At first, it took great will on my part not to "fix" the tear, not to restore the flag's aesthetic order. But, perhaps the sewer has deliberately asserted this ruinous aesthetic. Perhaps they have set out to disrupt the notion that care is necessarily equated with order and precision. Over time my gratitude for the rogue tear grows. It is a reminder that grief demands a messy affective mix, far from the disciplined poetics of military commemoration, or the illusive innocence of Canadian nationalism. Tears—like blood—defy the containment of elegiac order. And like the lamenting women who tear at their hair, who bare and beat at their breasts, grief defies aesthetic constraint.

Flag of Tears is not the flag of a forgetful nation's purified state. It is neither an art object nor an artifact of memorialization. It is a lament. As a participatory living memorial, it hails a polyvocal chorus who come together heads bent to the task of unsettling Canada's dominant

settler-colonial nationalisms. I situate *Flag of Tears* (and this dissertation) as part of a larger counter-memorial journey. As Feldman points out, the notion of reconciliation as a journey that begins with truth but that has no pre-scripted or cathartic reconciliatory conclusion differs significantly from the trauma trope's notion of "working through." To the extent that this journey is a "road to reconciliation," then it is a road that must begin with the unbecoming truth that Canada is a settler-colonial nation—a truth that renders irreconcilable the notion of reconciliation without reparation and redress.

For memory to be a messy labour of critical engagement, I propose that it requires practices of sustained attention and intention. This is especially the case in the context of Canada's more privileged subjects whose imagined national identities have been forged by dominant white-settler narratives of Canadian nationalism with their purifying foreclosures and violently forgetful omissions. My intention with this dissertation has been to denaturalize the performative processes of remembering and forgetting that contribute to the construction of Canada's popularized and intersecting national mythologies of humanitarian militarism (abroad) and multicultural inclusivity (at home). Rather than commemorative celebrations of Canadian exceptionalism, I propose that we need to engage in processes of lament that engender an attitude of hospitable reception for the ghosts of the forgotten (and not) dead of history. With *Impact*, *Unravel*, and *Flag of Tears* I have sought to neither monumentalize the dead, nor the acts of military, colonial and social violence that have resulted in their deaths. Instead, it has been my hope that these memorials generate fissures of possibility, cracks in the horizon of the imagined Canadian nation and its privileged white settler-consciousness.

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