

# Volume 11

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# Minerva

An Undergraduate History Journal

This is the eleventh edition of *Minerva*, a journal representing the strongest fourth-year papers from the Brantford and Waterloo campuses at Wilfrid Laurier University. This year, as we transition to a new structure in our program, you will see essays represent a more diverse set of student writing assignments. This was our last year of linked reading and research seminars (20<sup>th</sup> Century Canada and the Ancient World). Essays by Bagole and Rodgers explore gender history in twentieth-century Canada as the culmination of a full year of work in Canadian history. Gast's exploration of the Stein collection at the British Museum studies the ethics of antiquities collecting.

In two one-semester seminars, students focussed on historiography, with Redford-Haines' essay presenting a short but deep dive into a single work of Renaissance history. Rodgers' essay represents a rich, recent history of the history of indigenous land claims. And in the final one-semester research seminar, Murray's examines the education of wealthy girls through the use of autobiography.

The first section of the journal demonstrates students' engagement with historiography, while the second section demonstrates primary source research.

**Congratulations to our authors!**

## ***Did you know?***

*In Anishinaabe teachings, the Gookooko'oo (owl) holds a complex history and meaning. In more recent studies, indigenous scholars have found that the Gookooko'oo was not a negative omen, but rather beings who disguise themselves as Gookooko'oo to bring bad luck or death.*

*- Wendy Makoons Geniusz, "Gookooko'oog: Owls and Their Role in Anishinaabe Culture," Papers of the Algonquian Conference, 40 (2012).*



[Alancundall99](#), Anishinaabe, birch canoe, Wikimedia Commons.

*Immodest Acts: The Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy* is a shining gem in microhistory. The second book in the series *Studies in the History of Sexuality*, *Immodest Acts* is the series co-editor's standout piece, immediately following the other editor Guido Ruggiero's *Boundaries of Eros*. The series certainly has a strong opener in those two books. *Immodest Acts* examines lesbian sexuality in the Middle Ages through the lens of Benedetta Carlini, its subject. Studying lesbianism in history is a field which Brown finds woefully inadequate in 1989 and continues to be underdeveloped, making her book one of the first of its kind and still a landmark work today.

Though Benedetta's sexuality is perhaps the most important part of the book, it is by no means the only focus. Brown examines everything about convent life in late Renaissance Italy, the life of a mystic, her geographical journey, and other matters so we can fully understand her life. It is for this reason that her actual "Immodest Acts" are saved for the very last portion of the book— that, and they were the allegations that were brought up very last in the actual investigations. The book is divided neatly into sections that set the stage for the social and historical context that Benedetta lived in, gradually getting closer to Benedetta herself and the events that define her existence in history.

The first of these is titled "The Family". In this chapter, Brown aims to introduce the circumstances Benedetta grew up in, to preface her life with the context and a possible explanation for the actions and events within it. There are three main points to this chapter. The first is that Benedetta was loved dearly by her parents, especially her father, who took great pains to ensure she grew up as a holy woman. Within this context we learn much about social norms around raising children in the late Renaissance. For instance, the fact that she was nursed by her own mother instead of a wet nurse implies that her father was especially concerned about her, as babies had a greater survival rate when nursed by their own mother and there was also concern that morality was transferred through breast milk. Brown further speculates that her father may have practiced abstinence due to superstitions at the time about sex "spoiling" breast milk.<sup>1</sup> This may be less of an actual speculation by Brown and more of an informative observation and note about social norms at the time.

Secondly, Brown stresses the significance of the area that Benedetta spent her early life in. The convent she would spend the rest of it in is only seven miles south of her natal home but, as Brown observes in the second chapter, "The impact of Benedetta's journey down the mountain must be measured in psychic and cultural distance."<sup>2</sup> The way Brown phrases it makes it sound like a "small-town girl moves to the big city" type of movie plot. Indeed, some things may stay the same in history, as Benedetta was raised in a more isolated, quiet life in which she stood out in her family as well as in her village, and then was moved to a larger city in which one blended in much more easily. This sets the stage for what some might call Benedetta's attention-seeking behaviour.

Thirdly, Brown notes that supernatural events reportedly began to happen to Benedetta before she joined the convent. There is only a hint of skepticism in Brown's relation of the events; she dutifully explains them and notes the odd semiotic significance of some of them, but makes no further comments. These events of Benedetta's childhood, we later learn, were relayed by Benedetta herself, which may have been helpful to know on a first read through to fully understand the context in which they were told. That aside, it makes for a compelling story. Brown speaks of Benedetta's conversion from fairy-tale heroine to saint, which is engaging but a bit questionable. The way it is phrased implies that Benedetta experienced a sort of pagan Christianization which is certainly not the case due to how devout her parents are. The mountains, as Brown later notes, were seen as pagan holdovers, and reading Brown's analysis of the events makes it feel somewhat like a pagan deity transformed to a Christian saint so they could still be worshipped, like for instance (as it is theorized) St. Brigid. There may be some conflation in Brown's mind where it is not entirely warranted.

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<sup>1</sup> Judith C. Brown, *Immodest Acts: The Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 25.

<sup>2</sup> Brown, *Immodest Acts*, 29.

Despite this, while reading I began to understand what Thomas Cohen meant when he said some historical records “lure the inner writer”<sup>3</sup> Brown’s presentation of the events is quite compelling and I can easily see why a movie was produced about this story. I do not suppose it is particularly often that a movie is produced on a nonfiction, academic work. Perhaps it is because her story is written in part as a story, as a “life” of a saint. Hagiography has long been of interest to lay people and scholars alike. To present her tale as such makes perfect sense and is engaging. For instance, to further fill out Benedetta’s story and origins, Brown often uses language such as “one can imagine.” As mentioned above, I see this less as actual, historical speculation of what happened in Benedetta’s life and more of a general observation of the norms at the time and gentle guidance to the reader to understand them better.

The following chapter, “The Convent”, elaborates on these themes. Benedetta entered a convent of female Theatines, which carry with them a particular history and social context. Since the main convents in Pescia were very particular and expensive, her parents opted to send her to a newer, less prestigious convent. “The marriage market for a bride of Christ was tied to the market for the brides of ordinary men,” writes Brown.<sup>4</sup> The fees were unaffordable for the average family of the middling classes, so this made a cheaper option more desirable. However, Brown argues, this does not make it of lesser quality or “less serious”. She explains that the established convents were seen as elitist and corrupt, and even less religious than the newer ones founded by genuinely passionate religious people.<sup>5</sup>

Benedetta was elected abbess at a surprisingly young age, we discover, and so we enter the chapter called “The Nun.” Benedetta’s miracles and visions are carefully evaluated for their possible sources and inspiration, and semiotic value, and are subjected to a sort of visionary literary criticism and analysis. This further places us within Benedetta’s world, allowing us to see what scriptures and hagiography she would have been familiar with, seeing as how she emulates them intentionally or not in her own visions. Brown explains the context through art history and also the records of books that Benedetta was likely to have read that instructed one how to pray and meditate.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, Brown explains the significance of emotions in the 17th century. This is rather reminiscent of Muir’s explanation of the anger in *Mad Blood Stirring*, in that the existence of the anger alone justified acts of violence. (Muir, xxiv.) The emotion itself, both these authors write, is significant in its own existence, and signifies more than itself. As Brown puts it, they “validated moral truths.”<sup>7</sup> Further validation came from the physical signs that Benedetta later developed such as a mysterious illness and, more importantly, the stigmata, which legitimized her claims. Brown takes a somewhat psychological approach to this, and elaborates more in the notes to this chapter, comparing her illness to the “conversion reaction” theories of Sigmund Freud and diagnoses her with personality disorders.<sup>8</sup> I greatly dislike this as it is entirely ahistorical. However, I cannot criticize it too harshly as once again it is absent from the main text and Brown includes plenty of thoughtful analysis on how we ought not to impose our current views of mental illness upon the people of the past alongside it.

Benedetta began giving sermons as an angel, an act of gender subversion with important implications. As seen later on, Benedetta used her male personas to be heard and respected more effectively, such as when she spoke as Jesus, giving orders to the nuns around her when they were not listening to her rule as abbess and praising herself as them. It was this lack of humility that was perhaps the most problematic for her contemporaries. Though it was not until much later that it was actually seen as problematic, in the early stages she was greatly believed and still remained popular with ordinary people after her death. It was the church and institutional authorities that could not allow her to continue on. She then became the subject of two distinct investigations into the veracity of her claims.

I appreciate how the text is respectful of the viewpoint of the people of the seventeenth century and does not accuse them of lying. It would have been extraordinarily easy to imply that the accounts of Benedetta’s visions

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas V. Cohen, *Love & Death in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 6.

<sup>4</sup> Brown, *Immodest Acts*, 34.

<sup>5</sup> Brown, *Immodest Acts*, 38.

<sup>6</sup> Brown, *Immodest Acts*, 47.

<sup>7</sup> Brown, *Immodest Acts*, 49.

<sup>8</sup> Brown, *Immodest Acts*, 184-185.

that Bartolomea gave were an agreed-upon story, and that she was covering for her, but Brown does not do that. Instead Brown takes pains to tell Benedetta's story with dignity. It is only in the second investigation that her story truly begins to fall apart. Being investigated by the papal nuncio, writes Brown, brought forth a different result because "Unlike the Theatine nuns, or Father Ricordati, or Monsignor Cecchi, they had nothing to gain from Benedetta's claims."<sup>9</sup> Since the records of the investigation are Brown's main primary sources, this is the most in-depth part of the book. Though the records are incomplete, Brown attempts to recreate what is lost and fill in the blanks with records from other, similar cases to recreate the story as well as possible.<sup>10</sup>

Brown remarks on how good the memory of the nuns who attended Benedetta's wedding were and calls it "a tribute to the memories of the nuns and to the importance attached to ritual in seventeenth-century life."<sup>11</sup> Thinking back to *Giovanni and Lusanna*, however, in which the imperfect memory of the wedding's attendants was actually taken as a sign that the wedding did take place, one wonders what the difference is.<sup>12</sup> Of course, a secret wedding and a very public wedding of an already popular nun to Christ are not the same thing, but it invites thought regardless.

It takes until the very end for the nature of Benedetta's immodest acts, as it were, to be revealed. Most notable to Brown is how Benedetta interacted with and conformed to gender norms in the structures that they were understood in the seventeenth century despite how socially unacceptable they were. Brown theorizes that Benedetta was given a comparatively light sentence because, firstly, she never used "material instruments," which was considered the greatest of sins because it implied a symbolic change of gender, that is to say, a woman trying to become a man. This is representative of what Brown calls "phallogentric" sexuality, in which all notions of sexuality revolved around the male phallus, which is why lesbian sexuality was so hard for them to wrap their heads around.<sup>13</sup> Though a phallus was not present, Benedetta's sexual acts still stunned and disgusted them, evident by the scribe's handwriting becoming erratic while transcribing them. Her sentence, argues Brown, more closely reflects those of mystics who were discovered to be frauds.<sup>14</sup>

One finds a real mirror to their relationship in the history of pederasty, in which Benedetta was teaching Bartolomea to read and write as a cover for sexual favours, but also her gender subversion while roleplaying as the angel reminds one of how adolescent boys were allowed to exist in a framework of androgyny and sexual submission, as explored in *Forbidden Friendships* by Michael Rocke, another book in the *Studies in the History of Sexuality* series. As Rocke puts it, "To take the "passive" role in sex with a male, however, was deemed "feminine" and dishonorable, but since this role was in effect limited to the biological period of adolescence it was only a temporary wayward turn on a boy's path to full-fledged manhood."<sup>15</sup> Benedetta, likewise, took on a male form in order to be sexually dominant, but this was not the same subversion of sexual dynamics that was widely understood between males because it was not characterized by being temporary and therefore excusable.

Brown waits until the notes at the end of the book to speak more on the scholarship and discourse around history, sexuality, and sexual identity. She acknowledges that the term lesbian is imperfect but convenient for the purpose of the book, referring to recent work done in the field of the study of sexuality such as that of Adrienne Rich.<sup>16</sup> Foucault is also mentioned as a matter of course. She disputes the claim that one should not use the term homosexual to describe men before the term's inception, and brings up Ruggiero's claim that a homosexual subculture existed in Venice as evidence.<sup>17</sup> This is unsurprising, considering the two are co-editors. The claim is of course problematic but not particularly relevant, as Brown does not imply a lesbian subculture existed, and male homosexuality is scarcely mentioned in the text.

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<sup>9</sup> Brown, *Immodest Acts*, 105.

<sup>10</sup> Brown, *Immodest Acts*, 80.

<sup>11</sup> Brown, *Immodest Acts*, 91.

<sup>12</sup> Gene Brucker, *Giovanni and Lusanna: Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 21.

<sup>13</sup> Brown, *Immodest Acts*, 6.

<sup>14</sup> Brown, *Immodest Acts*, 135.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Rocke, *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence* (London: Oxford University Press, 1998), 13.

<sup>16</sup> Brown, *Immodest Acts*, 172.

<sup>17</sup> Brown, *Immodest Acts*, 173.

As Brown ends her book reflecting that Benedetta made her mark on history regardless of her opponents, so too shall I remark on her brilliance. One cannot help but think that if she was born a mere few centuries earlier she would have been more accepted as a mystic. Certainly, many medieval holy women made much more extravagant claims, fit much less into social norms, and faced little consequence. One can easily blame the Protestant Reformation and Counter-Reformation for making the church tighten its grip on anything that did not fit within the social norm. Now was the time for conformity, not for new spiritual leaders. In that way, I am glad that we have our own hagiography in this book, the life, or *vita*, of a lesbian nun.

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Aberdeen Bestiary – Owl, 1542, Wikimedia Commons.

In 1988, Frank Cassidy and Norman Dale published *After Native Claims? The Implications of Comprehensive Claims Settlements for Natural Resources in British Columbia* through the Institute for Research on Public Policy. The book is an attempt to understand the "underlying issues which surround the comprehensive claims question so that there will be greater certainty about what is at stake and greater insight into how native claims might be resolved."<sup>1</sup> In order to address these concerns, the authors described the history of dispossession of Indigenous nations, briefly outlining the perceived decline of once-thriving cultures as their populations were depleted by disease, alcohol, and violence.<sup>2</sup> They assert that it was "not surprising" that the settlers sought profit on arrival in what is now British Columbia, and state that Indigenous nations had been asserting their claim to the land "almost from the moment that it became obvious [...] that the newcomers were no longer just trading their furs [...] and sailing away."<sup>3</sup> Outlining the early, localized efforts by nations from as early as the 1880s to assert their claims, to the 1910s and the establishment of organizations like the Nisga'a Land Committee or the Allied Tribes of British Columbia, to the 1926 Amendment to the Indian Act that prohibited fundraising for land claims, and finally to 1951 with the removal of this prohibition and the ensuing rise in claims, the authors establish the long history of Indigenous land claims in British Columbia. Concluding their brief history of Indigenous claims, the authors state, "[i]t is necessary to bear in mind that the comprehensive claims issue is not likely to go away. It has not disappeared in over a century. The native peoples will not die out, as once was thought, nor will their commitment to their position."<sup>4</sup> They also capture the urgency of the land claims issue; there was a very pressing concern for many nations that while they had been negotiating with the federal or provincial governments, a competing interest would infringe on their territory, leaving them alienated from traditional lands.<sup>5</sup>

Despite this not being a traditional history—indeed, most of the book anticipates the possible future of land claims—it is an apt starting point to begin a study of the topic. The "history" of land claims in Canada is not a finished chapter in the nation's past; for many, if not most, communities, the process of having their territory recognized is an ongoing issue. This means that many of the authors this paper will cover were writing about an issue that was both part of the past and incredibly, urgently present. This survey of the historiography of land claims seeks to examine how academic scholarship on the topic has changed over time. The progression of the study of land claims has not been a straightforward process, as resurgences in conservative scholarship appear every couple of years despite the advancement of anticolonial, Indigenous-centered scholarship. Despite these conservative interventions, the latter style of scholarship has grown exponentially and outweighs the former. In the latter half of the twenty-tens and into the twenty-twenties, scholars began writing their histories with the specific goal of reconciliation in mind, creating a form of activism motivated history that actively seeks to impact Canadian policy and the attitudes of Canadian individuals.

One of the earliest books on the topic is *Aboriginal Land Claims in Canada: A Regional Perspective*, edited by Ken Coates, who specializes in Indigenous governance.<sup>6</sup> The book is a collection of essays by eight authors examining Indigenous land claims by region, with the final two chapters being on Métis claims and the Oka crisis and federal land claims. Contributors come from a variety of backgrounds, all of whom had spent careers focusing on

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<sup>1</sup> Frank Cassidy and Norman Dale, *After Native Claims? The Implications of Comprehensive Claims Settlements for Natural Resources in British Columbia* (Lantzville, BC and Halifax, NS: Oolichan Books and The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1988), viii.

<sup>2</sup> Cassidy and Dale, *After Native Claims?* 5.

<sup>3</sup> Cassidy and Dale, *After Native Claims?* 5-6.

<sup>4</sup> Cassidy and Dale, *After Native Claims?* 8.

<sup>5</sup> Cassidy and Dale, *After Native Claims?* 13.

<sup>6</sup> "Ken Coates: Expert Overview," Macdonald-Laurier Institute (MLI), November 8, 2023, <https://macdonaldlaurier.ca/cm-expert/ken-coates/>.



Indigenous history in some way, though of these eight academics, only two, David T. McNab and Sakej Henderson, were Indigenous.

In the introduction, Coates outlines the controversial nature of land claims in Canada, noting that the government and most of Canada's non-Indigenous population were opposed to "the very concept of aboriginal land settlements."<sup>7</sup> Coates notes that calls for assimilation as an answer to economic hardship faced by Indigenous communities were legitimized by the Canadian government in the form of the White Paper.<sup>8</sup> Coates notes that all provinces and territories were facing various Indigenous land claims, illustrating how "pervasive, and how crucial," the issue had become in Canada.<sup>9</sup> He states that the purpose of the study was to bring the issue of land claims into focus, and that a national point of view was less helpful than a regional perspective which highlighted the complexity of the process.<sup>10</sup> Coates, therefore, sought to include a variety of experts well versed with the differences in Indigenous identity and their specific claims. For example, Sakej Henderson, one of the only two Indigenous scholars on this project, is himself Chickasaw and Cheyenne, is married to well-known Mi'kmaw scholar, Marie Battiste, and he has served as a constitutional advisor for the Mi'kmaq Nation and the National Indian Brotherhood in the late twentieth century.<sup>11</sup> Frank Cassidy, who wrote the chapter on land claims in BC, had written *After Native Land Claims?* at the end of the previous decade, bringing his expertise to this edited collection.

Similarly to Cassidy and Dale, Coates identifies the urgency of the situation, stating, "the cost and pain of delay [in settling claims] is borne disproportionately by the First Nations."<sup>12</sup> Both texts share another similarity as well, in identifying resource management and extraction as being at the heart of land claims issues, asserting that while Indigenous nations fought with the government for recognition, their resources were likely to be extracted without recompense by a third party.<sup>13</sup> Cassidy and Dale were attempting, with their book, to carve a path forward for the land claims process and assuage concerns about what the settlement of comprehensive claims would mean for all parties, and Coates states plainly that land claims had been regarded as a "competition"<sup>14</sup> between Indigenous Peoples and settlers, and that his goal was to introduce and clarify the topic. Both works, seemingly, are meant for non-Indigenous audiences to make them feel more comfortable with the land claims process.

Not all books published in this early period were focused on acclimatizing settlers to the topic, however. In 1994, Antonia Mills published *Eagle Down Is Our Law: The Witsuwit'en Law, Feasts and Land Claims*, which was adapted from the report she wrote in 1987 on behalf of the Wet'suwet'en in the *Delgamuukw* case.<sup>15</sup> The reason for the report drives Mills' thesis; *Delgamuukw v. the Queen* was meant to determine who held jurisdiction over the traditional territories of the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en peoples, whether they had maintained their hold through the matrilineal succession system decided through potlatches and therefore the territory itself, or if the Canadian colonial system had eclipsed this authority.<sup>16</sup> As Mills acknowledges, the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en had never acknowledged any other authority over their territory and no treaty ceded their territory.<sup>17</sup> Mills describes how the Canadian government argued that it was Crown land, "land which belongs to the Queen, by the colonial right of sovereign nations to claim unoccupied (!?) land,"<sup>18</sup> applying principle of *terra nullius* to obviously inhabited territories.

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<sup>7</sup> Ken Coates, "Introduction," in *Aboriginal Land Claims in Canada: A Regional Perspective* ed. Ken Coates (Mississauga: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1992), 1.

<sup>8</sup> Coates, "Introduction," 2.

<sup>9</sup> Coates, "Introduction," 3.

<sup>10</sup> Coates, "Introduction," 4.

<sup>11</sup> "James (Sa'ke'j) Youngblood Henderson," Centre for International Governance Innovation, accessed April 3, 2025, <https://www.cigionline.org/people/james-sakej-youngblood-henderson/>.

<sup>12</sup> Coates, "Introduction," 5.

<sup>13</sup> Coates, "Introduction," 5, and Cassidy and Dale, *After Native Claims?* 13.

<sup>14</sup> Coates, "Introduction," 5.

<sup>15</sup> Antonia Curtze Mills, *Eagle Down Is Our Law: The Witsuwit'en Law, Feasts and Land Claims* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 1994), 3.

<sup>16</sup> Mills, *Eagle Down Is Our Law*, 5.

<sup>17</sup> Mills, *Eagle Down Is Our Law*, 5.

<sup>18</sup> Mills, *Eagle Down Is Our Law*, 5.

Unlike the works by Cassidy and Dale and Coates et al., Mills was explicitly focused on asserting Indigenous jurisdiction over the land itself, not only the resources within it. Her assertion of Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en sovereignty was based on a history of Wet'suwet'en legal institutions, particularly the potlatch feast, which "remains central to Witsuwit'en government, law, social structure, and world view."<sup>19</sup> At the potlatch ceremony, people are given their titles and the authority over associated territory, and "demonstrate that such jurisdiction is based on a deep appreciation of the spiritual qualities of the land, the animals, and the holder of the titles."<sup>20</sup> During the fifteen months that she resided with the Wet'suwet'en in order to prepare her expert testimony, Mills attended several feasts. One was an All-Clan Feast, which was to "clarify and to validate [...] the outer boundary of the Witsuwit'en territory."<sup>21</sup> This, she said, was done in accordance with traditional law, rather than calling a meeting.

Mills also testified that although we have extensive biological, geographical, anthropological, linguistic, archaeological, and ethnographic evidence of habitation on Wet'suwet'en lands, we also have the *kungax* (oral tradition) of the Wet'suwet'en.<sup>22</sup> The *kungax* are not shared lightly, but rather, "the Witsuwit'en and other North American Native peoples are carefully trained in the learning of their oral tradition."<sup>23</sup> Mills' testimony played a critical role in the *Delgamuukw* case, which, at this time, had not ruled in their favour. In the epilogue, which she wrote as an addendum to the original court report, Mills states that the Wet'suwet'en and Gitksan people knew they were taking their case to a "foreign court, and that in doing so they were laying out much of themselves."<sup>24</sup> This acknowledgement of the Canadian courts as foreign is an assertion of Indigenous sovereignty over land and self, which has become normalized in the intervening decades, but stands in stark contrast to the ideas advanced in Coates et al. and Cassidy and Dale about cooperation between Indigenous nations and settler institutions.

Another of the major landmark cases in Canadian land claims was *Calder et al. v. Attorney-General of British Columbia*. The *Calder* case predated *Delgamuukw* by nearly two decades, first brought before the court in 1967.<sup>25</sup> *Calder* was significant because it recognized legal Aboriginal title in Canada, and even though it was technically a defeat for the plaintiffs, it laid the groundwork for successive claims cases, such as *Delgamuukw*.<sup>26</sup> *Let Right Be Done: Aboriginal Title, the Calder Case, and the Future of Indigenous Rights* is a collection of legal and historical essays written in 2007, thirty four years after the Supreme Court handed down their ruling. Christina Godlewska and Jeremy Webber, both legal scholars, contributed the first essay, "The *Calder* Decision, Aboriginal Title, Treaties, and the Nisga'a," outlining the history of the case, the significance of the decision, and the purpose of the book. They also described what Aboriginal title is, stating that, "*Calder* was not about a land 'claim.' It was another step in the assertion of their right to the lands they had never ceased to occupy and defend."<sup>27</sup> They argued that *Calder* introduced the existence of Indigenous title into Canadian jurisprudence. Before that, title was not recognized.<sup>28</sup>

The focus on resource sharing evident in the first two works is absent from *Let Right Be Done*; while Indigenous nations such as the Nisga'a were, certainly, concerned with resource management on their territories, the purpose of scholarship on the topic has shifted to focus on the right to those lands themselves and the sovereignty of the people upon them, as evident by Godlewska and Webber's above assertion that the lands had never been ceded. The basis for Aboriginal title is the Royal Proclamation of 1763, wherein the British Empire indicated how the settlement and acquisition of territory was to occur in North America. As Godlewska and Webber note, the 1763 Royal Proclamation was "a law of the interface, which recognized First Nations' entitlement to their lands and

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<sup>19</sup> Mills, *Eagle Down Is Our Law*, 43.

<sup>20</sup> Mills, *Eagle Down Is Our Law*, 43.

<sup>21</sup> Mills, *Eagle Down Is Our Law*, 44.

<sup>22</sup> Mills, *Eagle Down Is Our Law*, 72.

<sup>23</sup> Mills, *Eagle Down Is Our Law*, 72.

<sup>24</sup> Mills, *Eagle Down Is Our Law*, 177.

<sup>25</sup> Tanisha Salomons, "Calder Case," Indigenous Foundations, 2009, [https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/calder\\_case/](https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/calder_case/).

<sup>26</sup> Christina Godlewska and Jeremy Webber, "The *Calder* Decision, Aboriginal Title, Treaties, and the Nisga'a," in *Let Right be Done: Aboriginal Title, the Calder Case, and the Future of Indigenous Rights* eds. Hamar Foster, Heather Raven & Jeremy Webber (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 3.

<sup>27</sup> Godlewska and Webber, "The *Calder* Decision," 1.

<sup>28</sup> Godlewska and Webber, "The *Calder* Decision," 3.



established an orderly means for those lands' acquisition. It was confined to relations between peoples, not purporting to regulate Aboriginal patterns of landholding."<sup>29</sup> Aboriginal title has, however reluctantly, continued to be recognized by the rights to the land "unless and until this authority is extinguished by valid government action."<sup>30</sup> Godlewska and Webber go on to outline the history of treaty making and Aboriginal title since 1763, and the eventual twentieth century shift to regarding First Nations as irritating holdovers from centuries past, not as treaty partners.<sup>31</sup>

*Let Right Be Done* and *Eagle Down is Our Law* are not only both more concerned with Indigenous sovereignty over their land compared to Cassidy and Dale and Coates et al. but are also overtly critical of Canadian policy regarding Indigenous Peoples and rights. Godlewska and Webber explicitly outline the connections between Canadian policy and the economic, social, and cultural degradation of Indigenous cultures, and indicate the hypocrisy of Canadian policy.<sup>32</sup> Mills, for her part, took a more overtly disparaging tone, with statements such as, "[t]he government has somehow managed to convince itself that this [clearcutting] is proper forestry management."<sup>33</sup> This scepticism of Canadian colonial policies has become normalized for scholars, but in the late twentieth and early years of the twenty-first centuries, this was much less the norm in the literature.

This shift to focussing on Indigenous sovereignty and perspectives was not an entirely straightforward progression, however. In 2010, Tom Flanagan, Christopher Alcantara, and André Le Dressay published *Beyond the Indian Act: Restoring Aboriginal Property Rights*. Their thesis was that transition to fee simple property rights would address poverty amongst First Nations.<sup>34</sup> They state,

Broadly speaking, the political left in Canada believes in aboriginal self-government, while the political right emphasizes the integration of native peoples into the mainstream of Canadian life. Each seems to have political veto power over major innovations, so that nothing big seems to get done. But our proposal should appeal to both left and right: First Nations will get the underlying title to their land, which is an important part of self-government; but they will also find it easier to adopt individual property rights for their landholdings, which will facilitate their participation in the Canadian economy. Is it too much to hope that the left and right can put a little water in their wine and come together on a proposal like this, which gives each of them something corresponding to their worldview?<sup>35</sup>

This notion is a stark contrast to the perspective held by Mills and the authors of *Let Right Be Done*. Flanagan and his coauthors assert that this move, which they call the First Nations Property Ownership Act (FNPOA), would improve the economic wellbeing of people living on reserves.<sup>36</sup> This quote indicates that the legislation would satisfy the political left because it would represent a shift to self-government, however, a true acknowledgement of autonomy would be given without regard to the Canadian political landscape, and certainly without the goal of "integrating" (read— assimilating) First Nations into the Canadian body politic. This line of thinking is much more in keeping with the works of Coates et al. and Cassidy and Dale, who were concerned with collaboration between First Nations and the Canadian government and industry to manage resources on traditional Indigenous territories. Furthermore, this assertion that the FNPOA would satisfy the political left and right misses something crucial in that it ignores the wishes and demands of First Nations themselves.

There are other issues with this book. Flanagan alleges that egalitarianism, the basis for many Indigenous property systems of collective property rights, is a biological impossibility: "According to the famous metaphors of Richard Dawkins, all organisms are 'survival vehicles' for the 'selfish genes' within. [...] Property is part of the extended

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<sup>29</sup> Godlewska and Webber, "The Calder Decision," 11.

<sup>30</sup> Godlewska and Webber, "The Calder Decision," 12.

<sup>31</sup> Godlewska and Webber, "The Calder Decision," 15.

<sup>32</sup> Godlewska and Webber, "The Calder Decision," 15.

<sup>33</sup> Mills, *Eagle Down Is Our Law*, 178.

<sup>34</sup> Tom Flanagan, Christopher Alcantara, and André Le Dressay, *Beyond the Indian Act: Restoring Aboriginal Property Rights* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 5.

<sup>35</sup> Flanagan et al., *Beyond the Indian Act*, 7-8.

<sup>36</sup> Flanagan et al., *Beyond the Indian Act*, 29.

phenotype of human beings.”<sup>37</sup> However, traditional Indigenous property systems functioned for millennia before the infringement of settler colonialism, and, in theory, could again without the persistent attempts at integrating or assimilating First Nations undermining their autonomy. Shiri Pasternak, who studies “interdisciplinary approaches to Indigenous jurisdiction, resource economies, and Crown-First Nations’ relations,”<sup>38</sup> criticized the book for its narrow focus and Western capitalist perspective, stating, “[r]egaining jurisdiction over their lands is the missing link here, not property rights.”<sup>39</sup> Although Flanagan, Alcantara and Le Dressay do highlight the critical socio-economic disparities facing Indigenous Peoples, their focus on integrating them into Canadian society rather than the reinforcement of Indigenous social and legal systems hampers their analysis.

In contrast, John S. Long’s *Treaty No. 9: Making the Agreement to Share the Land in Far Northern Ontario in 1905*, also published in 2010, presented a perspective more in keeping with the growing body of Indigenous-focused perspectives. He utilizes the “reading against the grain” technique that many historians employ when consulting colonial primary sources to reconstruct the past. He notes that colonial authorities tended to view their own culture as inherently superior to the Indigenous ones they encountered.<sup>40</sup> Using the example of Samuel Stewart’s comment in his journal that the Indigenous individuals he encountered were essentially naked, Long demonstrates how this is a symptom of a colonial mindset, and that really, the people he’d encountered were probably dressed in animal skins that did not meet with Stewart’s understanding of civility, especially as the role of these colonial administrators was to “propagandize in favour of the government’s handling of relations with First Nations.”<sup>41</sup> An important part of Long’s project was to convey to readers exactly what appeared in the treaty documents, including the private journals of the commissioners. This included making note of things added at a later date, and attempted erasures that he was able to decipher, which he added into the text with a legend to denote these edits.<sup>42</sup>

Long’s awareness of colonial perspectives, and the effect that they had on the conveyance of the treaty meanings, is integral to his study. He warns his readers that the commissioners may have been misleading with their writing, stating that their “ethnocentric gazes” had an impact on how Indigenous Peoples were portrayed, and how the terms of the treaty were described.<sup>43</sup> More important, however, was the discovery of Daniel George MacMartin’s journal. He was the third commissioner involved in crafting the treaty, and the inclusion of his perspective alters the historical record significantly, acknowledging the inconsistencies between what was promised, what was written, and what was told.<sup>44</sup> While Mills’ study of oral history is integral to the study of Indigenous history, Long demonstrates that thorough, critical analysis of colonial primary documents is also necessary.

Michael Asch, in his 2014 monograph *On Being Here to Stay: Treaties and Aboriginal Rights in Canada*, similarly approaches colonial documents to uncover the nature of treaties. Asch’s book is driven by the question of what gives settlers the right to stay in Canada— “We take for granted the idea that we are all here to stay because we are Canadians and Canada has sovereignty and jurisdiction over these territories. But that just begs the question: If this is so, then how did Canada gain the authority to govern lands that were already being governed by others, and if not, what then is the basis for our right to be here to stay?”<sup>45</sup> He states his own personal belief, informed by the 1960 United Nations Declaration of De-colonization, is that it is legally and morally wrong to “move onto lands belonging to others without first obtaining their permission.”<sup>46</sup> With this stance guiding him, Asch set out to understand, for himself and for all those of settler descent, what it means to be here to stay while recognizing that

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<sup>37</sup> Flanagan et al., *Beyond the Indian Act*, 17.

<sup>38</sup> “Shiri Pasternak,” Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU), <https://www.torontomu.ca/criminology/people/faculty-directory/pasternak-shiri/>.

<sup>39</sup> Shiri Pasternak “Beyond the Indian Act: Restoring Aboriginal Property Rights,” *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 30, no. 2 (2010): 424-425.

<sup>40</sup> John S. Long, *Treaty No. 9: Making the Agreement to Share the Land in Far Northern Ontario in 1905*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010), 7.

<sup>41</sup> Long, *Treaty No. 9*, 7.

<sup>42</sup> Long, *Treaty No. 9*, 111-115.

<sup>43</sup> Long, *Treaty No. 9*, 111-115.

<sup>44</sup> Long, *Treaty No. 9*, 351.

<sup>45</sup> Michael Asch, *On Being Here to Stay: Treaties and Aboriginal Rights in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 4.

<sup>46</sup> Asch, *On Being Here to Stay*, vii.

the land was already inhabited, concluding that the path forward rested in the treaties signed by Canada and Indigenous nations. Asch's book comes closest to merging the theoretical frameworks of Euro-Canadian centric writers like Coates et al. and Cassidy and Dale with the Indigenous-centric perspectives of Mills and the authors of *Let Right Be Done*. Asch's goal with this book was to demonstrate how settlers and Indigenous Peoples could co-exist while honouring Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty.

This challenge of reconciling settler presences with Indigenous rights is continued in *From Recognition to Reconciliation: Essays on the Constitutional Entrenchment of Aboriginal and Treaty Rights*, edited by Patrick Macklem and Douglas Sanderson. Jeremy Webber's essay "We Are Still in the Age of Encounter: Section 35 and Canada Beyond Sovereignty," best represents the collection in relation to the matter at hand. As the title of this essay suggests, by 2015, studies relating to land claims and Indigenous rights were firmly linked to conversations of sovereignty. Like Asch, Webber is attempting to understand whether or not Canadian sovereignty precludes Indigenous sovereignty.<sup>47</sup> Acknowledging that conversations about Indigenous rights and sovereignty together in regards to section 35 of the 1982 Constitution Act are unusual, he goes on to state, "[t]he jurisprudence has been preoccupied with the recognition of Aboriginal title to land, the nature and incidents of that title, how Aboriginal title must be proven, regulated, or extinguished, and the possibility of Indigenous peoples holding lesser rights to resources."<sup>48</sup> This is very much in keeping with the older styles of scholarship concerned with jurisdiction over land and resources. However, Webber also notes that Indigenous assertions of sovereignty and the scholarship of it have been long present.<sup>49</sup> If anything, then, this essay demonstrates a transition in the wider acknowledgement of sovereignty in discussions relating to Indigenous rights. Webber, in identifying the conversation as "unusual", suggests that this movement has been fringe; his acknowledgment then seems to function as a legitimization of that conversation into the mainstream.

This mainstreaming of scholarship connecting land claims, Indigenous rights, and sovereignty has remained prevalent in Canadian scholarship since about the mid-twenty-tens. An example of this is Susan Hill's book *The Clay We Are Made Of: Haudenosaunee Land Tenure on the Grand River*. Hill (Wolf Clan, Mohawk Nation) relies on centuries of Haudenosaunee political, legal, and cultural philosophy to demonstrate their continuing sovereignty. She outlines the various failings of Britain and later Canada to uphold treaty obligations to the Haudenosaunee. One such example followed the breaking of the Caledonia Dam, causing the flooding of the Grand River, which revealed that the land that had been lost was because of the DIA negotiating on their behalf, and the Haudenosaunee were never compensated for the use of the land or its loss.<sup>50</sup> Incidents such as this run throughout the book and Haudenosaunee history.

Similarly to Long, Hill argues that Western history has long left Indigenous Peoples as a backdrop to "the real history of the continent," which is demonstrated through colonial accounts.<sup>51</sup> To counter this, the permeation of Haudenosaunee worldview is integral to the book; Hill demonstrates that the Haudenosaunee are deeply connected to their land through the Creation narrative, which situates the land as their mother.<sup>52</sup> Hill's book is demonstrative of the infusion of Indigenous worldviews into academia, symbolically continuing the work of *Delgamuukw*—the case ruled that oral tradition could be used in evidence in court, and now is being used as evidence in history. This infusion is a consequence of the rising number of Indigenous scholars reshaping the field.

As much as the conversation around land claims and Indigenous rights had turned to issues of sovereignty, the related topic of resource management also remains relevant, such as in David Calverley's 2018 book *Who Controls*

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<sup>47</sup> Jeremy Webber, "We Are Still in the Age of Encounter: Section 35 and Canada Beyond Sovereignty," in *From Recognition to Reconciliation: Essays on the Constitutional Entrenchment of Aboriginal and Treaty Rights* ed. Patrick Macklem and Douglas Sanderson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 63.

<sup>48</sup> Webber, "We Are Still in the Age of Encounter," 64.

<sup>49</sup> Webber, "We Are Still in the Age of Encounter," 66.

<sup>50</sup> Susan Hill, *The Clay We Are Made Of: Haudenosaunee Land Tenure on the Grand River*, (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2017), 21.

<sup>51</sup> Hill, *The Clay We Are Made Of*, 2.

<sup>52</sup> Hill, *The Clay We Are Made Of*, 21.

*the Hunt?: First Nations, Treaty Rights, and Wildlife Conservation in Ontario, 1783-1939*. His text attempts to grapple with the complicated question of Indigenous rights to hunting and fishing, specifically relating to Anishinaabeg treaty rights and the attempts by the Ontario Game and Fish Commission and the Department of Indian Affairs to erode those rights.<sup>53</sup> Acknowledging the role of racism and paternalism in these processes, Calverley asserts that economic opportunity ultimately drove the Game Commission and DIA; when the provision was made that the Anishinaabeg could continue to hunt as they had “heretofore been in the habit of doing,” wildlife did not present a major economic opportunity.<sup>54</sup> This changed, however, and “the Robinson Treaties and the Anishinaabeg posed a legal and constitutional threat to the provincial government and the liberal principles of liberty, private property, and equality.”<sup>55</sup> This book demonstrates the struggle of the Anishinaabeg to retain the liberties guaranteed to them by their treaties, and the Canadian attempt to extinguish those liberties. Although not directly about sovereignty or land claims, the text demonstrates the historic struggle over treaties and the many faces that struggle takes. As much as jurisdiction over the land itself is integral to Indigenous rights, the ability to pursue traditional practices upon that land remains relevant today.

The 2019 book *No Surrender: The Land Remains Indigenous* by Sheldon Krasowski continues the work done by many of the aforementioned scholars, arguing that treaties negotiated with Indigenous nations did not extinguish Indigenous title, but that “First Nations agreed to share their lands in exchange for the benefits offered by the Canadian government.”<sup>56</sup> Krasowski identifies that older scholarship claimed that these divergent viewpoints have led many scholars to argue that “cultural differences impeded a mutual understanding of the treaty terms,” but ultimately argues against this.<sup>57</sup> Krasowski’s book is as much an argument against the historiography as it is about the historical events themselves. Blending colonial documents with oral histories, Krasowski demonstrates that the numbered treaties were about “peace, commerce, and territory that governed non-Indigenous access to and use of Indigenous Lands.”<sup>58</sup> Krasowski’s book, as he identifies in the preface, was influenced by Asch’s *On Being Here to Stay*; as a person of settler descent, he built built on the idea put forth by Asch that the treaties with Indigenous nations were a “Canadian Magna Carta” that must be the basis of Canada’s legal system.<sup>59</sup> This perspective demonstrates clearly the shift in the scholarship towards a kind of “activist history” that aims to untangle the web of our past to try and build something better through the decolonization of our national history.

Kent McNeil continues this work in *Flawed Precedent: The St. Catherine’s Case and Aboriginal Title*, critically examining how British and Canadian common law, written by and meant to serve upper-and-middle class Anglo-Canadian men, has been used to disadvantage Indigenous nations in Canada.<sup>60</sup> He states that “the common law itself cannot be appropriately applied to colonized peoples for the obvious reason that they have their own cultures, including legal conceptions and norms very different from those of English law.”<sup>61</sup> He also notes that rulings are made within a cultural context and, if racism is a dominant part of that perspective, it will impact the court’s ruling.<sup>62</sup> This acknowledgement of the overt racism and very real impacts of colonialism is something that is becoming more normalized in historical scholarship, and became more prevalent in the latter half of the 2010s.

This shift is likely influenced by the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report in 2015. As Carole Blackburn acknowledges in her book *Beyond Rights: The Nisga’a Final Agreement and the Challenges of Modern Treaty Relationships*, the TRC highlights that without the treaties, Canada lacks all legitimacy, and that a

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<sup>53</sup> David Calverley, *Who Controls the Hunt?: First Nations, Treaty Rights, and Wildlife Conservation in Ontario, 1783-1939* (Vancouver: UBC Press, University of British Columbia, 2018), 4.

<sup>54</sup> Calverley, *Who Controls the Hunt?* 5.

<sup>55</sup> Calverley, *Who Controls the Hunt?* 5.

<sup>56</sup> Sheldon Krasowski, *No Surrender: The Land Remains Indigenous* (Regina: University of Regina, 2019) 1.

<sup>57</sup> Krasowski, *No Surrender*, 1.

<sup>58</sup> Krasowski, *No Surrender*, 3.

<sup>59</sup> Krasowski, *No Surrender*, xvii.

<sup>60</sup> Kent McNeil, *Flawed Precedent: The St. Catherine’s Case and Aboriginal Title* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019), 4.

<sup>61</sup> McNeil, *Flawed Precedent*, 5.

<sup>62</sup> McNeil, *Flawed Precedent*, 5.

healthy relationship between Indigenous Peoples and settlers was based on the historic treaties.<sup>63</sup> Through a critical examination of the Nisga'a Final Agreement, or the Nisga'a Treaty, Blackburn outlines the possibility of reforming these relationships. The book focuses on three things: "the nature and source of self-government, the nature and source of Aboriginal title, and citizenship."<sup>64</sup> Her work adds another dimension to the field of treaty studies, explicitly influenced by the completion of the TRC, which looks to advance the process of reconciliation through historical study.

This shift in historical study, from studying and recording the past to utilizing it to reshape the future, continues to be relevant within many topics relating to Indigenous history. The final two works to be examined here also fit within this stream, these being *Unstable Properties: Aboriginal Title and the Claim of British Columbia* by Patricia Burke Wood and David A. Rossiter, and *The Spaces in Between: Indigenous Sovereignty Within the Canadian State* by Tim Schouls. Wood and Rossiter acknowledge the inherent violence of the colonization of the Indigenous Peoples in what came to be British Columbia, with settlers "[rewriting] the story of the place, absent its depth of history."<sup>65</sup> Identifying the illegitimacy of settlement in the absence of treaty negotiations, mandatory per Britain's own laws via the Royal Proclamation, Wood and Rossiter assert that "settler colonialism in BC has been an effort to unmake Indigenous polities and land use and to remake colonial territory."<sup>66</sup> This overt identification of the violence of colonization and the wrongdoing upon Indigenous nations, speaks to the belief that there can be no reconciliation without truth. Wood and Rossiter, in examining the history of settlement in BC, bring that truth to the forefront.

Schouls similarly seeks to anchor his study in truth. He argues for the recognition and reinstallation of Indigenous sovereignty, stating,

Indigenous peoples say that all this assertion did was impose a form of illegitimate foreign rule upon Indigenous peoples. No one disputes the fact that the imposition of colonial rule has served to curtail, constrain, regulate, and appropriate Indigenous sovereignty. But what many Indigenous peoples generally do not accept is the proposition that their sovereignty was thereby extinguished.<sup>67</sup>

He goes on to argue that while the Canadian state has claimed a position of dominance with regard to sovereignty, Indigenous nations have managed to carve out significant arenas of political power from the state, what he calls "the spaces in between."<sup>68</sup> He identifies the need to confront the legacy of colonialism and move to reconciliation as a driving force of the book,<sup>69</sup> clearly situating it within the newest iteration of the subfield.

The study of land claims and treaties has evolved from discussions surrounding resource management to those of sovereignty, from legal issues to dynamic studies concerned with reconciliation. This shift has not been entirely straightforward; with so much at stake for settler Canada, the acknowledgement of Aboriginal rights or sovereignty is not easily given. Hence, we continue to see works like *Beyond the Indian Act* being published into the twenty-first century, focused on assimilation, and undermining Indigenous rights set forth by treaties. Since 2015 and the release of the TRC Final Report, scholars have been more focused on how the study of treaties can contribute to the process of reconciliation. Many works are also being used to assert the ongoing sovereignty of nations, such as Susan Hill's *The Clay We Are Made Of*. Though Canada itself may not be within a postcolonial period, the scholarship of treaties has seemingly fully embraced such a perspective.

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<sup>64</sup> Blackburn, *Beyond Rights*, 4.

<sup>65</sup> Patricia Burke Wood and David A. Rossiter, *Unstable Properties: Aboriginal Title and the Claim of British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2022) 3.

<sup>66</sup> Wood and Rossiter, *Unstable Properties*, 4.

<sup>67</sup> Tim Schouls, *The Spaces in Between: Indigenous Sovereignty Within the Canadian State* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2024) 3.

<sup>68</sup> Schouls, *The Spaces in Between*, 4.

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Great Horned owl flying from a barn,  
Southern Ontario, 17 October, 2018,  
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## Introduction

The Canadian Girl Guide movement is based on British, colonial, and imperialist ideas of citizenship and ways of life. Since its founding, Girl Guides has perpetuated an ongoing history of colonialism and imperialism in Canadian society. Official Guiding programming has always been founded on the adult anxieties of the time.<sup>1</sup> This paper is focused on Canadian Girl Guide programming throughout the Cold War, however, most primary sources were drawn from Ontario newspapers and thus will narrow the research scope to Ontario. During the Cold War era in Canada, the Guiding movement sought to train its members based on the fears and anxieties of the atomic age. Cold War changes to family life, schooling and government impacted Canadian childhood and thus, the Girl Guide movement itself. The importance of youth and youth organizations during the Cold War made Girl Guides of Canada a vital organization to Cold War Canadian society. While adapting programming to fit the needs of the Cold War world Girl Guides of Canada continued to push colonial programming meant to train young girls to be proper Canadian citizens. This aided in the Canadianizing of non-British immigrants and Indigenous children throughout the twentieth century. Girl Guide programming encouraged girls to take on social, international, and sexual responsibility in Cold War Canada. Towards the end of the Cold War, Girl Guides began to move away from the concept of training young girls in favour of fostering personal experience, development and interests. However, modern-day Guiding shows a complete and purposeful ignorance of their painful history. This demonstrates that Guiding has never been the girl-centred organization it claimed to be and instead an asset to the colonial Canadian project.

## Colonial Context: The Girl Guide Movement

The Girl Guides organization was founded on colonial and imperialist values that can be identified throughout Cold War programming and actions. Girl Guides was created in England by Lord Robert Baden-Powell and his sister Agnes Baden-Powell in 1909. Robert Baden-Powell first founded the Boy Scouts organization in 1907 and agreed to create a sister program for young girls. The Boy Scouts and Girl Guides movements quickly spread across the British Empire, with Canadian troops being founded in 1910.<sup>2</sup> Both Boy Scouts and Girl Guides were founded on the imperialistic and militaristic values of Robert Baden-Powell. Robert Baden-Powell had a long-standing colonial military career, spending most of his life stationed in India, Afghanistan, and Africa. He most notably fought in the Second Boer War. Meanwhile, his sister, Agnes Baden-Powell lived a typical life of a Victorian woman. She never attended formal schooling. Instead, she stayed at home with her sisters and mother, learning the domestic skills that would aid her in her womanly duties. Robert-Aden Powell's military career and properly gendered Victorian family influenced the way he thought about youth and their role in society. His imperialistic and colonial past influenced Girl Guide programming.<sup>3</sup> The Girl Guide Law, written by Lord Baden Powell demonstrates the imperialist values held by the Girl Guide organization. The Law reads:

A Guides honour is to be trusted

A Guide is loyal

A Guides duty is to be useful and help others

A Guide is a friend to all, and a sister to every other Guide. No matter to what creed, country, or class the other belongs

A Guide is courteous

A Guide is a friend to animals

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<sup>1</sup> Kristine Alexander, "Can the Girl Guide speak? The Perils and Pleasures of Looking for Children's Voices in Archival Research," *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures* 4, no. 1 (2012), 133.

<sup>2</sup> Kristine Alexander, *Guiding Modern Girls: Girlhood, Empire, and Internationalism in the 1920s and 1930s*, (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 2017), 39.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander, *Guiding Modern Girls*, 21.

A Guide obeys orders  
A Guide smiles and sings under all difficulties  
A Guide is thrifty  
A Guide is pure in thought, word, and deed<sup>4</sup>

This Guiding law was last revised in 1941, and was officially published and sold by the Girl Guides of Canada well into the 1970s.<sup>5</sup> I will revisit the Guiding Law throughout my argument, demonstrating its influence on the colonial, imperialistic and militaristic values of the Girl Guide and Boy Scout movements.

Robert-Baden Powell based Girl Guide programming on adult fears and anxieties. As the world moved into the twentieth century there were growing concerns about the youth of the British Empire. Following the First World War, many worried that the modern world made men soft and women aggressive.<sup>6</sup> Children of the British Empire were viewed as a national asset as English society "sought to create a generation of standardized, efficient, and properly gendered people."<sup>7</sup> This meant that the British Empire wanted their children to become properly gendered and return to a form of domestic stability following the First World War. This responsibility was placed on girls. As Kristine Alexander discusses in her book *Guiding Modern Girls: Girlhood, Empire and Internationalism in the 1920s and 1930s* girls are often regarded in relation to reproductive futurism. This is the concept in which "modern girls themselves were often seen as less important than the future children they were expected to bear."<sup>8</sup> This means that women and girls represented the future generation of the British Empire and it was vital that they were capable of raising properly gendered and active citizens.<sup>9</sup> This became increasingly important with the rise of the modern girl. The modern girl was "a figure whose cropped hair, short skirts, and active, consumer-oriented lifestyle symbolized all that was exciting, new, and sometimes threatening about life after the First World War."<sup>10</sup> Throughout the twentieth century, many worried that modern girls were lazy and ignorant of their domestic duties. Instead of spending their free time thinking about their future husbands and children, modern girls thought about themselves, often favouring leisure activities and the workforce. This concern in addition to the growing infant mortality rate across the British Empire led many to assume that modern girls were not going to be adequate mothers, caregivers, or wives. The Girl Guide programming was created as a direct response to these adult fears and anxieties following the First World War.<sup>11</sup> Baden-Powell designed Guiding to train girls to be good wives and mothers. It is important to note that this training was based on British ideas of what a good wife and mother should be. Historians can follow this pattern as Canadian society sought to return to a gendered domestic life following the chaos of the Second World War. The fears and anxieties about youth and their ability to be properly gendered and active citizens were ever present in the Cold War world. This demonstrates how the colonial, imperialistic, and militaristic nature followed the Girl Guide movement into the postwar world. This colonial and adult-led foundation of the Girl Guide movement shows how and why Girl Guide programming was created and how it continued to train girls to be properly gendered and capable mothers and wives in Canadian postwar society.

Girl Guides became increasingly important in the postwar years but their vitality often goes unrecognized. In 1945, Ontario Premier George Drew expressed his hope that "every boy or girl in this country belong to the Boy Scouts or Girl Guides."<sup>12</sup> Most Canadians believed that Girl Guides and Boy Scouts were building good citizens.<sup>13</sup> However, Boy Scouts were often regarded as more valuable than Girl Guides. In 1950, Ontario provided \$2,500 of funding to the Boy Scouts but only \$1,000 to the Girl Guides. When questioned about the imbalance of funding, the province

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<sup>4</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, *Girl Guiding: The Official Handbook*, 14th ed. (1918), 50.

<sup>5</sup> Girl Guides of Canada, *Price List 1967* (October 1, 1966), 18.

<sup>6</sup> Alexander, *Guiding Modern Girls*, 22.

<sup>7</sup> Alexander, *Guiding Modern Girls*, 26.

<sup>8</sup> Alexander, *Guiding Modern Girls*, 7.

<sup>9</sup> Alexander, *Guiding Modern Girls*, 26.

<sup>10</sup> Alexander, *Guiding Modern Girls*, 6.

<sup>11</sup> Alexander, *Guiding Modern Girls*, 5-6.

<sup>12</sup> Christopher Greig, *Ontario Boys: Masculinity and the idea of Boyhood in Postwar Ontario, 1945-1960*, (Waterloo, Ontario, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2014), 68.

<sup>13</sup> Greig, *Ontario Boys*, 68.

stated that boys needed more guidance than girls.<sup>14</sup> During the Cold War Boy Scouts were training future leaders and responsible citizens. Because the Guiding movement was based on girls' roles as future mothers and wives rather than capable citizens, they were regarded as less important. Instead of training future leaders, Girl Guides were training good Canadian daughters, mothers, and wives. This understanding of the Girl Guide movement undermines the vitality of girls and girlhood in Canada. Girl Guides met the needs of the postwar world in Canada. Just as social responsibility was placed on women and girls following the First World War to raise the future generation of the British Empire, social responsibility was placed on women and girls following the Second World War. Domestic training for girls meant that Girl Guides participated in Civil Defense planning, they were active international citizens, and they were vital to the colonial practice of Canadianizing non-British immigrants and Indigenous children.

Canada's deep-rooted colonial past in tandem with the colonial past of the Girl Guides movement aided in the Canadianizing of non-British immigrants as well as Indigenous children. In Postwar Canada there was a growing immigrant population as well as a functional Residential School system. Canada wanted immigrants and Indigenous communities to assimilate to an Anglo-Saxon, colonial, Canadian way of life.<sup>15</sup> Since its founding Girl Guides and Boy Scouts have helped form proper citizens in the eyes of the British Empire. Throughout the Cold War Canada utilized this original function of the Girl Guide movement to Canadianize new, non-British Canadians and Indigenous communities. Canadianizing the youth became vital as Canada attempted to preserve the image of a settler, colonial nation. Assimilation and Canadianization of non-British immigrant and Indigenous children through the Girl Guide movement began in the First World War and continued into the Cold War.<sup>16</sup> During the First World War, Guiding members were sent into Japanese internment camps. Here, they attempted to improve the morale of prisoners by starting Guiding troops and ultimately Canadianize Japanese immigrants.<sup>17</sup> In the interwar years and possibly up until the school's closure, Girl Guides were active in the Mohawk Institute Residential School in Brantford. Here, the militaristic nature of the Mohawk Institute worked in perfect harmony with the militaristic nature of the Girl Guides.<sup>18</sup> Guiding domestic competitions were also held at various Residential Schools. These competitions consisted of Girl Guides acting out domestic scenarios like caring for a child, then the audience would make a list of the competitor's mistakes, tallying a score.<sup>19</sup> These competitions demonstrate the domestic and colonial nature of Girl Guides in Residential Schools. These "Colonial values ... shaped the Guiding experience, and Guide texts emphasized the value of camp experiences to "teach Indian girls western standards of discipline and hygiene" and emancipate them from the supposed backwards customs of their own cultures."<sup>20</sup> Guiding instilled British ideas about "proper" scheduling, motherhood and domestic duties onto non-white girls.<sup>21</sup> The Guiding Movement's presence in Residential Schools speaks to their overall Canadian goal of eradicating Indigenous cultures.<sup>22</sup>

In the 1940s, Guiding was still present within Residential Schools. Scout and Guiding membership became mandatory in some Residential Schools as it was seen as extremely valuable for Indigenous children.<sup>23</sup> Residential Schools sought to educate their victims in Canadian citizenship. The idea of British or Canadian citizenship was categorized by the Girl Guides of Canada as a series of responsibilities and privileges. This was generally accepted after the federal enfranchisement of most women in 1918. The enfranchisement of most women in Canada meant that Canadian Girl Guides began teaching its members about their duties as responsible and active voters. However, this excluded members, especially Indigenous members, who did not have the right to vote in Canada.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Greig, *Ontario Boys*, 73.

<sup>15</sup> Mona Gleason, "Psychology and the Construction of the 'Normal' Family in Postwar Canada, 1945-60." *Canadian Historical Review* 78, no. 3 (1997): 444.

<sup>16</sup> Alexander, "Can the Girl Guide speak?," 137.

<sup>17</sup> Alexander, *Guiding Modern Girls*, 196.

<sup>18</sup> Alexander, *Guiding Modern Girls*, 58-59.

<sup>19</sup> Alexander, *Guiding Modern Girls*, 58-59.

<sup>20</sup> Jennifer Helgren, *American Girls and Global Responsibility: A New Relation to the World* (United States: Rutgers University Press, 2017), 8.

<sup>21</sup> Alexander, *Guiding Modern Girls*, 54.

<sup>22</sup> Alexander, *Guiding Modern Girls*, 133.

<sup>23</sup> Alexander, "Can the Girl Guide speak?," 137.

<sup>24</sup> Alexander, *Guiding Modern Girls*, 84-85.

Girl Guides of Canada effectively ignored the fact that many of its members, especially those in Residential Schools, “were still emphatically not citizens in this most basic political/electoral sense.”<sup>25</sup> This exclusion of Indigenous members lasted until the Cold War when the full, unconditional federal enfranchisement was granted to Indigenous peoples in 1960, and provincial enfranchisement was granted to all Indigenous peoples in all provinces in 1969.<sup>26</sup> This intentional ignorance of the Girl Guide movement shows that they were not attempting to make capable citizens out of Indigenous girls. Instead, they were trying to create obedient subjects of the British Empire and Canadian nation-state. Those who would not and could not threaten the colonial and imperialistic powers of Canadian society. Through the eyes of the British Empire, a proper citizen is obedient, just as the Guiding law states “A Guide obeys orders.”<sup>27</sup> This law encourages loyalty to one’s country, her parents, her teachers, and her leaders. It encourages girls to be obedient as they should carry out their duties cheerfully. The encouragement of loyalty and obedience was very helpful in assimilating immigrants and in creating helpful, cheerful, and obedient subjects out of Indigenous girls. The continuous use of this Guiding law throughout the Cold War demonstrates that the organization held the same imperialistic beliefs and actions as it did when it was founded. And Guiding’s deep-rooted colonial past in tandem with Canada’s deep-rooted colonial past resulted in the Canadianizing of non-British immigrants and Indigenous children.

### **Context: Childhood in Cold War Canada**

In order to understand the growing impact of the Girl Guide movement in Cold War Canada it is vital to understand the historical context in which this movement was taking place. Canada’s role in the Cold War is often regarded as insignificant.<sup>28</sup> “Technically Canada was at peace between 1945 and 1975;” however, Canada remained diligent in civil defence as well as diplomatic affairs as the threat of nuclear warfare loomed over the world.<sup>29</sup> Canada’s relationship with its allies like the United States and Britain meant that they influenced more than is often recognized.<sup>30</sup> Although Canada influenced the international sphere during the Cold War it is undeniable that “Canada’s role in the Cold War mattered primarily to Canada.”<sup>31</sup> This means that most of Canada’s Cold War actions happened domestically. Changes in the postwar world meant changes to the Canadian family and home life. It also meant changes on a federal and provincial level to health, education and surveillance.<sup>32</sup> Throughout the Cold War Canada had to balance internal national security alongside their commitments to the international sphere. Canada was most concerned with fostering close relationships with the United States and Britain. While doing so, Canadian governments needed to ensure their own national security against the perceived threat of communist spies and sympathizers. Thus, Canadian governments set out to surveil and persecute suspected communists and other groups considered to be threats to Canadians and the power of democratic capitalism.<sup>33</sup> These Cold War concerns and changes altered the experience of childhood for Canadian children and adolescents and changed the way Canada regarded their children.

In Cold War Canada, there was a growing shift to focus on the mental and physical well-being of children. Because of the growing threat to national security, many feared that familial security was also in danger.<sup>34</sup> Postwar challenges deeply affected Canadian families and the government took notice. Canada made federal and provincial changes to education, health and surveillance. Canada implemented a federal family allowance that aided families in need of

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<sup>25</sup> Alexander, *Guiding Modern Girls*, 84.

<sup>26</sup> Simon Dabin, Jean Daoust and Martin Papillon, “Indigenous Peoples and Affinity Voting in Canada,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 1 (March 2019): 42.

<sup>27</sup> Baden-Powell, *Girl Guiding*, 50.

<sup>28</sup> Tarah Brookfield, *Cold War Comforts Canadian Women, Child Safety, and Global Insecurity, 1945-1975*. (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012), 8.

<sup>29</sup> Brookfield, *Cold War Comforts*, 8.

<sup>30</sup> Brookfield, *Cold War Comforts*, 8-9.

<sup>31</sup> Brookfield, *Cold War Comforts*, 9.

<sup>32</sup> Brookfield, *Cold War Comforts*, 2.

<sup>33</sup> Brookfield, *Cold War Comforts*, 2.

<sup>34</sup> Jane Helleiner, “The Right Kind of Children”: Childhood, Gender and Race in Canadian Postwar Political Discourse.” *Anthropologica* 43, no. 2 (2001): 145.

financial support.<sup>35</sup> These changes were made in the name of "the nation's greatest asset,"<sup>36</sup> children. This as well as a rise in psychology in the postwar period meant that Canadian society shifted its attention from mostly infants to the overall physical and "psychological health of all children."<sup>37</sup> However, it is important to recognize these actions were politically charged. The federal family allowance did help Canadian families but it also helped Canada demonstrate the superiority of democratic capitalism in the age of rising communism.<sup>38</sup> The growing concern for the well-being and safety of all Canadian children stemmed from Cold War concerns, thus affecting the everyday lives of children.

It is important to note that the Cold War era was the baby boom era. Meaning that more children were present in Canadian society and this demanded a shift in children's rights.<sup>39</sup> Not only were children becoming a larger part of Canadian society but they were viewed as the most vulnerable to the threats of the Cold War. Children's minds and bodies were seen as defenceless against the threat of nuclear warfare.<sup>40</sup> Due to this fear, children were "emotionally driven symbols of Cold War successes and failures,"<sup>41</sup> meaning children became more useful as symbols rather than individuals, and this led to the concept of the universalized child. The universalized child is a symbol of vulnerability, categorized as the next generation of Canadians. Thus, children needed protection on a familial and federal level.<sup>42</sup> The universalized child was a tool and symbol rather than an actual child or children. In Canadian postwar policies, young people were referred to as "children," "youth," "boys" or "sons".<sup>43</sup> Thus, making the ideal universalized child masculine and in the Canadian context presumably white, Christian and middle-class. However, the universalized child did aid marginalized children, terms like "youth" or "children" generalized young people. Instead of separating political policies by gender or race, ambiguous words like "children" or "youth" included all children. This meant that Canadian policies regarding "children" included girls and non-white children who were previously excluded from Canadian political policies.<sup>44</sup> Girls and non-white children were not the intended recipients of Cold War policies and they were unequal in the eyes of the Canadian government.<sup>45</sup> But they did benefit from the symbol of the universalized child. This shift in Canadian society demonstrates the importance of children during the Cold War. Children had a larger public presence and more value was placed on the lives of children as they were seen as Canada's future.

Similar to the First World War, the Cold War left a strong desire to return to the comfort of a gendered domestic life within Canadian society. In the postwar world, the Depression and the Second World War left families struggling to survive. This resulted in rising divorce rates, juvenile misconduct and more women entering the workforce. These tensions combined with the growing threat of nuclear warfare and the rise of communism left Canadians in desperate need of familiarity and structure.<sup>46</sup> The gender roles of the domestic sphere provided Canadians with the normality and stability they craved.<sup>47</sup> This growing desire for the ideal "normal" Canadian family affected the experience of childhood. The Cold War "era was a family-centric one."<sup>48</sup> The idea of an ideal "normal" family was based on the values of middle-class Canada in the postwar world.<sup>49</sup> This meant an ideal of motherhood, fatherhood, and childhood was held by the majority of Canadians. The idea of fatherhood began to change in the postwar world but only slightly. By the end of the Second World War, it was no longer acceptable for fathers to be distant from the

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<sup>35</sup> Helleiner, "The Right Kind of Children," 145.

<sup>36</sup> Helleiner, "The Right Kind of Children," 145.

<sup>37</sup> Helleiner, "The Right Kind of Children," 145.

<sup>38</sup> Helleiner, "The Right Kind of Children," 143.

<sup>39</sup> Brookfield, *Cold War Comforts*, 12.

<sup>40</sup> Brookfield, *Cold War Comforts*, 3.

<sup>41</sup> Brookfield, *Cold War Comforts*, 14.

<sup>42</sup> Helleiner, "The Right Kind of Children," 145-46.

<sup>43</sup> Helleiner, "The Right Kind of Children," 147.

<sup>44</sup> Helleiner, "The Right Kind of Children," 147.

<sup>45</sup> Helleiner, "The Right Kind of Children," 148.

<sup>46</sup> Gleason, "Psychology and the Construction of the 'Normal' Family," 443.

<sup>47</sup> Greig, *Ontario Boys*, X.

<sup>48</sup> James Ounsko, *Boom Kids: Growing Up in the Calgary Suburbs, 1950-1970*, (Waterloo, Ontario, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2021), 1.

<sup>49</sup> Gleason, "Psychology and the Construction of the 'Normal' Family," 443.

domestic sphere. They were expected to take on a more active role, especially in the lives of their children. They mostly did so by coaching soccer or becoming Boy Scout leaders.<sup>50</sup> This was encouraged by Canadian society to help properly gender boys and girls. Many believed that having an active father would help boys embody proper masculine traits. This would prepare boys to be active and proper citizens, capable of protecting their nation and maintaining social order.<sup>51</sup> An active father would also help girls develop a typical heterosexual identity.<sup>52</sup> This change in fatherhood did not mean that domestic duties became less gendered. Mothers were expected to take on domestic duties like childcare, cooking, and cleaning, filling their idyllic roles. Ideal children were expected to take on their parent's gendered roles. Boys were to learn from their fathers and girls were to assist and learn from their mothers.<sup>53</sup> This idea of an ideal gendered domestic life was a defining factor of the Cold War in Canada. This informed the education of children and the programming of children's groups like the Girl Guides of Canada.

The epitome of Girl Guide domestic programming is best represented through the Child Nurse Badge. This Badge was mandatory when the programming was founded but became less popular over time.<sup>54</sup> The badge was still being awarded well into the Cold War.<sup>55</sup> The Child Nurse Badge required Guides to be capable of caring for a child between the ages of 2-5 years. The Guide had to portray her ability to properly and efficiently care for the child throughout all of their daily activities. This included; washing, dressing, meal preparation, outdoor activities like walks, appropriate entertainment for the child, and putting the child to bed.<sup>56</sup> This demonstrates how girls were trained through Guiding to be proper caregivers. It shows the gendered domestic expectations of Canadian society that were perpetuated through the Guiding movement. This badge as well as other Guiding programming also makes assumptions about its members and their futures. Girl Guides operated under the assumption that members would eventually be in monogamous, heterosexual marriages.<sup>57</sup> This left no space for various identities or sexualities within Girl Guides. This was reflective of the values of Canadian society throughout the twentieth century. It is also important to note that there was no Child Nurse badge or any badge regarding fatherhood for Boy Scouts. This is strong evidence pointing towards the fact that boys were not expected or encouraged to think about their future children or partners the way girls were.<sup>58</sup> Girls were encouraged to only think about their future partners and children, steering them away from any true personal development. The Child Nurse badge is a fitting example of the gendered and domestic expectations held and perpetuated through the Guiding movement.

### Youth Organizations, Education and Civil Defence

Girl Guides and Boy Scouts were vital to training Cold War youth. By the 1950s, adults had a more active role in the lives of children and adolescents. They took on an interventionist role that helped them properly train the future generation of Canadians.<sup>59</sup> Adults became increasingly concerned with the juvenile misconduct of Cold War youth. In North America, defiant behaviour from young people was viewed as a defiance against government systems, the state, and democracy itself. Thus, the threat of delinquency came to be perceived as a dangerous act of communism, and as much of a threat as the atomic bomb itself.<sup>60</sup> In Canada, adult intervention came in the form of youth organizations. Youth organizations allowed young people to socialize with their peer group in an appropriate, adult-led environment. These organizations were seen as vital to producing good, productive Canadian citizens.<sup>61</sup> Girl Guides and Boy Scouts served this purpose for many Canadian families. Canadian Girl Guides and Boy Scouts were adult-created and led. The Christian, militaristic, and imperialistic values of Girl Guides and Boy Scouts sought

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<sup>50</sup> Greig, *Ontario Boys*, 6-8.

<sup>51</sup> Greig, *Ontario Boys*, X-11.

<sup>52</sup> Greig, *Ontario Boys*, 11.

<sup>53</sup> Greig, *Ontario Boys*, 5-11.

<sup>54</sup> Alexander, *Guiding Modern Girls*, 63.

<sup>55</sup> "Orangeville Girl Guides Hold Mother and Daughter Banquet," *The Orangeville Banner*, May 4, 1954, 1.

<sup>56</sup> Mary B. Willet, "Badges of the Little House Emblem," *The Canadian Guide*, (March 1955), 12-13.

<sup>57</sup> Alexander, *Guiding Modern Girls*, 69.

<sup>58</sup> Alexander, *Guiding Modern Girls*, 52.

<sup>59</sup> Ounsko, *Boom Kids*, 7.

<sup>60</sup> Helgren, *American Girls and Global Responsibility*, 22.

<sup>61</sup> Cynthia Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth: Adolescence and the Making of Modern Canada, 1920 to 1950*. (Waterloo, Ontario. Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006), 189-90.



to crush any defiant or delinquent behaviour of Canadian youth. This demonstrates how Girl Guides and Boy Scouts were used to control and train youth in Cold War Canada, just as it was when it was first created.

Education in Canada was influenced by Cold War tensions and anxieties. The federally and provincially approved education for Canadian youth during the Cold War aids in identifying what adults deemed important for young people. In schools during the Cold War "Teachers, administrators, and school curriculums reflected the Cold War's influence on the lives of students both inside and outside the classroom."<sup>62</sup> The Cold War also saw children and adolescents spending more of their time in the classroom than anywhere else, and their leisure activities were often predetermined by their gender.<sup>63</sup> This demonstrates how adults in schools and children's groups like Girl Guides and Boy Scouts were training children to be active and capable in the event of atomic warfare. Cold War education is best recognized by the film *Duck and Cover*. This film was very popular in North American classrooms as it taught children what to do in the case of atomic warfare.<sup>64</sup> Like Bert the Turtle in *Duck and Cover* Canadian students would practice taking cover from an atomic bomb. They would do this by covering their heads and necks and ducking under their desks.<sup>65</sup> Teachers were expected to teach civil defence tactics like *Duck and Cover* while "creating a reassuring learning environment that would avoid panic, confusion, boredom, and overexcitement."<sup>66</sup> It was expected that civil defence would be taught in the same way as traffic safety or fire drills.<sup>67</sup> Teachers were told to incorporate Cold War education in a way that would minimize the fears and anxieties of children and the disruption to everyday schooling. Despite their best efforts, children and adolescents feared the threat of nuclear warfare as they absorbed the anxieties of the adults around them.<sup>68</sup> The presence of this type of education and training in Canadian classrooms means it was present in organizations like Boy Scouts and Girl Guides.

During this time, civil defence was taught outside the classroom as well. Civil defence organizations would tour across Canada, holding exhibitions to inform Canadian citizens on the best ways to prepare themselves and their families for a nuclear attack. Schoolchildren were often invited to these exhibitions.<sup>69</sup> Here, attendees were informed that civil defence was part of good Canadian citizenship. They also learned that "Male and female citizens would be required to fulfill their duties in very different ways."<sup>70</sup> Men and boys were expected to take on a more active role, extending beyond the domestic sphere while women and girls should focus on the home in the event of a nuclear disaster.<sup>71</sup> The involvement of schoolchildren in these exhibitions means that adults were actively trying to train Canadian children in their gendered roles in the case of an international emergency. Cold War education itself shows that Canada was attempting to inform and train Canadian youth based on the threat the Cold War held.

Civil defence in Boy Scouts and Girl Guides reflected the curriculum in schools during the Cold War. Their differing roles demonstrate the gendered roles of civil defence that were common in Canada during this time. Outside of school, children rarely participated in civil defence planning. Adults did not want children to panic and thus did not let them get too involved. Most of the Canadian population wanted civil defence training as long as it would not frighten their children.<sup>72</sup> Children who did take an interest in emergency preparedness "were told not to worry, that the adults had a plan. The adults did not."<sup>73</sup> This illusion of control was used across Canada to promote civil defence and avoid mass panic. Canadian Girl Guides and Boy Scouts were involved in civil defence planning. Just as the Canadian education system promoted, community preparations for civil defence were highly gendered, especially

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<sup>62</sup> Ounsko, *Boom Kids*, 45.

<sup>63</sup> Ounsko, *Boom Kids*, 12.

<sup>64</sup> Brookfield, *Cold War Comforts*, 44.

<sup>65</sup> Brookfield, *Cold War Comforts*, 44.

<sup>66</sup> Brookfield, *Cold War Comforts*, 44.

<sup>67</sup> Andrew Burtch, "What Am I to Do to Save My Children?": Canadian Children in Civil Defence Planning," in *Small Stories of War: Children, Youth, and Conflict in Canada and Beyond*, ed. Barbra Lorenzkowski, Kristine Alexander and Andre Burtch (Montreal, McGill-Queens University Press, 2023), 99.

<sup>68</sup> Brookfield, *Cold War Comforts*, 44.

<sup>69</sup> Andrew Burtch, "Armageddon on Tour" *International Journal* 61, no. 3 (Toronto, 2006): 735-756.

<sup>70</sup> Burtch, "Armageddon on Tour," 737.

<sup>71</sup> Burtch, "Armageddon on Tour," 751.

<sup>72</sup> Burtch, "What Am I to Do to Save My Children?," 97.

<sup>73</sup> Burtch, "What Am I to Do to Save My Children?," 108-109.

for boys and girls.<sup>74</sup> Civil Defence Canada pursued the support of the Boy Scouts of Canada more so than The Girl Guides of Canada.<sup>75</sup> Some Boy Scouts trained with RCMP officers in order to aid with the evacuation of their towns in the event of a nuclear attack. They were also trained to provide instructions to civilians if they found themselves in an emergency situation.<sup>76</sup> Boy Scouts were seen as trusted individuals, charged with duties outside of the home and in the community. Boys were to protect women and children through military power and democratic masculinity.<sup>77</sup> This shows how Girl Guides and Boy Scouts were separated into gendered spheres during civil defence training. Girls and Girl Guides played a different role in civil defence planning from their male counterparts. In 1951, the Chief Commissioner of Girl Guides reached out to Civil Defence Canada asking if they could get similar training for older Guiding members. They were told that Guides were most useful in the domestic sphere. In order to support civil defence measures Girl Guides should enhance their cooking courses in case they need to feed mass amounts of displaced people. They were also told to learn basic first aid as well as fire safety.<sup>78</sup> This was a disappointing response to the Girl Guides as they wished to make themselves more actively useful in the event of an atomic attack. The gendered roles of Girl Guides “provided a space for the articulation of the goals of the global imaginary of integration.”<sup>79</sup> Girl Guides limited and gendered role in civil defence granted them the opportunity to be symbols and representatives of peace rather than defence against perceived enemies.<sup>80</sup> This once again, demonstrates how girls were given the burden of social responsibility while their hyper-masculine male counterparts were militarized. This establishes the gendered roles that Girl Guides and Boy Scouts were pushed into during the Cold War.

### Girl Guides as International Citizens

In the Cold War era, being a good international citizen was a vital component of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. In the postwar era, Girl Guides and Scouts were “embracing the ideal of international peace.”<sup>81</sup> The idea that Girl Guides were symbols and representatives of global peace rather than defence was promoted by the focus on international friendship by Girl Guide leaders. Throughout the Cold War Girl Guides and Girl Scouts set out to reduce the conflict of the Cold War.<sup>82</sup> In the age of the United Nations, the atomic arms race, and the wake of the Holocaust, Girl Guides and Scouts were attempting to form international friendships and tolerance.<sup>83</sup> Guides and Scouts travelling abroad to the Girl Guide World Centers were expected to behave as ambassadors rather than tourists.<sup>84</sup> In accordance with the Guide law, “A guide is a friend to all, and a sister to every other Guide. No matter to what creed, country, or class the other belongs.”<sup>85</sup> Meaning that Girl Guides were promoting a girl's social responsibility to be a good international citizen.

Following the Second World War Canadian Girl Guides and Boy Scouts aided their fellow Guides and Scouts around the world. Canadian Girl Guides sent uniforms to Greece and they donated money to Guides across Europe.<sup>86</sup> Canadian Guides and Scouts founded the World Friendship Fund to help maintain Boy Scouts and Girl Guides in war-torn Europe. The World Friendship Fund was also used to uphold the four existing world centres; Our Chalet in Switzerland, Our Cabaña in Mexico, Sangam in India, and Olave House in London.<sup>87</sup> Girl Guides internationally promoted friendship as the best way to avoid war.<sup>88</sup> The Girl Guide pen pal program was created to promote the building of international ties and thus the avoidance of warfare. Girls were encouraged to write Guiding members in

<sup>74</sup>Burtch, “What Am I to Do to Save My Children?,” 94.

<sup>75</sup> Burtch, “What Am I to Do to Save My Children?,” 102.

<sup>76</sup> Burtch, “What Am I to Do to Save My Children?,” 102.

<sup>77</sup> Helgren, *American Girls and Global Responsibility*, 16.

<sup>78</sup> Burtch, “What Am I to Do to Save My Children?,” 103.

<sup>79</sup> Helgren, *American Girls and Global Responsibility*, 10.

<sup>80</sup> Helgren, *American Girls and Global Responsibility*, 16.

<sup>81</sup> Marcia Chatelain, “International Sisterhood: Cold War Girl Scouts Encounter the World.” *Diplomatic History* 38, no. 2 (March 12, 2014): 261-70, 261.

<sup>82</sup> Helgren, *American Girls and Global Responsibility*, 34-36.

<sup>83</sup> Chatelain, “International Sisterhood,” 263.

<sup>84</sup> Chatelain, “International Sisterhood,” 261.

<sup>85</sup>Baden-Powell, *Girl Guiding*, 50.

<sup>86</sup> “Lord Baden Powell's Anniversary Keynote of Scout-Guide Week,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, February 17, 1947, 9.

<sup>87</sup> “Local Guides Observe Thinking Day,” *Standard-Freeholder*, February 22, 1969, 5.

<sup>88</sup> Helgren, *American Girls and Global Responsibility*, 34-36.

other countries in an attempt to learn about their lives and create international friendships.<sup>89</sup> The Girl Guides of Canada promoted international friendship in many ways. Often Canadian Guides would visit other countries to learn about different cultures and promote the international sisterhood of Guiding.<sup>90</sup> Canadian Girl Guides also participated in the international observation of Thinking Day. Thinking Day takes place on February 22, marking the birthdays of Lord Baden-Powell and his wife, the second president of the Girl Guides, Olave Baden-Powell. As the *Standard-Freeholder* stated in their article regarding Thinking Day in 1969, "Thinking Day is the occasion of special ceremonies stressing the Guide ideal of international friendship."<sup>91</sup> The very nature of Thinking Day is to promote international collaboration and friendship between Girl Guides and Scouts around the world. This idea was strong within Canadian Boy Scouts and Girl Guides as they sought to help their fellow members.

The idea of international friendship is best demonstrated by the Girl Guides World Camp hosted in Ontario from August 8 to 29, 1957. It was hosted in Doe Lake, Ontario which required 127,000\$ of funding for refurbishments to the campsite.<sup>92</sup> This camp began its planning stages in 1956, *The Windsor Star* reported that the "Girl Guides are playing leading roles in Canada's international good will program" through the creation of the World Camp.<sup>93</sup> The goal of the camp was not to learn skills or earn badges but rather to learn how other Guides live and teach international Guides about Canadian culture.<sup>94</sup> The camp featured a Canadian exhibit from a local museum that sought to teach international Guides about Canadian culture and history.<sup>95</sup> The camp hosted about 1,600 Guides from around 40 countries, including; Canada, Mexico, England, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, the United States, Ceylon, Pakistan, the Philippines, and the Caribbean.<sup>96</sup> Many newspapers covering the events of the World Camp noted how much food the Guides were able to prepare. Catering staff provided 1,800 dozen eggs, 7000 pounds of butter, and 18,000 quarts of milk to Guiding members.<sup>97</sup> Guides were required to prepare their own food over charcoal stoves, about one and a half tons of charcoal was used each day.<sup>98</sup> The focus on food preparation from news sources suggests that Canada or Ontario was attempting to prove a point. That point is; that Canada, under the superiority of democracy is able to feed mass amounts of people for extended periods. It also proves that Canadian Guides are capable of cooking in the wilderness for extended periods. This subtly proved Canada's emergency preparedness and survival skills in a time when civil defence planning and survival skills were a necessity. The *North Bay Nugget* stated on August 12, 1957, that "The 1,600 Girl Guides who travelled from practically every corner of the world to join hands at the World Girl Guide Camp have proved that creating good international relations isn't such a difficult job after all."<sup>99</sup> This statement summarizes the intentions of the World Camp; to promote international friendship in the Cold War world. The creation of the World Camp as well as other international efforts made by the Girl Guides of Canada demonstrates how they were a key player in the building of international friendship during the Cold War. This idea placed the social responsibility of international collaboration and peace on young girls and women.

### Cold War Changes to Girl Guide Programming

Changes to dating and sexuality, especially for adolescents were a prominent factor of the Cold War era in Canada. The Girl Guide movement adapted its programming to educate its adolescent members and prompt them to be proper young ladies. The growing film, magazine and beauty industry meant that adolescent girls were being held to a higher, more adult standard of beauty.<sup>100</sup> This made adolescents in the Cold War era feel more adult and encouraged them to take part in mature activities like sex. By 1961 illegitimate birthrates were on the rise in

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<sup>89</sup> Helgren, *American Girls and Global Responsibility*, 17.

<sup>90</sup> "Visit British Isles," *The Kingston Wing-Standard*, July 12, 1963, 24.

<sup>91</sup> "Local Guides Observe Thinking Day," 5.

<sup>92</sup> Oli Daum, "Guide Commissioners Elect Heads, Plan Camp," *The Windsor Star*, June 20, 1957, 30.

<sup>93</sup> Daum, "Guide Commissioners Elect Heads, Plan Camp," 30.

<sup>94</sup> Daum, "Guide Commissioners Elect Heads, Plan Camp," 30.

<sup>95</sup> Frances Williams, "Canadian Exhibit Popular as 1,500 Guides from 40 Lands Encamp," *The Toronto Star*, August 9, 1957, 3.

<sup>96</sup> "23 Ottawa Girl Guides to Attend World Camp at Doe Lake," *The Ottawa Journal*, July 20, 1957, 27.

<sup>97</sup> Mary Burke, "Girl Guides to Prepare 50,000 Meals at Camp," *Waterloo Region Record*, August 9, 1957, 9.

<sup>98</sup> Williams, "Canadian Exhibit Popular as 1,500 Guides from 40 Lands Encamp," 3.

<sup>99</sup> "Guides Symbol of Goodwill," *North Bay Nugget*, August 12, 1957, 4.

<sup>100</sup> Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*, 71.

Canada.<sup>101</sup> And birth control pills were becoming increasingly available to women.<sup>102</sup> Many feared that this would lead to the spread of sexually transmitted infections, teenage pregnancy and prostitution.<sup>103</sup> This in addition to changing attitudes toward sex and sex education meant that teenagers needed to be properly informed about their bodies and relationships. Girl Guides of Canada began rolling out information and articles targeted at teenage girls and their promiscuous behaviour. As the Guide law states "A guide is pure in thought, word, and deed."<sup>104</sup> The Guiding law elaborates stating that a Guide should "avoid listening to, or taking part in anything that is ugly and unclean."<sup>105</sup> This means that Girl Guide members needed to be perceived as pure, respectable young women. In Cold War Canadian society, pure, respectable young women did not have sex before marriage. It is hard to ignore that these purity values were often rooted in the Christian values of British society. However, the production of information regarding purity and sex shows that the Girl Guides were not ignorant of Cold War changes in Canadian society.

These ideals extended to Girl Scouts in the United States as well. In the late 1950s, Girl Scouts visiting Our Cabaña, one of The Girl Guides world centres in Mexico were warned against improper behaviour. They were warned against relationships with local Mexican boys of any kind as they could be possibly dangerous or simply ruin the reputation of the organization.<sup>106</sup> These warnings "highlight the entangled concerns about respectable female behaviour in the Cold War era and anxieties about race-mixing and miscegenation."<sup>107</sup> This demonstrates the ideals that the Guiding movement held as a whole as they spanned across borders. Concerns about race mixing clearly stem from the colonial past of the Girl Guide movement and the colonial nature of North American society. The Girl Guides of Canada made a point of publishing a poem about appropriate behaviour for young women. The poem reads:

It is really fun to dance,  
But I'm sure to watch my stance.  
When all the rest begin to neck,  
Can I keep myself in check?  
Being ready and waiting for him to arrive,  
Is something for which I always strive.  
I try to be interesting in all I say,  
So he will call another day,  
But when he wants to talk to me,  
I listen attentively as can be.  
Lots of friends mean lots of fun.  
Til I meet my only one.<sup>108</sup>

Throughout the Cold War, this focus on purity and self-control is targeted at young girls. It gave young adolescent girls the responsibility of sexual self-control for themselves and their male counterparts.<sup>109</sup> Therefore girls were not only charged with social responsibility in the postwar era, but they were also charged with sexual responsibility. As James Ounsko points out in his book *Boom Kids: Growing Up in the Calgary Suburbs, 1950-1970* "On the surface, it might seem empowering that adolescent girls were deemed responsible for setting limits on physical contact, but this advice reflected the simplistic, misogynistic, and enduring belief that "boys will be boys".<sup>110</sup> This double standard was made increasingly popular in Cold War Canada and was perpetuated through Girl Guide programming. They sought to give girls the tools to take on the sexual responsibility they were given but the same purity values were not expected of their male counterparts in Boy Scouts.

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<sup>101</sup> Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*, 83.

<sup>102</sup> Ounsko, *Boom Kids*, 125.

<sup>103</sup> Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*, 40.

<sup>104</sup> Baden-Powell, *Girl Guiding*, 63.

<sup>105</sup> Baden-Powell, *Girl Guiding*, 63.

<sup>106</sup> Chatelain, "International Sisterhood," 266.

<sup>107</sup> Chatelain, "International Sisterhood," 266.

<sup>108</sup> Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*, 93.

<sup>109</sup> Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*, 84.

<sup>110</sup> Ounsko, *Boom Kids*, 131.

There were attempts to modernize and adapt Canadian Girl Guide programming to the changes of the postwar world. In 1961, Mrs. Stephen Dermandy, assistant director of the World Bureau of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts Association claimed that Guiding must adapt to the changes of the postwar era. She believed that the organization needed to adapt to the needs and interests of its members throughout the world.<sup>111</sup> By 1964 Canadian Girl Guides were faced with a drop-out problem, especially from adolescent girls. This required Girl Guides to take a serious look at their programming to determine why teenage girls were no longer interested in the organization.<sup>112</sup> They came to the same conclusion that Dermandy did, Girl Guides had to adapt to the modern-day concerns and interests of their members. In 1964, the Ontario Council of Girl Guides held a three-day meeting in Hamilton regarding program changes. Here, they determined that young girls were facing more pressures and freedoms than before and Guiding was needed to help guide young people.<sup>113</sup> These newfound pressures and freedoms included more leisure time, personal choices of activities, less parental supervision, and a broader knowledge of the world through television.<sup>114</sup> These are adult-perceived factors in children's lives and some are simply untrue. Children throughout the Cold War in Canada did not have more freedom or leisure time as they spent more time in the classroom or youth organizations than anywhere else.<sup>115</sup> In order to understand the growing pressures and freedoms of Cold War youth, Girl Guides consulted psychologists and educators. Other Girl Guide Provincial Councils decided to solve this issue through the organization of co-ed camps between Boy Scouts and Girl Guides. However, this idea was rejected by the Ontario Council out of fear of criticism, or possibly out of fear of sexual relationships between Boy Scouts and Girl Guides.<sup>116</sup> It is undeniable that these adult anxieties regarding youth and the Girl Guide program echo the concerns of the organization when it was first founded. It is also extremely intriguing that the solution to these issues is more adult intervention through experts like psychologists and educators rather than teenagers themselves.

In 1970, Ontario Guides were still, seemingly, having recruitment issues. Mrs. C. K Wallace, Ontario Public Commissioner of the Girl Guides of Canada stated that Girl Guides was more than camping and knot-tying. In 1970, Girl Guides moved away from the pressure of badge earning, instead, members were encouraged to earn badges important to them. Wallace also stated that Girl Guides were becoming more about enjoyable activities that interested their members rather than work activities.<sup>117</sup> She promoted the Girl Guides focus on international travel and newer camping methods, speaking to a sense of adventure in young girls.<sup>118</sup> It seems that a growing drop-out rate as well as the fact that the Cold War was drawing to a close in Canada, finally pushed Canadian Girl Guide programming away from the gendered sphere of domestic duties and civil defence. Instead, they attempted to focus on fulfilling the interests of their members. This did not mark the end of the gendered and colonialist past of the Girl Guides, but it does mark a shift away from it. These attempts to modernize, at the very least, demonstrate how the Girl Guides of Canada was attempting to be seen as a member-centred organization, focused on individuals rather than the domestic training of Canadian girls.

## Conclusions

Today, The Girl Guides of Canada are seemingly committed to the empowerment of young girls and women. Their revised law and promises are based on honesty, respect, friendship, and environmentalism. Badges and other guiding activities are based on building interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, exploring different identities, and taking action within one's community.<sup>119</sup> This modern-day programming is reflective of modern Canadian society. Girl Guide programming is still determined by adults and based on what adults deem appropriate and necessary to produce good, functional Canadian citizens. It is an organization that settles adult anxieties by training and conforming young girls to modern-day ideals of girlhood and childhood. The organization has since removed its

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<sup>111</sup> "Girl Guides Must Adapt to Times," *The Gazette*, June 7, 1961, 8.

<sup>112</sup> "Teenage Drop-Outs Result in Program Re-evaluation," *The Hamilton Spectator*, April 3, 1964, 27.

<sup>113</sup> "Teenage Drop-Outs Result in Program Re-evaluation," 27.

<sup>114</sup> "Teenage Drop-Outs Result in Program Re-evaluation," 27.

<sup>115</sup> Ounsko, *Boom Kids*, 12.

<sup>116</sup> "Teenage Drop-Outs Result in Program Re-evaluation," 27.

<sup>117</sup> Mary Truman, "Girl Guide Programs Adjust to Progress," *The Windsor Star*, March 9, 1970, 28.

<sup>118</sup> Truman, "Girl Guide Programs Adjust to Progress," 28.

<sup>119</sup> "Mission, Vision, Promise and Law," Girl Guides of Canada, [last modified 2025](#).

face-value ties with Christianity and monarchy from its promises and law. It is now a non-secular organization. However, Girl Guides can never truly escape its imperialist and colonial past. Guiding's role in colonial heterosexual domestic life, Residential Schools, and internment camps has never been formally recognized by the organization. In fact, many sources and texts have been destroyed due to a lack of perceived importance or to preserve the reputation of the organization. Kristine Alexander witnessed this first-hand when conducting her research.<sup>120</sup> The Girl Guides and their purposeful silence bring into question the beliefs they claim to hold. If they encourage their members to take action, then the organization themselves should take action. Today, Truth and Reconciliation is a pillar of Canadian society, and it is time that the Girl Guides of Canada recognize its history and involvement in the colonial Canadian project in order to do better. The only way Girl Guides can move forward from its dark past is to acknowledge the harm it has caused.

From its founding, throughout the twentieth century, the Girl Guides of Canada have proved themselves to be a colonial, imperialistic, and militaristic organization. Guiding has always been based on the adult anxieties and fears of the era. Cold War anxieties and concerns shaped family life, schooling and government. This impacted the experience of Canadian childhood and thus, the Girl Guide movement itself. The Girl Guides of Canada were vital as girls took on social, international, and sexual responsibility throughout the Cold War. The Girl Guides of Canada were also vital in the Canadianizing of non-British immigrants and Indigenous children. The Girl Guides of Canada have become ignorant of their history. This goes against the values they claim to hold and teach, thus demonstrating how the Girl Guides of Canada was and is an asset to the Colonial Canadian project.

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<sup>120</sup> Alexander, "Can the Girl Guide speak?," 136.



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The Owls girls' softball team on the steps of their school, the Ontario School for the Deaf, Belleville, Ont., c. 1936-1939, Wikimedia Commons.

Museum collections in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have become increasingly politicized. At its height in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, the British Empire enthusiastically funded global expansion and exploration which supported their colonial mission. Part of this mission included archeological expeditions in foreign countries to acquire antiquities. These finds were then taken to Britain and displayed in museums as examples of the British Empire's strength. Today, the British Museum is largely known as an institution which holds a massive collection of international antiquities. Among the archeologists who acquired antiquities which are now in collections at the British Museum was Sir Aurel Stein. Stein explored many places in Central Asia and China, but the location of interest for this study is his expedition to the Dunhuang Library Caves in Gansu, China. During his multiple trips, and through carefully calculated negotiations, Stein managed to remove thousands of manuscripts from the Dunhuang caves and transported them to the British Museum and the National Museum of India who funded his expedition and where they remain today.<sup>1</sup>

The removal of antiquities from China has become increasingly politicized and Stein's reputation has gone from being a celebrated archeologist in China to a thief. Following Stein's first expedition to the Dunhuang Library Cave multiple other Western archeologists visited the site and acquired manuscripts. This has resulted in the international dispersion of the Dunhuang collection and further blame placed on Stein for beginning this exodus of artifacts from China. In the late 1990s a digital database project called the International Dunhuang Programme (henceforth IDP) was begun by the British Library with the goal of reuniting the Dunhuang collection through collaboration with all institutions which hold Dunhuang manuscripts. Besides the debate over Stein's ethics, and the digitization of the Dunhuang collection, there has been little discussion of the return of the Stein collection to China. The history of the Dunhuang Stein collection is a microhistory of intellectual and political change in museum politics in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The collection's acquisition during the colonial era and subsequent existence in the imperial institution of the British Museum has made it subject to growing decolonization discourse within museum politics. Given the nature of the collection, the acquisition method, and the accessibility of the collection, the Stein collection has proved to be a unique example of a progressive response by the British Museum to decolonial discourse.

Some of the largest topics in present day museum politics are ownership and repatriation. The ethical question of whether a museum institution should have ownership over unethically acquired artifacts has incited repatriation calls from many countries and groups from whom artifacts were stolen throughout history. This response has been a part of the growing international decolonization movement. By repatriating artifacts to their countries of origin, the objects can be reconciled with their colonial history and interpreted through the lens of this history. For the Dunhuang collection, however, the process of repatriation is more complicated due to its scattering across the globe. Suchen Wang argues in *Atoms & Bits of Cultural Heritage* that the history of the Dunhuang objects spans both China and the West, making the Dunhuang collection uniquely tied to both through politics, economy and culture.<sup>2</sup> Wang does not take a firm stance on the question of the ownership of the Dunhuang collection. Instead, Wang views the digital reunification of the collection as a positive way of depoliticizing museum collections.<sup>3</sup> The reason for Wang's moderate stance on collection ownership and repatriation is that those discussions undermine the importance of the history of the Dunhuang collection. Another scholar who takes a moderate approach to repatriation through the lens of digitization is Zheng Zhang. The IDP is viewed by Zheng as a form of repatriation for China. Through China's participation in the IDP, Zheng argues, the country is able to claim "[shared] guardianship of

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<sup>1</sup> Exploring Silk Roads, "The Library Cave, Dunhuang," The British Museum.

<sup>2</sup> Suchen Wang, *Atoms & Bits of Cultural Heritage: The Use of Dunhuang Collections in Knowledge Making, Nation Building, Museum Diplomacy, Cultural Tourism and Digital Economy*, (Aalto University, 2019), 20; 25.

<sup>3</sup> Wang, *Atoms & Bits of Cultural Heritage*, 38-40.

cultural materials” and participate in collaborative preservation efforts.<sup>4</sup> Without the opportunities offered by digitization, China would have no opportunity to claim any such ownership or authority over artifacts in international collections. The repatriation of the Stein collection through legal means has been proven futile by Lui Zhouzhen. Lui demonstrates that despite dubious dealings between Stein and Wang, and the legal issues with Stein’s purchase of the manuscripts,<sup>5</sup> the difference between English and Chinese law would likely result in an unfavourable outcome for China. The hypothetical nature of this case, however, is revealing of the low possibility and priority of China’s repatriation of the Stein collection. Although the Stein collection has increasingly become a focus of museum politics, specifically the discussion of repatriation, the emergence of digitization technology and online databases has fundamentally changed the conversation. For a number of scholars, the digitization of the Stein collection and other items in the Dunhuang collection is part of, and sometimes equivalent to, the repatriation of the objects.

Digital repatriation has not been embraced by all. There remains a general hostility towards Stein and other western archeologists in China because they stole Chinese cultural artifacts. A common characterization of Stein in China is as a thief. However, this was not always the narrative in China. Jacobs argues in “Confronting Indiana Jones” that Chinese opinion of Stein was positive until the 1930s when the Chinese intelligentsia began forming national identity around Han-Chinese identity and history, including Chinese language manuscripts and archeological sites.<sup>6</sup> The shifting opinion of the Chinese is expanded in Jacobs’ monograph, *Compensations of Plunder*, where it is argued that Chinese opinions of western archeologists and their removal of antiquities changed due to the increased power of the Chinese state through the duration of the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> Amidst Chinese nationalist efforts to create a national identity, Stein and other western archeologists were increasingly perceived by institutions in China as criminals who had stolen cultural history. As Joanna Wardęga demonstrates, there is a strong sense of martyrdom and humiliation attached to the loss of Chinese artifacts to the west which occurred throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>8</sup> To recover from this “century of humiliation” China has implemented firm policies surrounding cultural artifacts and heritage sites to protect Chinese heritage from further theft.<sup>9</sup> This reassertion of Chinese authority over cultural heritage is accompanied by hostility towards the west which can inevitably be traced back to the actions of western imperial powers, including those of Stein. Beginning with the hostility of the Chinese towards Stein in the 1930s, China’s perception of the west, specifically western archeologists, has soured. The tradition of villainizing archeologists such as Stein is rooted in the national sense of humiliation and China’s efforts to create a national identity on the international stage.

Articles about the use of the Stein collection by Chinese scholars are revealing of the British Museum’s role in disseminating the collection through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. These articles demonstrate the freedom of access the British Museum has ensured for the Stein collection and the ways in which the collection has been used academically. Rong Xinjiang’s lecture on the major Dunhuang collections discusses the dispersion of the Dunhuang manuscripts into international collections and their subsequent organization and use. Access to the Stein collection was initially limited to catalogues created by the curators of the Stein collection.<sup>10</sup> With the emergence of microfilm, Chinese and Japanese scholars were able to begin compiling their own catalogues without having to travel to England.<sup>11</sup> Chunwen Hao’s historiography discusses Chinese access to Dunhuang manuscripts and argues that despite microfilm of Dunhuang manuscripts entering China in the 1950s and 1960s, it was only in the 1970s that

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<sup>4</sup> Zhang Zheng, “From Digitization to Digital Repatriation: A Case Study of International Dunhuang Project,” in *The Museum in Asia* (Routledge), 268.

<sup>5</sup> Zuozhen Lui, “Restitution Through Civil Litigation: A Case Study of the Dunhuang Manuscripts,” in *The Case for Repatriating China’s Cultural Objects* (Singapore: Springer, 2016), 105.

<sup>6</sup> Justin Jacobs, “Confronting Indiana Jones: Chinese Nationalism, Historical Imperialism, and Criminalization of Aurel Stein and Raiders of Dunhuang, 1899-1944,” in *China on the Margins*, eds. Sherman Cochran and Paul G. Pickowicz (Ithaca: Cornell East Asia Series, 2010), 84.

<sup>7</sup> Justin Jacobs, *The Compensations of Plunder : How China Lost Its Treasures*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020).

<sup>8</sup> Joanna Wardęga, “Chinese Heritage with European Characteristics: International and Domestic Dimensions of China’s Cultural Heritage Politics,” *Politeja* no. 73 (2021), 20-21.

<sup>9</sup> Wardęga, “Chinese Heritage with European Characteristics,” 23-24.

<sup>10</sup> Xinjiang Rong, “Major Collections of Dunhuang Manuscripts,” in *Eighteen Lectures on Dunhuang*, trans. Imre Galambos (Boston: Brill, 2013), 138.

<sup>11</sup> Rong, “Major Collections of Dunhuang Manuscripts,” 142-146.

Chinese scholarship using Dunhuang manuscripts truly began.<sup>12</sup> With greater access, Hao demonstrates that further specialization in Dunhuang studies in China was possible.<sup>13</sup> Written in 1999, Hao requests better quality and publication of Dunhuang manuscripts in future.<sup>14</sup> Arguably, this request has been met through the IDP and its high-quality, public access database of manuscripts. The British Museum's dedication to ongoing open access to the Stein collection makes it a unique collection and has influenced the relationship between Chinese and western scholars and institutions. As these historiographies reveal, open access to Dunhuang documents has been integral to Chinese scholarship and specialization in Dunhuangology. Access to the Stein collection challenges the colonial nature of the collection because it allows Chinese scholars to interpret the documents according to their historical context, rather than the collection being interpreted solely from a western context.

The historiography of the Stein collection, the British Museum, and the Dunhuang collection simultaneously functions as a historiography of decolonization and interactions between China and the west in the twentieth century. The political turmoil of China during the twentieth century greatly impacted China's interactions with the west. The beginning of the twentieth century in China was a period of decentralization and chaos as the Qing dynasty ended and the Warlord Era began.<sup>15</sup> The chaos of this period in China facilitated Stein's relatively unmitigated acquisition of Chinese artifacts. The tensions of the 1930s and 1940s with the Sino-Japanese War and the Civil War resulted in the ascendancy of the Chinese Communist Party under Mao Zedong, which involved isolationism from the west in particular. The Maoist regime culminated in the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s. The Cultural Revolution attacked the four olds, which included the destruction of cultural heritage.<sup>16</sup> As China modernized under Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s and 1980s, cultural heritage and Chinese history became increasingly valued by the Chinese government.<sup>17</sup> As the cultural value of Chinese antiquities increased so did demands for the repatriation of stolen artifacts which had been removed to the west. The British Museum has not responded to the many repatriation requests they have received since the 1980s. Emily Duthie problematizes the British Museum's colonial history by arguing that the British Museum acquired the majority of their collections through colonial and imperial means and are therefore inextricably connected to that colonial past.<sup>18</sup> Through an analysis of the British Museums and collections policies in the past century, Duthie demonstrates that the British Museum continues to reject repatriation requests while maintaining universalism messaging.<sup>19</sup> The Stein collection, however, has not been the subject of repatriation requests. As Wang and Zheng demonstrate, the digitization of the Stein collection through the IDP has been crucial to the British Museum's decolonizing of the collection. By providing open access to the documents and objects in this collection the British Museum no longer asserts colonial possession of the collection and demonstrates their dedication to open access and international scholarship.

The Dunhuang caves in Gansu province, China are a site of great significance to Silk Road Studies. The area was a hub of movement during the first millennium and Dunhuang specifically, was a centre of Buddhism during the tenth century. What would become known as the Dunhuang Library Cave by Aurel Stein, was most likely called the Three Realms Monastery.<sup>20</sup> Housed within this cave were manuscripts dated as early as the fifth century up to the early eleventh century. In addition to the date range of these manuscripts, the Three Realms Monastery contained manuscripts in a large variety of languages including Chinese, Tibetan, Sanskrit, Khotanese, Uighur, and Sogdian.<sup>21</sup> Buddhist texts are not the only texts represented in this collection, the Dunhuang Library Cave holds a remarkable variety of religious texts. A text in Hebrew and a Zoroastrian text have also been found in the cave.<sup>22</sup> As Valerie

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<sup>12</sup> Chunwen Hao, "A Retrospective of and Prospects for Historical Studies Based on Dunhuang Conducted this Century," *Social Sciences in China* 20, no. 4 (1999), 101.

<sup>13</sup> Hao, "A Retrospective," 102.

<sup>14</sup> Hao, "A Retrospective," 109.

<sup>15</sup> Wardęga, "Chinese Heritage with European Characteristics," 13.

<sup>16</sup> Wardęga, "Chinese Heritage with European Characteristics," 18.

<sup>17</sup> Wardęga, "Chinese Heritage with European Characteristics," 20-22.

<sup>18</sup> Emily Duthie, "The British Museum: An Imperial Museum in a Post-Imperial World," *Public History Review*, vol. 18 (2011).

<sup>19</sup> Duthie, "The British Museum,".

<sup>20</sup> Valerie Hansen, "The Time Capsule of Silk Road History: The Dunhuang Caves," in *The Silk Road: A New History* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 178.

<sup>21</sup> Hansen, "The Time Capsule of Silk Road History," 181.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

Hansen argues, the community at Dunhuang in the first millennium was incredibly diverse and religiously tolerant.<sup>23</sup> A monk at the Three Realms Monastery named Daozhen is credited with collecting and preserving manuscripts in the monastery.<sup>24</sup> The Three Realms Monastery functioned as a Buddhist monastery to train monks and preserve the Buddhist religion. Part of their responsibility was to care for the manuscripts and artworks in their collection. Patching material and fragments of manuscripts and paintings have also been found in the cave for future use in preserving the contents of the monastery.<sup>25</sup> The Three Realms Monastery did not collect religious texts exclusively. The collection of secular documentation within the Library Cave has also been significant for reconstructing the political history of Gansu in this period.<sup>26</sup> Due to the care of the monks, and the desert conditions of the area, the Dunhuang Library Cave was well-preserved for centuries. As the field of Silk Road Studies developed in the twentieth century, the Dunhuang Library Cave was revealed to be a treasure trove of information about the interactions between people, languages, and religions.

The circumstances of Stein's acquisition of the Dunhuang manuscripts set the tone for the later discussions about the Stein collection in the British Museum. An analysis of Stein's own writing about his experience in Dunhuang reveals his approach to Dunhuang, specifically the caretaker of the caves, Wang. Two of Stein's publications will be analyzed in this section, *Ruins of Desert Cathay* (1912) and *Serindia* Volume 2 (1921). The first, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, is Stein's personal account of his travels to China between 1906 and 1908.<sup>27</sup> In this book, Stein recounts his first encounter with Dunhuang and the process of removing the first manuscripts from the Library Cave. *Serindia* also details Stein's 1906-1908 expedition, but it is an official report,<sup>28</sup> rather than a personal diary of experiences. In comparing and analyzing both sources, a fuller picture of Stein's actions in Dunhuang becomes possible. Due to the limitations of language, I am not able to analyze the perspectives of the people Stein interacted with in Dunhuang. In place of this perspective, I will incorporate Jacobs' scholarship on Chinese perspectives to discuss responses to Stein and to prevent a singular perspective history of the acquisition of Dunhuang manuscripts by Stein.

Aurel Stein knew about the potential value of antiquities found at the Dunhuang caves from a paper which was presented by Lajos Lóczy who visited the site in 1879 and remarked on the Buddhist murals in the caves.<sup>29</sup> Upon arriving at Dunhuang in 1907 with his Chinese secretary Chiang, Stein encountered the Daoist monk, Wang Yuanlu, who had assumed the responsibility of caretaker for the site. Stein was immediately interested in the contents of the Library Cave, however, Wang's response to their interest indicated to Stein that trust would need to be gained in order to access the cave: "the Tao-shih showed such perturbation [...] it seemed [...] best to drop the subject for a time."<sup>30</sup> While waiting for tensions to cool between himself and Wang, Stein began to learn about the locals in Dunhuang. He learned that the Dunhuang monastery remained to be an active site of worship for locals.<sup>31</sup> With this knowledge in mind, Stein became all the more aware that his mission was a precarious one which needed to be handled with care. In his words, "[Wang] would be a difficult person to handle."<sup>32</sup> Recognizing the religious significance of the caves, Stein approached Wang with a new tactic to gain his respect: a Chinese patron saint. In conversation with Wang, Stein expressed his devotion to the Chinese figure, Xuanzang.<sup>33</sup> Wang's trust was gained with this action: that evening, Chiang was presented with some manuscripts smuggled from the cave by Wang in the dark.<sup>34</sup> Observing that Wang's trust was in the process of being won by Chiang, Stein remained away from the site for some time allowing Chiang to continue to gain Wang's trust in the form of more manuscripts.<sup>35</sup> It is important that Chiang's role in Stein's acquisition of Dunhuang manuscripts is not understated. Stein did not speak or read any

<sup>23</sup> Hansen, "The Time Capsule of Silk Road History," 181-182.

<sup>24</sup> Hansen, "The Time Capsule of Silk Road History," 178-179.

<sup>25</sup> Hansen, "The Time Capsule of Silk Road History," 181.

<sup>26</sup> Hansen, "The Time Capsule of the Silk Road," 189-193.

<sup>27</sup> M. Aurel Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, vol. 2 (London: Benjamin Blom, 1912), vii.

<sup>28</sup> M. Aurel Stein, *Serindia*, vol. 1 (London: Clarendon Press, 1921), vii.

<sup>29</sup> Hansen, "The Time Capsule of Silk Road History," 167-168.

<sup>30</sup> Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, 166.

<sup>31</sup> Stein, *Serindia*, 802.

<sup>32</sup> Stein, *Serindia*, 803.

<sup>33</sup> Stein, *Serindia*, 805.

<sup>34</sup> Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, 171-172; Stein, *Serindia*, 813.

<sup>35</sup> Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, 171-172.

Chinese and therefore was completely reliant on Chiang to communicate and negotiate with Wang.<sup>36</sup> The fact that Chiang was presented with the first manuscripts indicates that Wang found it easier to trust the person he was directly communicating with, rather than Stein the western foreigner.

Having established Wang's trust, Stein and Chiang began to push the limits of that trust. Their ultimate goal was to remove the manuscripts from the Library Cave, "[rescuing them] from their dismal imprisonment,"<sup>37</sup> and bring them to Britain. Now having been granted access to the cave, Stein and Chiang inspected the manuscripts in the monastery, sharing their findings with Wang as they went.<sup>38</sup> Stein requested that they be allowed to remove some manuscripts to their campsite for "closer examination".<sup>39</sup> Although Stein was never transparent with Wang about the true intentions of his expedition to Dunhuang, it is this moment that Stein begins to demonstrate the attitude of exploitation which condemned him in the eyes of the Chinese. Stein failed to consider that Wang was an observant and shrewd participant in these dealings due to the colonial ideology of the period which characterized non-western peoples as intellectually inferior. Upon realizing Stein's intent to permanently remove manuscripts from the cave, Wang began to demand donations to the temple before more manuscripts were allowed to leave the Library Cave.<sup>40</sup> In his personal account, Stein details that negotiating with Wang would require "very careful handling and [the] suavest manners".<sup>41</sup> Stein had the advantage of already having removed a number of manuscripts and came to the agreement with Wang that for the approximate price of £220, Stein acquired fifty bundles of manuscripts, plus an additional twenty bundles when Wang was assured that the deal was secret.<sup>42</sup> With the successful acquisition of a portion of the Library Cave manuscripts through the cooperation of Wang, Stein returned to Britain with his bundles and the work of organizing and analyzing them began.

While Stein boasted arrogantly about his "bargain,"<sup>43</sup> it is important to note that Stein continued to respect Wang's wishes for the temple in his charge. The claim could be made that Wang was swindled by Stein due to his disadvantage in knowledge about Buddhist texts and the historical significance of the Library Cave, but Stein's accounts make it evident that Wang was aware of Stein's goals. The fact that Wang was so hesitant to let the manuscripts leave the cave, and that he began to ask for a donation in exchange for the manuscripts indicates that Wang was aware of the perceived value of the contents of the cave and the potential profit he could acquire from dealings with Stein. In Jacobs' book *The Compensations of Plunder*, he explores the motivations of the local Chinese population in their dealings and interactions with western archeologists.<sup>44</sup> Jacobs argues that where Westerners saw immense value in antiquities, the Chinese elite, in this case represented by Wang, did not attribute value to antiquities in the same way. Often local peoples accepted payments in exchange for antiquities because they believed it to be a fair transaction.<sup>45</sup> Unlike the westerners, the Chinese did not associate national or cultural legitimacy and history with art which, Jacobs argues, explains why so much Chinese art was taken out of China by archeologists in the early twentieth century.<sup>46</sup> The actions of Wang, then, become clear. As the Daoist priest and caretaker of the still active Dunhuang temple, Wang's priorities were with the maintenance of the temple. As compensation for the loss of the manuscripts in the Library Cave, Wang accepted Stein's donation to the temple as a fair transaction. In the case of Chiang, who acted on behalf of Stein in the negotiations for the Dunhuang manuscripts, it is evident that he did not ascribe national value to the objects in the Dunhuang Library Cave either. As Stein's secretary, Chiang was being paid for the work he did for Stein. By Jacobs' concept of "compensations of plunder", Chiang believed the sale of manuscripts he enabled was being compensated appropriately through the

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<sup>36</sup> Jacobs, "Confronting Indiana Jones," 78.

<sup>37</sup> Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, 178.

<sup>38</sup> Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, 171-172.

<sup>39</sup> Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, 179-180.

<sup>40</sup> Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, 191.

<sup>41</sup> Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, 192.

<sup>42</sup> Duthie, "The British Museum," 16; Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, 193.

<sup>43</sup> Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, 193.

<sup>44</sup> Justin M. Jacobs, "Introduction," in *Compensations of Plunder: How China Lost Its Treasures* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020).

<sup>45</sup> Jacobs, *Compensations of Plunder*, Chapter 1.

<sup>46</sup> Jacobs, *Compensations of Plunder*, 33-35.



wages he earned from Stein. For their differing reasons and prices, both Wang and Chiang were knowing participants in Stein's removal of Dunhuang manuscripts.

Shortly after Stein's first expedition to Dunhuang, French archeologist Paul Pelliot arrived in Dunhuang and made similar dealings with Wang. Similar to Stein, Pelliot arrived in Dunhuang peacefully, in search of manuscripts. Possessing the language skills Stein lacked, Pelliot sorted through the manuscripts left in the Library Cave and identified the most important Chinese texts.<sup>47</sup> Having already dealt successfully with Stein in an exchange, Wang was amenable to dealing with Pelliot as well.<sup>48</sup> As a result, Pelliot removed to France another multiple thousand items from the Dunhuang caves.<sup>49</sup> Pelliot endeared himself to the Chinese differently than Stein did with his gaining of Wang's trust. As he sorted through the manuscripts, Pelliot shared the information he found with Chinese scholars.<sup>50</sup> Although this action was originally endearing to the Chinese, the fact that Pelliot removed the Chinese texts of significance from Dunhuang became a point of contention in the later twentieth century.<sup>51</sup> The actions of subsequent western archeologists excavating at Dunhuang became increasingly violent. Langdon Warner's 1925 expedition, for example, involved the removal of murals from the walls of the Dunhuang caves by way of "fresco-loosening glycerin and cheesecloth".<sup>52</sup> Warner's actions incited local protest and resulted in the criminalization of foreign archeologists by Chinese authorities.<sup>53</sup> Stein's dealings with Wang set a precedent for Chinese-western interactions at Dunhuang. These interactions, however, became increasingly exploitive and violent by the western archeologists.

Why, then, is the process of Stein's (and Pelliot's) acquisition of Chinese antiquities so markedly different from other Chinese collections acquired during the colonial era? The answer lies in part with the comparison between Stein's actions and the actions of the British during the famous looting of the Yuanmingyuan in 1860. The British raided the Summer Palace in Beijing, set fire to the buildings and looted all the valuable goods they could get their hands on. These actions were taken as part of the Opium War where the British tried to make imperial claims over China. The looting of the Yuanmingyuan was explicitly violent, as evidenced by the burning of the buildings.<sup>54</sup> This action is strikingly different from Stein's respectful approach to Dunhuang as an active temple. In the eyes of the British, the looting of the palaces was justified as vengeance for the torture of British and French men by the Chinese authorities.<sup>55</sup> Unlike Stein's action of purchasing the Dunhuang manuscripts, an estimated 1.5 million objects were looted from the Yuanmingyuan and brought into private collections or displayed in military museums.<sup>56</sup> Louise Tythacott's article, "Trophies of War," discusses the use of the looted objects from Yuanmingyuan in British military museums. In these contexts, the objects are used as trophies of British imperialism and "superiority over the Chinese."<sup>57</sup> Even the interpretation of looted items in military museums, Tythacott argues, justifies the conquest narrative of the British perspective of the Opium Wars and the looting of the Yuanmingyuan.<sup>58</sup> As demonstrated here, the British narrative of looted items from the Summer Palace is deeply rooted in conquest narratives and war trophies. The cultural violence enacted by the British is celebrated as victory over a subjugated country and the continued possession and display of the objects demonstrates the continued dominance the British believe themselves to hold over China. Although the Stein collection also carries strong colonial associations, there is less of a conquest narrative associated with the Stein collection. I argue that the reason for this difference in narrative is inherently attached to the acquisition method of these antiquities. Where the looting of the Yuanmingyuan was

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<sup>47</sup> Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, 217.

<sup>48</sup> Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, 217.

<sup>49</sup> International Dunhuang Programme, "Pelliot Collection," The British Library.

<sup>50</sup> Jacobs, "Confronting Indiana Jones," 79-80.

<sup>51</sup> Jacobs, *Compensations of Plunder*, 103.

<sup>52</sup> Jacobs, "Confronting Indiana Jones," 73.

<sup>53</sup> Jacobs, "Confronting Indiana Jones," 73-74.

<sup>54</sup> Lynn Hatem, "Restoring History: The Return of Looted Treasures to the Old Summer Palace," *Beijing Times*, 12 May 2024.

<sup>55</sup> Chris Bowlby, "A place of shame that makes China angry," *BBC News*, 2 February 2015; Louise Tythacott, "Trophies of War: Representing 'Summer Palace' Loot in Military Museums in the UK," *Museum and Society* 13, no. 4 (2015), 472.

<sup>56</sup> Tythacott, "Trophies of War," 469. See also: Wardęga, "Chinese Heritage with European Characteristics," *Politeja* no. 73 (2021), 12.

<sup>57</sup> Tythacott, "Trophies of War," 470-471.

<sup>58</sup> Tythacott, "Trophies of War," 483.

explicitly violent, Stein's acquisition of the Dunhuang manuscripts was respectful. This difference is also evident in the Chinese response to the two stolen collections.

In China, the ruins of the Yuanmingyuan remain to be a historical site of remembrance for the century of humiliation.<sup>59</sup> The loss of Chinese history and culture which occurred through British looting of the palaces is felt deeply by the Chinese and motivates the repatriation of these lost objects. As of 2024, only one tenth of the stolen objects have been repatriated to China.<sup>60</sup> In many cases, the only reason objects have been repatriated is because they went on auction and were bid for by wealthy Chinese.<sup>61</sup> The repatriation of these looted objects is extremely slow and despite efforts of Chinese researchers to discover the whereabouts of objects in museum collections, British authorities refuse to give information about the whereabouts of Yuanmingyuan objects<sup>62</sup> or acknowledge the circumstances under which the objects were taken.<sup>63</sup> By contrast, the British Museum is much more open about the location of their collections. For example, on the main page about the Stein collection on the IDP website, the locations of the collection are immediately listed with specifics of where certain parts of the collection have been dispersed to.<sup>64</sup> Additionally, the British Library has a very open access policy in terms of requesting to view items from the collection. By holding a current Reader's Pass, one can request items from the collection, including the Stein collection, to be made available to them in a reading room, exactly as one would with any other archive.<sup>65</sup> Although the British Museum and British Library fail to explicitly acknowledge the fact that the Stein collection was acquired by colonial means, their access policy makes them much easier to navigate for Chinese researchers. On the subject of Chinese museum institutions, Wardęga notes that because of the political and cultural history of China in the twentieth century, namely the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution which targeted the destruction of artifacts,<sup>66</sup> Chinese museums and institutions are at a disadvantage. Where Western institutions had a long-standing tradition of cultural heritage through artifacts, Chinese museum institutions were in danger during the wars and only began to create policies to protect cultural heritage in the 1980s.<sup>67</sup> With the failure of British institutions to acknowledge and make available looted Yuanmingyuan objects and the continued marring of Chinese culture through western gatekeeping, it is unsurprising that China is adamant about repatriating the stolen objects. Because the British Library has ensured easy and open access to the Stein collection, there have been significantly less calls from China for the repatriation of Stein's stolen Dunhuang manuscripts.

It is also important to acknowledge the difference between the looted objects of the Yuanmingyuan and the documents of the Stein collection. Some of the objects that are most sought after by Chinese authorities from the 1860 looting are marble pillars and animal head sculptures from the Chinese zodiac.<sup>68</sup> One reason these objects are so sought after in China is because of their significance to the Han-Chinese culture.<sup>69</sup> Unlike the Dunhuang manuscripts which represent the diversity of the Silk Road, the objects which were in the Summer Palace represented elite Han culture which has been used by the Chinese Communist Party to create a unified Chinese identity. This suggests that because the Stein collection presents a more diverse picture of ancient China, which goes against the ideology of the Chinese government, it is less sought after. Another important difference between the two collections of artifacts is their physical attributes. The fact that the stolen Yuanmingyuan objects are largely physical objects makes them a greater target for repatriation requests. Unlike a document which can be scanned, photographed, and copied, physical artifacts are much more difficult to copy and share between institutions. Since the Dunhuang Stein collection is comprised of mainly manuscripts it is much easier for institutions to make the content of the documents available to an international audience. The existence of the IDP is reliant on the fact that

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<sup>59</sup> Bowlby, "A place of shame that makes China angry," *BBC News*.

<sup>60</sup> Hatem, "Restoring History," *Beijing Times*.

<sup>61</sup> Bowlby, "A place of shame that makes China angry," *BBC News*.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>63</sup> Lynn Hatem, "Global Dispute Over Cultural Artifacts: The British Museum Controversy," *Beijing Times*, 6 December 2023.

<sup>64</sup> IDP, "The Stein Collection(s)," The British Library.

<sup>65</sup> "Research," The British Library.

<sup>66</sup> Wardęga, "Chinese Heritage with European Characteristics," 18.

<sup>67</sup> Wardęga, "Chinese Heritage with European Characteristics," 17, 23-24.

<sup>68</sup> Hatem, "Restoring History" *Beijing Times*.

<sup>69</sup> See: Jacobs, "Confronting Indiana Jones," 83-86.

the Dunhuang objects are largely manuscripts which have been scanned and digitized in detail so that one can scrutinize the documents without needing to physically visit them. The answer for why there are no calls to repatriate the Stein collection lies in the fact that the collection is fundamentally different from other stolen Chinese collections. Not only do the documents in the Stein collection bring into question the Chinese Communist Party's Han-Chinese national identity which makes them undesirable as repatriated artifacts, the collection is simply easier to share than the physical objects stolen from the Summer Palace. Since the Stein collection has been made available in great detail online, due to its textual nature, it is accessible and therefore could be perceived as less of a cultural loss than that of physical artifacts.

If the Stein collection was acquired and brought to Britain peacefully and through legitimate means, how then has it been presented in Britain? As discussed, the looted objects from the Yuanmingyuan have been used in British military museums as trophies of conquest and strength. The Stein collection has not been presented with this narrative. Instead, the Stein collection has had a history of open access. A historiography of the Stein collection catalogues reveals evolving museum technology and increasingly decolonial access to the collection.

The first catalogue that was published with the objects in the Stein collection was authored by Arthur Whaley in 1931. Whaley was in the Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings when the Stein collection arrived at the British Museum.<sup>70</sup> The catalogue is split into two parts: the first contains the items in the British Museum and the second contains the items in the Museum of Central Asian Antiquities in Delhi.<sup>71</sup> From this first catalogue, it is evident that the unity of the Dunhuang collection is the main priority of those working with the collection at the British Museum. This catalogue, however, only contains the paintings in the Stein collection. The manuscripts acquired from Dunhuang by Stein are absent from this collection. This catalogue does, however, include important context about the painters, the style, and the significance of the paintings, as well as descriptions of the divinities depicted in the artwork.<sup>72</sup> This inclusion is important because it expands the accessibility of the catalogue beyond experts in Chinese Buddhist artwork. The contents of this catalogue, however, are limited to the technology of the time: only written descriptions of the artwork are included in the catalogue. Despite these limitations, Whaley's catalogue was the go-to catalogue for the artwork of the Stein collection until the 1980s.<sup>73</sup>

The next catalogue of the Stein collection was compiled by Lionel Giles who was responsible for cataloguing and numbering the entirety of the Stein collection at the British Museum.<sup>74</sup> This careful organization and cataloguing was essential to the future of the collection. Due to Giles' attention to detail while cataloguing, the full scope of the Stein collection emerged. Giles' catalogue of the Stein collection was published in 1957 after the work of cataloguing the entire collection was completed.<sup>75</sup> In this catalogue, Giles organizes the Stein collection according to subject (ex. Buddhist texts, Daoist texts, Manichean texts, secular texts).<sup>76</sup> Since Giles was the first to study the Stein collection in depth, much of his focus is on the elements of the manuscripts which indicate their dates.<sup>77</sup> In this early period of studying the Stein collection, the focus was mainly on understanding the full extent of the collection itself. Giles' careful cataloguing of the collection and the focus on dating the manuscripts makes this fact evident. This work revealed the full extent of the Stein collection (thousands of manuscripts), and the range of dates present at Dunhuang, aiding in establishing it in Silk Road history.

A less significant catalogue also published by Whaley in 1960 was *Ballads and Stories from Tun Huang*. This catalogue is an anthology of literature found at Dunhuang. Whaley's work demonstrates the increasing specialization

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<sup>70</sup> Arthur Whaley, "Preface," in *A Catalogue of Paintings Recovered from Tun Huang by Sir Aurel Stein* (London: 1931); Roderick Whitfield, *The Art of Central Asia: The Stein Collection in the British Museum*, vol. 1 (Kodansha Ltd., 1982), 15.

<sup>71</sup> Whaley, "Introduction," in *A Catalogue of Paintings Recovered from Tun Huang*.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Rong, "Major Collections of Dunhuang Manuscripts," 138.

<sup>74</sup> Rong, "Major Collections of Dunhuang Manuscripts," 140.

<sup>75</sup> Rong, "Major Collections of Dunhuang Manuscripts," 141.

<sup>76</sup> Lionel Giles, "Introduction," in *Descriptive Catalogue of the Chinese Manuscripts from Tunhuang in the British Museum* (London: The Trustees of the British Museum, 1957).

<sup>77</sup> Giles, "Introduction," in *Descriptive Catalogue of the Chinese Manuscripts from Tunhuang*.

of Silk Road studies. Unlike Giles' catalogue which focused on organizing and cataloguing the entirety of the Stein collection, this work focuses on a specific type of manuscript in the collection. *Ballads and Stories* contributed to an increase in access to Dunhuang manuscripts by providing translations and interpretive notes for the literature of the Stein collection.<sup>78</sup> Another element of Whaley's work which is of interest to the history of the Stein collection in the British Museum is the afterword of the book. In this chapter, Whaley sympathizes with the increasing resentment felt towards Stein in China. The dispersal of the Dunhuang manuscripts across the world into museum collections is bemoaned by Whaley and the point is made that the separation of the collection impairs the study of Dunhuang manuscripts greatly.<sup>79</sup> These observations further emphasize the importance of reuniting the Dunhuang collection which remained to be the focus of catalogues of the Stein collection. This afterword is of immense significance to the decolonization of the Stein collection because it represents the shifting perception of colonially acquired antiquities in Britain. This catalog, compiled with the use of the Stein collection at the British Museum, expanded the use and specialization of the Dunhuang manuscripts.

The next, most complete catalogue was published by Roderick Whitfield in 1982. Building off Arthur Whaley's 1931 catalogue, this three-volume catalogue contains high-quality images of the textiles and some manuscripts in the Stein collection. For this catalogue, Whitfield, then the curator of the Stein collection, collaborated with the British Library to include manuscripts in the Stein collection.<sup>80</sup> This catalogue, like Whaley's and Giles', emphasizes the importance of uniting the Dunhuang collection in one source. Whitfield accomplishes this through the inclusion of manuscripts in the catalogue. The most important aspect of this catalogue is the colour plates of the artwork in the collection. The images demonstrate the massive development in museum technology since the 1930s. This was not, however, the first time that images of the Stein collection were made available to broader scholarship. In the late 1950s, microfilm versions of the Stein collection were made available to scholars in China and Japan.<sup>81</sup> These copies were hardly sufficient due to their low quality and work by Chinese and Japanese scholars emerged slowly during the second half of the twentieth century. The significance of this catalogue is that it made detailed images and descriptions of the Stein collection available to international scholars unlike ever before.

Essential to the progress outlined above is the curator of the Stein collection at both the British Museum and the British Library. Assistant Keeper in the Department of Oriental Antiquities in the British Museum from 1968 to 1984, Roderick Whitfield, and curator of the Silk Road manuscripts in the British Library during the 1990s, Susan Whitfield, who have no apparent personal connection, were instrumental in making the Stein collection openly available. Until Roderick Whitfield's arrival at the British Museum, interest in and work on the Stein collection had been stagnant. Roderick Whitfield's tenure as Assistant Keeper "coincided with the opening of Communist China under Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms" which led to increased interaction between the British Museum and Chinese scholars and museum institutions.<sup>82</sup> One of Roderick Whitfield's main focuses with the Stein collection was proper preservation of the collection. As such, he engaged in trips to China to learn conservation methods and to visit Dunhuang itself.<sup>83</sup> Whitfield remarked that the director of Dunhuang "had a grudge against the English because of Stein".<sup>84</sup> Despite the changing opinions about Stein in China, Roderick Whitfield continued to partner with Chinese and Japanese scholars. During his tenure, researchers from China came to the British Museum to photograph the Stein collection as part of their work for a catalogue of secular manuscripts from Dunhuang.<sup>85</sup> Whitfield's time at the British Museum also encompassed the exchange of microfilm and the publication of *The Art of Central Asia* catalogue. These developments in the exchange of Dunhuang knowledge between 1960 and 1980 indicate Roderick Whitfield's focus on creating positive connections between the British Museum and China. Whitfield's tenure is also evidence of China's opening to the west and the British Museum's beginning to decolonize the Stein collection through increased access.

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<sup>78</sup> Arthur Whaley, "Preface," in *Ballads and Stories from Tun Huang* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1960).

<sup>79</sup> Whaley, "Afterword," in *Ballads and Stories from Tun Huang*, 238.

<sup>80</sup> Whitfield, *Art of Central Asia*, 7.

<sup>81</sup> Rong, "Major Collections of Dunhuang Manuscripts," 142-146.

<sup>82</sup> Sonya S. Lee, "An Interview with Roderick Whitfield on the Stein Collection in the British Museum," *The Silk Road* 17 (2019), 10.

<sup>83</sup> Lee, "An Interview with Roderick Whitfield," 18-19.

<sup>84</sup> Lee, "An Interview with Roderick Whitfield," 19.

<sup>85</sup> Lee, "An Interview with Roderick Whitfield," 17.

Beginning in the 1990s, Susan Whitfield became the curator of the Silk Road manuscripts at the British Library. Under her leadership, the British Library launched the IDP database in 1994. This project was created with the goal of “creating a partnership” between institutions who own Dunhuang manuscripts to collaborate on conservation and increased access.<sup>86</sup> Among the priorities of the IDP are “high-quality digital images” of the Dunhuang manuscripts alongside “supporting information” to help make the information available.<sup>87</sup> This project is focused on digitizing the Dunhuang collection, currently dispersed internationally, and providing open access to the entire collection through an online database. The mission of this database is explicitly decolonial. By making the Stein collection, and the rest of the Dunhuang Cave manuscripts, publicly available online, the British Library is actively engaging in decolonizing their ownership of Dunhuang manuscripts. As Susan Whitfield describes, there were previously significant obstacles to this kind of database being possible. The limitations of microfilm were such that paintings and other manuscripts with colour could not be rendered effectively.<sup>88</sup> Until the digital age, the unification of the Dunhuang collection was also limited due to the amount of storage such a collection would require. The fact that the digital age has coincided with the post-colonial age is of immense significance to the British Library and the IDP. Through the use of modern technology, the IDP has facilitated digitization, collaboration, and open access across the globe. As if returning to its original, free-flowing state at Dunhuang in the first millenium, the manuscripts from Dunhuang have been reunited unlike ever before through the power of the internet and the IDP.

A historiographical article by Chunwen Hao describes the struggles of Chinese scholars studying Dunhuang manuscripts and art during the twentieth century due to the removal of objects out of China. In 1962, after the exchange of microfilms of the Stein collection from the British Museum, *A General Catalogue of Dunhuang Manuscripts* was published in China.<sup>89</sup> This catalogue included the whereabouts of manuscripts, marking the increasing Chinese resentment towards European archeologists of the early twentieth century. After the publication of this catalogue and increased access to Dunhuang manuscripts in China, there began a significant increase in Chinese research and specialization related to Dunhuang.<sup>90</sup> With this increase of scholarship came an increase of publications and catalogues in China of the Dunhuang manuscripts, including a catalog of manuscripts in the British Museum specifically.<sup>91</sup> As Hao argues, the increased access to the Dunhuang collection in China gave way to increased scholarship and research in China about Dunhuang. What is also remarkable about the latter half of the twentieth century is that the British Museum was willingly partnering with Chinese institutions and providing access to the Stein collection. Further evidence of the British Museum’s prioritization of open access came in the late 1990s with the launch of the IDP database.

The IDP was founded by institutions with significant Dunhuang collections, the British Library being the host institution.<sup>92</sup> As the project has continued to develop, other institutions have been added to the list of partners, further expanding the scope of the database. Today, the IDP database extends beyond the contents of the Dunhuang Library Cave and can now be described as the online home for all materials related to the Eastern Silk Roads.<sup>93</sup> The IDP promotes education about the Eastern Silk Roads through open access to digitized collections from around the world. IDP also promotes intellectual and technological development across the associated institutions.<sup>94</sup> The British Library’s facilitation of the exchange of knowledge through the IDP is evidence of their dedication of decolonizing the Stein collection. In no way is the Stein collection emphasized as a collection of prestige on the website, despite the British Library’s ownership of the collection and their position of prominence over the website. Due to the fragile nature of the artifacts in the Stein collection, digitization is the ideal way to

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<sup>86</sup> Whitfield, “The International Dunhuang Project: Chinese Central Asia Online,” n.p.

<sup>87</sup> Whitfield, “The International Dunhuang Project: Chinese Central Asia Online,” n.p.

<sup>88</sup> Whitfield, “The International Dunhuang Project: A Challenge for Digitization,” 18.

<sup>89</sup> Hao, “A Retrospective,” 99.

<sup>90</sup> Hao, “A Retrospective,” 102.

<sup>91</sup> Hao, “A Retrospective,” 101.

<sup>92</sup> International Dunhuang Programme, “IDP London,” The British Library.

<sup>93</sup> International Dunhuang Programme, “About the International Dunhuang Programme (IDP),” The British Library.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

preserve and share the documents.<sup>95</sup> It can be inferred, therefore, that because of their fragility and the British Library's ample funding the Stein collection will continue to remain under the ownership of the British Library. It is important to note, however, that the circumstances surrounding Stein's acquisition of the Dunhuang manuscripts are not discussed by the IDP.<sup>96</sup> This omission is curious in the context of the IDP, given its decolonial mission. As an intellectual institution, I would speculate that the British Library is hesitant to publish information which cannot be supported as undeniable fact. It is possible that the IDP is hesitant to represent Stein's status in China as a fact of his character because he is a person of the past who can no longer speak for himself on the matter. As Jacobs demonstrates, Stein's reputation has changed throughout the past century. It is possible that the IDP is hesitant to publish a firm stance on Stein's acquisition methods because the interpretation of his ethics have been, and could continue to be, subject to change. Including acknowledgement of the colonial origins of the objects on the IDP website, however, is essential to the decolonial mission of the project and the obscuration of acquisition history for these items is problematic. While the existence of the IDP as an internationally available database in collaboration with international institutions is of immense significance to the decolonization of the Stein collection and other Silk Road collections, there is still room to improve. It will be important for the IDP to include information about the history of the objects within their database to maintain a decolonial mission. Regardless of the areas in need of improvement, the IDP's dedication to open access demonstrates the British Library's prioritization of decolonizing the Stein collection.

This paper has demonstrated the ways in which the Stein collection at the British Museum is completely different from other stolen Chinese collections which were removed to the west. First, the circumstances surrounding the acquisition of the Yuanmingyuan objects, versus Stein's acquisition of the Dunhuang manuscripts are very different. The British raid and looting of the palaces were explicitly violent. The fact that the buildings themselves were burned down and every object in sight was looted and taken from China entrenches the looting of Yuanmingyuan in violence and resentment. Stein, on the other hand, respected the Dunhuang Caves and their caretaker, Wang. While there was some deception involved in Stein's dealings with Wang, it was never violent, and the acquisition of manuscripts was negotiated and agreed upon. The peaceful nature of Stein's dealings at Dunhuang makes his collection unique and is a reason for the few calls for repatriation of Dunhuang manuscripts. Another reason for the vigilant calls for the repatriation of Yuanmingyuan objects is the cultural significance they hold. Unlike the diverse body of manuscripts from Dunhuang which represents a great variety of languages and religions in China in the first millennium, the artworks from the Summer Palace are associated with traditional Chinese culture and heritage. Their connection to the emperor and the historical power of the Chinese empire is of much greater importance to the Chinese identity than the outpost documents of Dunhuang. Finally, given the nature of the Dunhuang manuscripts, and the work of the British Museum, the collection has been reunited digitally for international use. Meanwhile, Yuanmingyuan looted objects that were placed in private collections remain private until they appear on auction. The difference in access is another reason the calls for the repatriation of Yuanmingyuan objects are more numerous than calls for the repatriation of Dunhuang manuscripts. The Stein collection and the ongoing increase in access to the collection throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is an example of alternative options for repatriation. As the collection was catalogued and copied onto microfilm, it was made available to scholars across the globe. The tradition of open access to the collection has culminated in the International Dunhuang Programme, a database which has reunited the manuscripts of Dunhuang in an online, public access database. This database operates with the priority of making artifacts from the Silk Road internationally available in the form of high-quality digitized images. The IDP has been instrumental in demonstrating the potential and efficacy of decolonizing a collection through open access. Given its nature as a textual collection, making it easily digitizable, and the peaceful nature of its acquisition the Stein collection is a unique museum collection. Its uniqueness lies not only in the contents of its objects, but in the way it has become an example of the British Museum and British Library's successful decolonization of the collection through digitization rather than repatriation.

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<sup>95</sup> See: Susan Whitfield and Frances Wood, "Dunhuang and Turfan: Contents and Conservation of Ancient Documents From Central Asia," (London: British Library, 1996).

<sup>96</sup> International Dunhuang Programme, "The Stein Collection(s)," The British Library.

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Amphora (possibly), c. 560BCE, The British Museum



Isabella G. Murray, "Freezing Palace, Thawing Dreams: The Education of Middle and Upper Class Girls in Victorian England," HI432 Seminar in British History with Dr. Amy Milne-Smith

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Glittery and golden, middle- and upper-class Victorian life from the outside appears like a fantasy. Children frolicked in the garden, went shopping with their mothers, played with their siblings in the schoolroom in their house, flipped through pages of books from stacked bookshelves, and smiled and laughed and lived. But it was colder than it looked, especially for girls. Frilly dresses would not keep them warm from the disabilities of simply being born a woman in Victorian era England. However, two truths can exist at once. This palace was a wonderful place to dream, and it was a place where girls got as close as they could to making those dreams a reality. Middle- and upper-class girls occupied an interesting and complex position in a patriarchal society: they were simultaneously privileged and unprivileged. In 1859, the Newcastle Commission was established to investigate public education across England to see what actions were required to extend elementary education to all classes of people. Its report published in 1861 surveyed that in England one-seventh of the population could be categorized as middle and upper class.<sup>1</sup> Only 14% of about 2.6 million children that were attending schools were of the middle and upper class.<sup>2</sup> These children lived lives of exclusivity, inhibiting social circles that would never be entered by the majority of England's population. But within that, only seven girls to every ten boys, at the best ratio, went to school.<sup>3</sup>

Education and the Victorian school system allows us to see the paradox that existed within the lives of middle and upper-class girls based on the intersection of their class and gender. The children of wealthy classes attended high-level, formal schooling institutions. The cost of tuition translated to better teachers and materials, while also keeping it exclusionary to working class children. Daughters could be partly removed from their subjugated position as girls and placed into a new position where they received the benefits of proper schooling, rather than entering society as a child labourer or remaining illiterate. But the emphasis is on partly: by virtue of being a girl, the opportunities higher-class education could provide to them shrunk significantly. Gender was a source of confinement. Length spent in school, the quality of education, and the types of subjects taught all changed depending on if the student was a girl or boy. Accordingly, education in a systemic sense—the way it was taught and what was taught—was oppressive because of gender, but education in a theoretical sense—the acquisition of knowledge and the ability to do so—was liberating because of class. This paper will chart the course of formal and informal education through the 1830s to the 1890s, underscoring periods of stagnation and dynamism. What a person knows and does not know defines their capabilities. This is especially true for girls, where education is a tool to prepare them for a predetermined future, and more importantly, to keep them out of other ones. Though this did not come without resistance, bolstered and made successful by class privilege.

Historical work on education in Victorian Britain is rich, richer even so with a focus on girls. Originally published in 1945, W.B. Stephens' *Education in Britain, 1750-1914* gives one of the first comprehensive overviews of education in Britain from the mid-18th century to the early 20th century. He takes an extremely broad view: urban and rural, upper and working class, across the entirety of Britain. Primarily Stephens threads the process of industrialization alongside how education developed.<sup>4</sup> Margaret E. Bryant writing in the late 1970s focused on how the movement of women's emancipation (primarily related to access to better, higher education) specifically came out of the Industrial Revolution and the social transformation that accompanied it. A part of this was the patriarchal society women were confined within, which Bryant connected to the deficiency of

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<sup>1</sup> Florence S. Boos, "Uneven Access: Working-Class Women and the Education Acts," in *Memoirs of Victorian Working-Class Women*, (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 36.

<sup>2</sup> Lionel Rose, *The Erosion of Childhood* (United Kingdom: Routledge, 1991), 161.

<sup>3</sup> Dorothea Beale, *Reports issued by the Schools' Inquiry Commission on the Education of Girls* (London: David Nutt, 1869), 21.

<sup>4</sup> William Brewer Stephens, *Education in Britain, 1750-1914* (Basingstoke (GB) New York: Macmillan St. Martin's press, 1998), 1-12.

middle-class girls' education.<sup>5</sup> Bryant's gender-based approach to the topic was continued with Joan N. Burstyn's *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood* in 1980. She too looked at the shaping force of industrialism. She focused on the middle class, but addressed class differences in received education, positioning middle class girls as equal to lower class children based on the intention of social control. The majority of her focus was on the way ideal womanhood was challenged by women's move towards higher education.<sup>6</sup> Both Bryant and Burstyn take top-down approaches. They write with consideration to class and gender, but neglect the experiences of children in the existing systems of education.

Unlike previous institutional and intellectual studies, scholarly works on Victorian girls' education in the 2000s began to primarily use autobiographies to shape their arguments. This emphasized the individuality and experiences of the women. Jane Martin and Joyce Goodman wrote on educators and adult women who pushed for changes in educational opportunity for women.<sup>7</sup> Mary Hilton and Pam Hirsch centered women as change-makers in education movements rather than the typical foregrounding of men.<sup>8</sup> Jane McDermid focused on the pre-university education of girls across the UK, using a comparative focus on gender, class, religion, and nationality.<sup>9</sup> While not focusing on education, Seth Koven's book *The Match Girl and the Heiress* looked at the childhood experiences of an upper class girl and a working class girl. He identified the paradox of how upper-class girls suffered because of their sex but still had freedom and power because of their class.<sup>10</sup> With a more specific focus on reconstructing middle- and upper-class girls' experiences in school before the university level, my research will fit into this overall framework.

The methodology of social history is integral when dealing with the spectrum of positionality in a critical way. Peoples' experiences are shaped by their identities which are not always given due attention in top-down approaches to history. In the context of this paper, the positionality of the subjects—their class, gender, age, and so on—is necessary to understanding the type of oppression and liberation they experienced. Social history is intrinsically tied to gender history. It is a way of "challenging centuries of silence" where written history neglected women.<sup>11</sup> By focusing on experiences rather than legislation, social history gives women their own voices to speak and share an authentic reality. To study a few people in great detail fosters a more intimate connection between researcher and subject in a way that makes the understanding of the historical time more genuine. In particular, the approach of this paper will mirror a "history of everyday things."<sup>12</sup> These small moments, sometimes overlooked, are perhaps more of a shaping force than they appear to be.

These experiences will be revealed primarily through life-writing: autobiographies, biographies, and memoirs. Victoria Woolf compares biography to a wax figure, an effigy with a "smooth superficial likeness" to the body it imitates.<sup>13</sup> This idea of imitation, or mimesis, is prevalent in discussion of life-writing. What is written can only ever be an attempt to mimic the actual life of a person; it can never be wholly true. This presents a complicated issue for historians: how can one tell what is and is not fact?<sup>14</sup> By highlighting Constance Maynard's (1849–1935) words of commitment in her own writing, Laura Green cautions that when approaching Victorian autobiography, historians should acknowledge that they need to "try not to read the present back into the past."<sup>15</sup> Ultimately, life-writing is an act of purposeful creation, a self-portrait. What authors viewed as the correct version of

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<sup>5</sup> Margaret E. Bryant, *The Unexpected Revolution: A Study in the History of the Education of Women and Girls in the Nineteenth Century* (London: University of London, Institute of Education, 1979), 11-23.

<sup>6</sup> Joan N. Burstyn, *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood* (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes & Noble, 1980), 11.

<sup>7</sup> Jane Martin and Joyce Goodman, *Women and Education, 1800-1980* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 2-4.

<sup>8</sup> Mary Hilton and Pam Hirsch, *Practical Visionaries: Women, Education, and Social Progress, 1790-1930* (Harlow, England; Longman, 2000), 2.

<sup>9</sup> Jane McDermid, *The Schooling of Girls in Britain and Ireland, 1800-1900* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 1-2.

<sup>10</sup> Seth Koven, *The Match Girl and the Heiress* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 11.

<sup>11</sup> John Tosh, ed., "History from Below," in *Historians on History* (London; New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2018), 83.

<sup>12</sup> Tosh, "History from Below," 80.

<sup>13</sup> Juliette Atkinson, *Victorian Biography Reconsidered: A Study of Nineteenth-Century "Hidden" Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1.

<sup>14</sup> Susan Groag Bell and Marilyn Yalom, *Revealing Lives: Autobiography, Biography, and Gender* (Albany (N.Y.): State University of New York Press, 1990), 2-4.

<sup>15</sup> Laura Green, "Rethinking Inadequacy: Constance Maynard and Victorian Autobiography," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 47, no. 3 (2019): 499.

themselves was revealed through autobiography—the culmination of the act of self-interrogation and the physical process of writing.

Most of the autobiographies read for this paper are from women who went on to have lives in education, politics, or activism, where they thought their lives were worthy of recording. These narratives were constrained by class and gender. In terms of class, the idea of legacy was a big convention of life-writing.<sup>16</sup> The Victorian middle and upper classes prized outward reputations; thus the idea of legacy was paramount to their writing. All forms of writing enter into a generic contract with the audience: as the genre becomes popular, it presumes a set of conventions and themes that are followed which might influence how people write. Literary conventions that shape fiction might influence style and form of non-fiction writing, allowing the author to exaggerate or downplay certain things, to dress up (or down) their lives.<sup>17</sup> On top of these conventions, life-writing in this paper also is influenced by gender, the “deep imprinting of cultural beliefs, values, and expectations” based on biological sex.<sup>18</sup> Because these beliefs end up forming core parts of identity, the appearance of them might be more unconscious in the writing, what Bell & Yalom describe as “the loaded associations and unspoken thoughts and feelings.”<sup>19</sup> Women writers not only are writing about their individual selves, but they also are writing within the larger marginalized community of women.<sup>20</sup> Through life-writing, this paper will aim to reconstruct the ‘typical’ educational experiences of middle and upper class girls by looking at the social expectations they operated under, and how that shaped the lessons, learning environment, and the teachers in both education at home and in a formal classroom.

### The Conditions of Girlhood & Purposes of Education

Before looking at examples of educational experiences, it is important to address the social contexts that create the framework the experiences existed within. Victorian conceptions of femininity and socioeconomic status determined the type of education received. These conceptions were influenced by public and private spheres. Victorian life was centrally focused around the nuclear family.<sup>21</sup> Mother and father, woman and man, had separate but complementary roles in society that relegated them to certain arenas. Men, who were the breadwinners, entered the public sphere. Women, particularly upper class women who did not have careers, remained (for the most part) in the domestic sphere, doing housework and raising children.<sup>22</sup> Coventry Patmore’s *The Angel in the House* affirmed this gendered division.<sup>23</sup> Middle and upper class girls were meant to become household angels: submissive and dependent, innocent and entertaining, and working to make the home a holy and loving place of comfort for the men,<sup>24</sup> a “haven of peace.”<sup>25</sup>

Education was a key tool to fitting the child for their prescribed role: a leader of the nation or an angel of the house. A letter written by Marie Belloc Lowndes’ cousin, René Millet, to her father offers an example of how some upper-class Victorian adults imagined the futures of male and female children before the children even had a chance to speak for themselves. Lowndes, at the time of the letter aged three, and her younger brother, aged two, were staying with Millet in the summer of 1871. When writing about Lowndes, Millet described her complexion, her femininity, and how she was spoiled. She had “innumerable funny and delightful little ways.” When writing about her brother, Millet noted that his solemn look would not be an obstacle to “his enjoying a brilliant career.” In fact, it would be an asset to him in politics. He joked that the toddler’s face sometimes looked like he was asking himself if he should be a Member of Parliament. In the meantime, “his lively laughing

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<sup>16</sup> Atkinson, *Victorian Biography Reconsidered*, 223-224.

<sup>17</sup> Oliver S. Buckton, *Secret Selves: Confession and Same-Sex Desire in Victorian Autobiography* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 1.

<sup>18</sup> Bell and Yalom, *Revealing Lives*, 5.

<sup>19</sup> Bell and Yalom, *Revealing Lives*, 6-7.

<sup>20</sup> Linda H. Peterson, “On the Victorian ‘Origins’ of Women’s Autobiography: Reconstructing the Traditions,” in *Traditions of Victorian Women’s Autobiography: The Poetics and Politics of Life Writing* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 41.

<sup>21</sup> Sally Mitchell, *Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland Pub., 1988), 143.

<sup>22</sup> E. Jordan, “Making Good Wives And Mothers - The Transformation Of Middle-Class Girls Education In 19th-Century Britain,” *History of Education Quarterly* 31, no. 4 (1991): 439–62: 443.

<sup>23</sup> Martin Hewitt, *The Victorians: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2023), 29.

<sup>24</sup> Beata Kiersnowska, “New Sporting Woman – A New Ideal of Womanhood in Late Victorian England?” in *New Perspectives in English and American Studies* (United States: Jagiellonian University, 2022), 147.

<sup>25</sup> Burstyn, *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood*, 32.

roguish sister [would] have ... a happy life."<sup>26</sup> Boys' education was "designed to provide men to run an empire."<sup>27</sup> Girls' education took on a different goal.

Etiquette manuals further illuminate what exactly a "happy" life in the domestic sphere would entail. Women would write letters, call on people in their social circles to visit, style the rooms of their houses, attend public balls, private theatricals, garden parties, excursions and picnics.<sup>28</sup> The upper classes had strict social codes that needed to be learned and followed, especially in the presence of others. Women were responsible for receiving visitors in an "easy, quiet, and self-possessed manner."<sup>29</sup> They needed to be graceful and stand correctly, position their feet properly, and hold their arms in specific ways. Conversation was important but not what was said, rather *how* it was said.<sup>30</sup> In a section on conversation, Samuel Roberts Wells in *How to Behave: A Pocket Manual of Etiquette, and Guide to Correct Personal Habits* said that women were "never tired of hearing of themselves and their children."<sup>31</sup> Women were not expected to hold intellectual discussions with others. Rather, these manuals highlighted their duty to entertain. Without any anxiety or opposition women needed to sing or play piano when music commenced to entertain guests.<sup>32</sup> Education at home would offer a place to first learn of these expectations. Formal education outside the home would be a place for girls to practice these traits with women of society to correct and guide them.

In this way, education was less about intellectual training and more about moral and domestic training. Parents wanted girls to be prepared to do household and entertainment-based tasks. They expressed these opinions in family magazines. An opinion piece in *Cassell's Family Magazine* from 1886 believed that while it was noble to be a scholar, it was much more noble "to be a helpful and loving daughter, sister, or wife."<sup>33</sup> Other parents complained when changes in education outside the home were made. The anonymous author of "A Perplexed Mother" in *Girl's Own Paper* was frustrated that her daughter's school replaced necessary lessons like stocking mending and the sewing on buttons with Euclid and algebra.<sup>34</sup> Another set of parents contemplated the usefulness of many of the components of school. They wanted their girls to be able to manage their own homes one day—to cook dinner *and* eat it, to make a dress *and* wear it. Ornamental topics at school like science and art would not be helpful in their post-school lives.<sup>35</sup> These opinions and social contexts directly influenced what education both in and outside of the home would look like—if it would be a source of empowerment and betterment, restriction and confinement, or both.

### Boys for the world, Girls for the drawing-room

Education was a means to an end for children of Victorian society. The places they received their education also impacted the levels of liberation and oppression the girls experienced. The majority of a middle- and upper-class girl's education was received in the home. Some girls, particularly the most wealthy, never stepped foot into a school as a student.<sup>36</sup> Learning at home was a good avenue for young women as the emphasis of their education was on domestic duties. Girls also needed to be literate, know the basics of arithmetic, and develop "accomplishments" like drawing, playing piano and singing, or creating textile art through needlework.<sup>37</sup> There was not a clear cut curriculum or universal expectation of a certain level of proficiency in a given subject, especially as teachers in the home tended to be mothers or governesses. Left in the hands of professionally

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<sup>26</sup> Marie Belloc Lowndes, *I, too, have Lived in Arcadia: A Record of Love and of Childhood* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1941), 207-208.

<sup>27</sup> Christopher Harvie and Colin Matthew, *Nineteenth-Century Britain: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 97.

<sup>28</sup> Lady Gertrude Elizabeth Campbell, *Etiquette of Good Society* (London, Cassell & Co., 1893), v-viii.

<sup>29</sup> Samuel Roberts Wells, *How to Behave: A Pocket Manual of Etiquette, and Guide to Correct Personal Habits* (London: Walter Scott Publishing, 1857), 67.

<sup>30</sup> Wells, *How to Behave*, 42.

<sup>31</sup> Wells, *How to Behave*, 73.

<sup>32</sup> Wells, *How to Behave*, 75.

<sup>33</sup> Barbara Foxley, "Home Study for Girls," in *Cassell's Family Magazine* (London: Cassell & Company, 1886), 432.

<sup>34</sup> "A Perplexed Mother," in *Girl's Own Paper* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1889), 395.

<sup>35</sup> H. B. D., "Ornamental or Useful? A Gossip on the Domestic Education of Women," in *Cassell's Family Magazine* (London: Cassell & Company, 1887), 715-716.

<sup>36</sup> Beale, *Reports issued by the Schools' Inquiry Commission*, 10.

<sup>37</sup> Alina Pintilie, "The Portrayal of the Late Victorian Upper-Middle-Class Daughter in R. N. Carey's *For Lilies*," *Across* (Galați) 1, no. 1 (2018): 33.

untrained educators, the quality of the education could suffer greatly depending on the subject. However, wealthy homes also allowed for opportunities for self-education and deeper engagement with subjects.

The process of education in the home was sometimes shouldered by mothers and sometimes handed over to governesses (teachers and caretakers). Some middle and most upper-class girls had governesses. Governesses were not from the lower classes and thus were competent in teaching young girls proper behaviour, and a handful of subjects, such as English literature, arithmetic, history, foreign languages, and visual arts.<sup>38</sup> Not all governesses taught all these subjects; some only taught manners or were chaperones.<sup>39</sup> This is because governesses were not formally trained—they went through the same education system as the children they then taught. Dorothea Beale, born in 1831, remembered going through many governesses in a short period of time because her mother was never satisfied with their ability to teach.<sup>40</sup>

Frances Power Cobbe, born in 1822, also had a complex relationship with her educators. When her mother was the one teaching her at age five, doing small lessons working on spelling and geography, Cobbe was as “happy a little animal” as a child could be.<sup>41</sup> Her mother was “gentle and sweet” which caused Cobbe to love whatever her mother had taught her. She vividly remembered the old map books and Mrs. Trimmer’s history book that were used to teach her.<sup>42</sup> When she turned seven her mother stopped teaching her and was replaced by a governess. Cobbe said that the governess’ lessons were not nearly as attractive as the ones taught by her mother. She quickly grew to hate her home education. As soon as she learned to write, she wrote on the gravel outside: “*Lessons! Thou tyrant of the mind!*” She wrote about being jealous of a peacock who never had to learn anything and could just sit in the sun. Her sums and spelling lessons seemed to be the bane of her existence, and she hoped desperately the world would end just so that she did not have to keep learning.<sup>43</sup>

It was not so much the quality of the instruction that allowed Cobbe to feel confident, engaged, and interested in her education, but rather the method of teaching. Middle- and upper-class girls had more resources at their hands, allowing for more opportunities for the method of education to be altered to encourage learning. For example, as Cobbe continued to recount her childhood, she mentioned that if the weather was poor, she would spend her leisure hours “[plunging] into the library at haphazard,” discovering all sorts of books on ancient history and poems. Lessons by a governess were not what led her to become a “studious girl,” but having access to shelves of books which she could pick to read at her own will. This is what Cobbe thought her mother “did very wisely” as it allowed her to grow a genuine appetite for reading and learning that she was not getting from her educator.<sup>44</sup>

Access to books was powerful for these girls. Despite untrained governesses or poorly written lesson books, middle- and upper-class girls had the ability to self-educate through the vivid libraries within their own home.<sup>45</sup> Similar experiences with learning can be seen with girls born later in the century as well. Marie Lowndes’ mother became anxious about how her brother and her were “going to turn out” when Lowndes was six years old, so she began to teach them grammar and read the Bible to them. However, it soon became clear that Lowndes was “very inferior to the average child” in the beginning stages of her education, something Lowndes was very ashamed of. She noted that her mother’s friends had “exceptionally high educational ideals” which was unfortunate for Lowndes and her mother.<sup>46</sup> Lowndes, despite trying her best, could not do simple math and she could “make neither head nor tail” of French or English. In a book, she could only read the words “the” and “a.” Lowndes was sent next door to a very small morning class taught following the “remarkable” Pestalozzian system. But it did not work. The teacher thought Lowndes was dull and disinterested, especially compared to her clever younger brother, and sent her back home for her mother to teach her. With her mother, she would

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<sup>38</sup> Mitchell, *Victorian Britain*, 337.

<sup>39</sup> Sally Mitchell, *Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland Pub., 1988), 337.

<sup>40</sup> Elizabeth H. Shillito, *Dorothea Beale: Principal of the Cheltenham Ladies' College, 1858-1906* (United States: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1920), 5.

<sup>41</sup> Frances Cobbe, *Life of Frances Power Cobbe, as Told By Herself* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1904), 34.

<sup>42</sup> Cobbe, *Life of Frances Power Cobbe*, 35.

<sup>43</sup> Cobbe, *Life of Frances Power Cobbe*, 35-36.

<sup>44</sup> Cobbe, *Life of Frances Power Cobbe*, 42.

<sup>45</sup> Hilton and Hirsch, *Practical Visionaries*, 7.

<sup>46</sup> Lowndes, *I, too, have lived in Arcadia*, 263-264.

"burst into agonies of tears" when she saw the distress of her mother who could not figure out how to teach her either.<sup>47</sup>

After her mother had given up trying to teach Lowndes, the "power to read" came to her "quite suddenly." She began to read, in both English and French, every book she could get a hold of. There was a privilege of books consistently coming into the house to feed this passion from her grandmother and from her family's American friends. She faced no restrictions on what to read and often read contemporary novels and memoirs rather than "children's books." The formal teacher-led process of education was confining for Lowndes. But being able to move at her own pace, coupled with a healthy access to books, allowed for a different, more positive experience of learning.<sup>48</sup>

Home education could extend past books or lessons. Mary Hughes, born in 1866, also found the best parts of her education to be ones that were non-traditional. Her more formal lessons were not engaging for her. With her mother, she read the Bible and together they worked through every word of a verse to see the meaning. However, any questions she had about the meaning of the passages were brushed off by her mother, dismissing it by saying it was just "those old times," a "bad translation," or even just telling Hughes to "never mind about that."<sup>49</sup> Her curiosity and willingness to learn was stifled, one of the disadvantages of home educators that were not specialists in the subjects. She learned English history from a book with small print that talked about kings only through anecdotes, not with proper sources. Most of her subjects were learned casually, skimming pages of books full of stories and pictures targeted to small children. There was no need for any kind of vigor when studying except for with her French lessons, which were drilled. Hughes could still repeat French phrases from the drilling at the time of writing her autobiography, which was published in 1977. French would be more useful in conversation with other people than most academic subjects.<sup>50</sup> Her science book, Dr. Brewer's *Guide to Science*, provided information in a question and answer format. Hughes noted that there was some doubt and ignorance in the book, but she was assured in the author's validity because her copy of the book was the twenty-sixth edition. Her mother's skills at math were "never quite sound" and all Hughes got out of the lessons was the ability to add numbers together, a headache, and a large distaste for math.<sup>51</sup>

Hughes was engaged through education in other ways. The best part of her education, she noted, was when her mother dismissed lessons and took Hughes out for a walk, to go shopping, or to take the train for a "sketching expedition." The reason for this is because she could finally ask questions and actually get answers. Her mother told her stories about her own life and travels, and she also recounted "Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Scott" and other novels. The lack of a "hard-and-fast routine" in her days was a massive benefit because it meant Hughes could enjoy opportunities like this.<sup>52</sup> Hughes did long for the ability to go to a proper school, especially as her older brothers went away for school and always told her all about it when they came home. She ached to "see a real classroom ... to run out on the great green." She wrote for pages about the intricate details of her brothers' school experiences, jealousy and longing radiating off the paper. Following this, she recounted how one day per year she got to the school and was treated very well as a visitor. On those days, she felt "for a time at least, superior to the boys."<sup>53</sup> But at the same time, in hindsight she ultimately felt thankful that she was "saved from the stupefying influence" of school. Not going to school until she was eleven years old was something she was happy about—because "there was no nonsense about a time-table" at home.<sup>54</sup> The paradox of liberation and confinement is apparent with her simultaneous distaste yet longing for school. She yearned for the experience of school, perhaps just to fit in with her brothers, but the actual system of learning was not appealing to her because of her lack of proper preparation in academic subjects. The traditional way of teaching and learning was not always the most liberating for these girls. Rather, the opportunities for them to learn in different methods and engage with subjects in different capacities because of their class privilege is what freed them from the strictness of a typical education.

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<sup>47</sup> Lowndes, 274-275.

<sup>48</sup> Lowndes, 274-275.

<sup>49</sup> Mary Vivian Hughes, *A London Child of the 1870s*, repr (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1984), 41.

<sup>50</sup> Hughes, *A London Child of the 1870s*, 42.

<sup>51</sup> Hughes, 43.

<sup>52</sup> Hughes, 44.

<sup>53</sup> Hughes, 57-58.

<sup>54</sup> Hughes, 41.

### A Real Classroom, With Desks All Inky and Carved With Names

Experiences and opinions of Victorian middle- and upper-class parents and girls have given insight into the powerful paradox of education. Firstly, the process of educating young women was situated within the gendered social context of Victorian England and aspirations of upper-class parents to shape an education that would help mould their daughters into proper ladies of society and ladies of the house. The autobiographies of girls from the 1830s to the 1870s who recounted their home education then indicated that the act of learning itself was not suffocating, but rather the traditional structures and methods in place, which could be circumvented. This leaves school outside of the home, or formal education, to be considered. This section will analyze how teachers and the academic and non-academic subjects they taught, in the specific ways they taught them, contributed to the restriction and cultivation of girls' education.

Formal education for girls was largely influenced by the popular idea that women physically could not handle intellectual learning. One of Britain's leading psychologists, Henry Maudsley, published a piece called "Sex in Mind and Education," in 1874 which came out of the conversation of women wanting to attend university. Essentially, he believed that women who already experienced significant "physical drain" on their bodies (because of being physically born weaker and because of menstruation), could not handle education that was equal, or similar to, men's education because it would cause even more of a drain on their energy.<sup>55</sup> Others even believed that the "average brain-weight of women [was] about five ounces less than that of men," which caused their inferiority.<sup>56</sup> Women could become sick, fatally so, or damage their bodies enough that they would not be able to fulfil their national duty of giving birth, either at all or to mentally or physically deformed children.<sup>57</sup> This argument was used to keep women not only out of better education but also out of anything considered a masculine sphere.

This biological approach regarding women's intellectual capabilities was challenged by women at the time. Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, the first woman to qualify as a physician in Britain, argued that young women's lives were actually quite dull outside of the schoolroom, and it was that dullness which actually negatively affected their health. To her, no "tonic in the pharmacopoeia" could compare with happiness—something many middle- and upper-class women lost after leaving school when their lives dragged along with "make-believe occupation and dreary sham amusements."<sup>58</sup> Her message might have been heavy-handed but others supported it, including Dorothea Beale. She believed that for one girl who suffered from overworking, there were hundreds suffering from "the feverish love of excitement" and the "the irritability produced by idleness and frivolity and discontent" after leaving school.<sup>59</sup> Despite this, over-study became a large concern for parents. Beale, who became a teacher, noted that parents rarely protested against anything that would better the academic training of their daughters and were mainly only concerned with "unsuitable companions, under-feeding, or over-study."<sup>60</sup>

The amount of time spent on each schoolwork was thus partly determined by the concept of over-study. A typical school week for a middle and/or upper-class girl might contain domestic and moral duties, grammar, elocution, history and geography, writing, arithmetic, plain and fancy needlework, and music, amongst other subjects.<sup>61</sup> Accomplishments saw the most time with over five hours devoted to music and languages per week. Some believed this amount of time was still insufficient.<sup>62</sup> Subjects like history were studied for approximately three hours, math for two to three, and science was lucky to receive one hour of study. Even at the end of the nineteenth century, it was believed that six hours was the absolute utmost time per day a girl could spend doing intellectual work to prevent over-study. The amount of hours a girl studied was slowly built up as she grew older.

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<sup>55</sup> Henry Maudsley, "Sex in Mind and Education," *Popular Science Monthly* 4 (June 1874): 199-200.

<sup>56</sup> Dale Spender, ed., *The Education Papers: Women's Quest for Equality in Britain, 1850-1912* (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), 11.

<sup>57</sup> Kiersnowska, "New Sporting Woman," 149-150.

<sup>58</sup> Burstyn, *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood*, 135.

<sup>59</sup> Shillito, Dorothea Beale, 41.

<sup>60</sup> Dorothea Beale, *Reports issued by the Schools' Inquiry Commission on the Education of Girls* (London: David Nutt, 1869), 39.

<sup>61</sup> Beale, *Reports issued*, 125.

<sup>62</sup> Beale, Soulsby and Dove, *Work and Play*, 328.

Girls under age thirteen could study for three hours, fourteen-year-olds studied for four hours, and sixteen-year-olds and above did five to six hours.<sup>63</sup>

Over-study was not the only stipulation that influenced the creation of an impactful curriculum at formal schools. Educators also had to grapple with the fact of time. How long would the student be attending school? Girls attended boarding or day schools for a year, sometimes two or three at most, to get the “finishing stroke” from professionals.<sup>64</sup> But this short amount of time presented a predicament. Some of the more complex subjects required a longer period to properly study them. If girls would not be at school long enough to properly engage with the subject, then what use was it to begin teaching them?<sup>65</sup> Schooling was not a consistent or standardized endeavour in the slightest. Girls of all ages and at all points of learning came and left school with no rhyme or reason. Some girls aged sixteen start school knowing less than a girl of twelve.<sup>66</sup> Education could be exalting for girls in that it gave them the chance to improve their skills, no matter how basic, by virtue of leaving the home. But when it was unsure when girls would leave, or when they would attend (as parents often took the girls out of school for large chunks of time), it became harder to navigate what to teach, how much, and in what ways.<sup>67</sup> If we recall Hughes’ minimal arithmetic knowledge, the complexities of accommodating all students can be better understood. Long division, for example, often was neglected because it was too hard for the children to understand. Rather than wasting the small time they had in the school system, it was better for teachers to move on to other subjects, especially ones which might actually be used by the students after they leave school, like music.<sup>68</sup>

Despite the reason, some students still found great issues with the way the school system was set up. Frances Cobbe was very outspoken about this in her autobiography. In fact, to start off the chapter on her experience in boarding school, she said that her mother was taking her to her “future tyrants.”<sup>69</sup> She described the curriculum as taught in the “inverse ratio of its true importance” as it put music and dancing lessons as the top priority.<sup>70</sup> She called it “pretentious... shallow and senseless.”<sup>71</sup> Girls practiced languages for multiple hours a day and did music and singing lessons at least twice a week. Cobbe had to learn all the dances in use in England, as well as various other international dances. To Cobbe, this was all a waste of money and time.<sup>72</sup> For academic studies, she described English as “one long, awful lesson each week,” and exasperated at how they had to memorize completely thirteen pages of a history lesson book.<sup>73</sup>

It seemed that the lessons that mattered most were ones that would make people perceive the girls admirably.<sup>74</sup> Even on Ash Wednesday, teachers at Cobbe’s boarding school made sure to remind them that fasting would not only be good for their soul, but it would also be good for their figures. Cobbe expressed the latter comment on their bodies in all capital letters.<sup>75</sup> Cobbe’s sour memories of education revealed the painful reality of education. Many teachers believed they spent too much time in school teaching girls intellectual training and thought their education should be “more for home.”<sup>76</sup> School was posited as “character training.”<sup>77</sup> It was integral for these reasons that girls’ and boys’ education were kept separate. Education aimed to preserve the inherent feminine qualities of girls: “Who could possibly desire to see our girls turned into boys?”<sup>78</sup> Women teachers feared that if girls were trained in masculine studies, they would become masculine. They clarified that it was not because they thought girls were incapable of learning the same things as men, it was instead that

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<sup>63</sup> Dorothea Beale, Lucy H. M. Soulsby, and Jane Frances Dove, *Work and Play in Girls’ Schools* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1898), 412-413.

<sup>64</sup> Beale, *Reports issued by the Schools’ Inquiry Commission*, 111.

<sup>65</sup> Henry Labouchere, “Taunton Report: Report of the Schools Inquiry Commission,” (London: HM Stationery Office, 1868), 16.

<sup>66</sup> Spender, *The Education Papers*, 155.

<sup>67</sup> Beale, *Reports issued*, 172.

<sup>68</sup> Beale, Soulsby and Dove, *Work and Play*, 227.

<sup>69</sup> Cobbe, *Life of Frances Power Cobbe*, 55.

<sup>70</sup> Cobbe, *Life of Frances Power Cobbe*, 60.

<sup>71</sup> Cobbe, *Life of Frances Power Cobbe*, 55.

<sup>72</sup> Cobbe 60-61.

<sup>73</sup> Cobbe, 63.

<sup>74</sup> Cobbe, 59-60.

<sup>75</sup> Cobbe, 63.

<sup>76</sup> Beale, *Reports issued by the Schools’ Inquiry Commission*, 114.

<sup>77</sup> Stephens, *Education in Britain*, 20.

<sup>78</sup> Jordan, “Making Good Wives And Mothers,” 454.



"men [were] afraid of clever women."<sup>79</sup> As seen with Cobbe's Ash Wednesday experience, the concern of keeping girls feminine extended past just what they were learning, and applied to their physical appearance and even their aspirations. Cobbe said that despite having daughters of such important people in society, their teachers would look upon girls who wanted to become artists or authors as a "deplorable dereliction." The students would simply go on to be an "Ornament of Society."<sup>80</sup> Many teachers long after Cobbe would be finished school would continue to support this sentiment. Dorothea Beale's section of the Taunton Report, *Reports issued by the Schools' Inquiry Commission on the Education of Girls*, helpfully supplied the voices and experiences of teachers.<sup>81</sup> One teacher claimed that their biggest goal was "to make the young people attractive in society." Another agreed. Their aim was to form character. Lady-like manners were "far more important" than academic learning. To many teachers, character and intelligence were mutually exclusive.<sup>82</sup>

The issue of teachers remained constant from home education to formal education. The same governesses who taught in homes also could teach in schools. Again, there was no formal teacher training until the end of the nineteenth century. A written collection on women's education achievements showcased at the Victorian Era Exhibition in 1897 reveals that the establishment of teacher training colleges was a new, interesting development.<sup>83</sup> Even so late in the century, the process of training teachers, particularly women, was rudimentary. The reason women were not trained before largely falls to the assumption that women innately had the qualities needed to teach. This was especially true for girls' education which was primarily concerned with morals and character.<sup>84</sup>

However, girls had more varied experiences with teachers in formal schools than they did at home, especially after the midpoint of the century, for different reasons. What made school confining or freeing was subjective to each girl, especially because of the non-standardized aspect of schools. There was more opportunity to have a good teacher than with home education. One of Mary Hughes' teachers changed how she perceived education by turning lessons into a game to get the girls to engage. For geography, he would call the name of "some obscure town," and then they would have to guess which county it was in. Whoever guessed right became the top of the class. Similarly, a game was set up for grammar after reading passages from a play. A girl would start by parsing a sentence, but if she slipped up by missing, for example, the preposition or common noun, whichever girl caught her mistake then got to play. By turning lessons into competitive, fun games which Hughes regarded as their "greatest treat," a good teacher could make school a liberatory and positive experience by getting students to engage with the material. Hughes even noted that while the game-lessons seemed absurd, it was "better than being bored with the learned notes" at the end of the play.<sup>85</sup>

Caroline and Mary E. Hullah, who attended Queen's College School in the late 1840s,<sup>86</sup> also recalled a memory coloured in love: girls from age twelve to twenty from all over England all coming together to attend a "Maurice" lecture. They all listened intently and wrote notes as he spoke "of history, past and present, of literature, of men and women, of divine love." It was a lecture so cherished that none of the girls could "ever entirely forget" it. The Hullah sisters end their recollection of this lecture with the quote "Education means the calling forth the spirit [sic] in the human being."<sup>87</sup> This was the liberation of a good education: a spark of intellectual interest fostered and made to flourish. The girls were inspired to care about learning instead of learning just because they had to.

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<sup>79</sup> Beale, *Reports issued*, 126.

<sup>80</sup> Cobbe, 60.

<sup>81</sup> Beale, *Reports issued*, vii. The Taunton Report was meant to examine schools to see their quality of education. Beale's section was only 1/20th of the entire report and the only part concerning girls.

<sup>82</sup> Beale, *Reports issued*, 30-31.

<sup>83</sup> Countess of Warwick, *Progress in Women's Education in the British Empire being the Report of the Education Section, Victorian Era Exhibition, 1897* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1898), 8.

<sup>84</sup> Marianne A. Larsen, "The Discourse of the Good Victorian Teacher: The Modern and Moral Teacher," in *The Making and Shaping of the Victorian Teacher: A Comparative New Cultural History* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 100.

<sup>85</sup> Hughes, *A London Child of the 1870s*, 65-66.

<sup>86</sup> Queen's College was originally made to offer further lectures and examinations that would help improve governesses' training. But because their academic preparation was so weak, they soon established a preparatory school for younger girls (Mitchell, *Victorian Encyclopedia*, 249).

<sup>87</sup> Hullah, "Recollections of Two Sisters," 71.

This makes clear an issue with many other schools: children were not engaged, nor did the teachers aim to make learning interesting. Methods of teaching were primarily rote memorization. Inspections at school revealed that just a few days after lessons, girls could not remember anything they had learned.<sup>88</sup> They also could not properly understand or answer questions which deviated even a little bit from the examples in their textbooks.<sup>89</sup> Girls could not tell the differences between common or proper nouns, adjectives or adverbs.<sup>90</sup> While Hughes was lucky to have one good teacher, bad teachers were the majority. Hughes described mental arithmetic as “black magic.” A teacher asked, “Twelve articles at fourpence three farthings each, how much altogether?” Somehow with no slates to work on, before the words had fully been spoken, other students in the class had the answer. Hughes was left confused and when she tried to ask for help, she found that the “explanations were far worse” than the original problem itself. Beale, in her profession as headmistress of a boarding school, noted that good teachers who actually knew the material they taught were scarce. When asking a potential candidate if she prepared her lessons, the woman answered, “I never teach anything I don’t understand.”<sup>91</sup>

Hughes was left having to enlist the help of her brother to teach her the right way to do her math problems.<sup>92</sup> Having older brothers who had gone through a formal school system already put her in a unique position of understanding the advantages and disadvantages of her education. She could always compare her education to the expectations she had from her brothers. They knew how to do math properly, but she did not. She had to waste her “precious hours” to do drawing lessons where they had to make their pieces as identical to the original version as possible, but her brothers were able to paint original pieces.<sup>93</sup>

The following examples will hone further in on experiences with accomplishments as it was a complicated and layered part of formal education. As it has been made clear, girls like Cobbe and Hughes did not enjoy accomplishments. They felt the confinement of their gender by being restricted to specific ways of doing art or by being subject to an oversaturated curriculum of music. This is fair: even the naming of the subject represented the gendered ideology that permeated Victorian life. Boys could also take “extras” like music and drawing; accomplishments implied superficiality and carried a derogatory connotation.<sup>94</sup>

But accomplishments were also widely beloved by parents, teachers, and students. The school displays at the Victorian Exhibition clearly took pride in their accomplishments over other subjects. They exhibited needlework and artwork, including many different kinds of garments that could be worn regularly, and paintings and shadings based off of models. They displayed “the result of regularity and discipline.”<sup>95</sup> Where Hughes was upset at not being able to make original designs, Maud Beerbohm Tree viewed her drawing hour as a “marvellous [opportunity]” to reproduce famous artworks or scenes from plays. She also recalled that her singing lesson came in the form of “two happy hours” twice a week—something she could look forward to and something which remains positively in her memory. She even believed that her music teacher allowed them to become “uplifted souls” who “gathered an undying love and reverence for great sounds” because of his influence. The ability to learn and appreciate art in a meaningful way was something Beerbohm Tree greatly valued from her education, something she would not have gotten without going to school.<sup>96</sup> Accomplishments were able to set girls up to have successful lives in the social conditions that Victorian society revolved around.

Accomplishments, as well as other academic subjects, were affected by pushes for reform of girls’ education in the 1860s and 1870s. It was a “cautious” and “limited” type of reform that on the outside did not appear to seek much change.<sup>97</sup> Women did not refute the purpose of education, which was to make “good wives and mothers.”<sup>98</sup> Rather, they began to argue that if girls were educated in a similar method to men, they could be

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<sup>88</sup> Beale, *Reports issued*, 36.

<sup>89</sup> Beale, *Reports issued*, 56.

<sup>90</sup> Beale, *Reports issued*, 95.

<sup>91</sup> Shillito, *Dorothea Beale*, 35.

<sup>92</sup> Hughes, *A London Child of the 1870s*, 59-60.

<sup>93</sup> Hughes, *A London Child of the 1870s*, 62.

<sup>94</sup> Jane McDermid, *The Schooling of Girls in Britain and Ireland, 1800-1900* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 70.

<sup>95</sup> Warwick, *Progress in Women’s Education*, 26.

<sup>96</sup> Maud Beerbohm Tree, “Quick, Thy Tablets, Memory!” in *The first college open to women: Queen’s College, London: memories and records of work done [1848-1898]*, edited by Ethel Alec-Tweedie (London: Queen’s College, 1898), 45.

<sup>97</sup> Hewitt, *The Victorians*, 29.

<sup>98</sup> Jordan, “Making Good Wives And Mothers,” 439.

better companions for their husbands, better mothers to their children who they were responsible for raising, and better housekeepers.<sup>99</sup> In the case of accomplishments, change was incremental, but it was change nonetheless. Women reformers used a two-pronged attack on the education of lower middle-class girls and upper middle-class girls to make changes in how much prevalence accomplishments received in school curriculums. First, they argued that lower middle-class girls should not be doing certain accomplishments because it would be unsuitable for their lifestyles. Many would, because of finances, end up having to do housework or become a governess. Artistic skill was seen as a distinguishing characteristic—only upper middle-class girls should be artistic. For upper middle-class girls, accomplishments were linked to blatant sexuality and husband-hunting. Girls were being educated “to get husbands,” instead of being educated to become wives.<sup>100</sup> This example of reform displays the intricacies of class division. It also shows us women’s efforts to change the system by working within it to achieve a higher quality level of learning for middle- and upper-class girls. This push against accomplishments allowed girls the ability to access the type of education necessary to succeed in their future lives.

The last subject to be looked at in this paper is physical education. It was a subject marked by great gender divide, but it also made great progress through the century, making it a good example to discuss both sides of oppression and liberation that characterized education for middle- and upper-class girls. The differences between girls’ and boys’ schooling was stark in terms of physical education. For boys, sport and specifically team games were integral in the development of masculinity. It would prepare them for “responsible citizenship and a future career in business, state and colonial administration or in the army.”<sup>101</sup> At the start of the Victorian period, middle- and upper-class girls did not do much, if any, exercise in school. One of Dorothea Beale’s colleagues recounted after Beale’s passing that in Beale’s childhood, there was no “hockey, tennis, net-ball, swimming, or other healthy exercise.” Beale grew up not understanding the necessity for others to play. Though the school she was Principal at did have playgrounds, they were “a stumbling-block” to her. It was a front she let others take charge of.<sup>102</sup>

Frances Cobbe, on the other hand, miserably recollected the state of her physical education. Outside of dancing, girls at Cobbe’s boarding school had “dismal walks” and calisthenics. Even the walks were confined to “parading” around the open field and outdoor spaces around the school. They were accompanied by a governess who used this time to make the girls practice their French, Italian, or German.<sup>103</sup> Cobbe could not escape her lessons. She was also forced to do calisthenic lessons every week. Calisthenics was a type of gentle Swedish gymnastics that used poles and dumbbells to do a variety of exercises which would not “[deprive] women of their dignity and femininity.”<sup>104</sup> She believed that “a few good country scrambles” would have been much better for them than all the calisthenics they had to do.<sup>105</sup> Calisthenics was a type of exercise which could be relaxing and pleasant. The most strenuous activity was girls hanging from overhead bars. This was important. Physical activities for girls before the mid-century were made so that the girls would not get too hot. This fit into the Victorian ideal for women. Men did not want to see women “red-faced frowsy from over-exertion” or “soaked with perspiration.” Sports could “unsex” women and make them less feminine.<sup>106</sup> Girls were thus technically relegated to gentle and non-violent sports (or no sports at all) because of their gender.

As the period progressed towards the turn of the century and the shape of girls’ schools changed with efforts of women reformers, physical education slowly became more liberating for girls. Many students had play time that allowed them to challenge the previous gender boundary. The Hullah sisters who attended Queen’s College recall days of “grand games” at lunch where they played wildly. They pretended to be knights in battles or Normans and Saxons fighting each other. They did not hit each other, but they did knock each other to the ground. Whoever landed on the bottom needed to verbally surrender before they could get back up. The Hullahs said that they were “immensely happy.” They would have been at the youngest, twelve years old, at the

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<sup>99</sup> Burstyn, *Victorian Education*, 39-40.

<sup>100</sup> Jordan, “Making Good Wives And Mothers,” 452-453.

<sup>101</sup> Kiersnowska, “New Sporting Woman,” 149.

<sup>102</sup> Shillito, *Dorothea Beale*, 6.

<sup>103</sup> Cobbe, *Life of Frances Power Cobbe*, 61.

<sup>104</sup> Kiersnowska, “New Sporting Woman,” 151.

<sup>105</sup> Cobbe, 61.

<sup>106</sup> Kiersnowska, “New Sporting Woman,” 152.

time of this memory.<sup>107</sup> This kind of play mirrors the earlier statement about the physical education of boys being a teaching force for future roles in the army. The roughhousing also subverts traditional expectations and restrictions against girls to not become too worked up. The ability to play like this at school highlights a change in the purposeful job of teachers to limit strenuous physical activity.

Mary Hughes also recalled play-time as the “best part of those school-days.” The girls she played with were jolly and at the time of writing her memoir she said she could still remember their names, faces, and peculiarities. They played games like “tip-and-run” and “rounders” in the garden outside the school at lunch. When they came back inside to join class, they were hot and panting.<sup>108</sup> Not only does this also exemplify a physical change in how girls were allowed to act at school, Hughes’ recollections displayed the companionship and healthy competition that sports fostered. For many of these girls, despite the oppressive quality of their actual education, school was a space that was freeing because of the companionship it offered. It gave them the chance to leave home, to experience a different world, and meet new people, before they had to return to their private, domestic sphere. The group quality of games made this a perfect opportunity to create and strengthen relationships with other girls. Hughes believed that the entire reason she was sent to a formal school institution was for companionship. The main value of her education, and of formal education as a whole, was to prevent her from becoming too accustomed to the solitude and familiarity of the home.<sup>109</sup> Later on in the Victorian period, schools eventually introduced some standardized sports like hockey, cricket, and lacrosse.<sup>110</sup> This allowed girls to raise awareness of their own bodies and “their physical nature,”<sup>111</sup> and gave them the ability to develop qualities like self-confidence and competitiveness that were typically undesired in women.<sup>112</sup> Altogether, the path of physical education illustrated the ways that middle and upper class girls at different points in the nineteenth century had different experiences with their education, whether that was confinement or freedom. Gender and class were always factors at play which determined, and created, the paradoxical nature of their experiences.

## Conclusion

This paper will offer one last example of the paradox of middle- and upper-class girls’ education. Beale’s section in the Taunton Report surveying the state of education revealed one important thing: in some schools, when the arithmetic teacher actually understood the subject and taught it properly (rather than just rote memorization), the levels of arithmetic in girls were excellent and equal to boys.<sup>113</sup> For just when math started to be treated like a science in boys’ schools, “a girl [dropped] the subject altogether.”<sup>114</sup> When given proper teachers, lessons, and time, girls performed at the same level as boys—they had the capabilities, but because of their gender they suffered at the hands of a flawed system. In a letter, Emily Davies wrote that when allowing girls to take Cambridge examinations in their effort to convince men that women deserved to go to university, 91 of the 128 girls of her school passed, a better feat than the boys.<sup>115</sup> It was not that girls could not do it. It was that many of them, for generations, did not have the resources to allow them to.

However, middle- and upper-class girls by virtue of their social status attained much higher access to education throughout their lives than working class children, even when it was limited because of their gender. Beale grew sick at age thirteen and needed to leave school. Rather than that being the end of the line for her learning, it was actually regarded by her as a fortunate opportunity. It allowed her to continue gaining knowledge through self-education, such as attending lectures hosted at various institutes and halls, and gathering books from libraries, book clubs, and shops.<sup>116</sup> Education did not have to stop just because their school days were finished. Lives full of learning if they so wanted to laid ahead of them, no matter their gender. It also remained a much better avenue of learning than the restrictive method of teaching under domestic or school governesses, or the

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<sup>107</sup> Caroline Hullah and Mary E. Hullah, “Recollections of Two Sisters,” 68.

<sup>108</sup> Hughes, *A London Child of the 1870s*, 62.

<sup>109</sup> Hughes, 58.

<sup>110</sup> Beale, Soulsby and Dove, *Work and Play*, 405.

<sup>111</sup> Kiersnowska, “New Sporting Woman,” 159.

<sup>112</sup> Kiersnowska, “New Sporting Woman,” 151.

<sup>113</sup> Beale, *Reports issued*, 56.

<sup>114</sup> Beale, *Reports issued*, 35.

<sup>115</sup> Emily Davies, Ann B. Murphy, and Deidre Raftery, *Emily Davies: Collected Letters, 1861-1875*, 1st ed. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004), 167.

<sup>116</sup> Shillito, *Dorothea Beale*, 6.

lived reality of many other children who simply would have stopped learning.<sup>117</sup> It is in this way that many outsiders at the time viewed middle- and upper-class girls' education as only benefiting themselves. With too high a level of education, they were not welcomed to teach anyone in the schools that the lower classes attended. If they were in the upper classes, they would not become teachers at all, even of their own class.<sup>118</sup> The ability to access education for the "selfish" reason of self-betterment or interest in knowledge thus exemplified the intricate, complex intersection of class and gender in Victorian society. Education was a tool of exclusivity used both towards and by higher class women.

Overall, middle- and upper-class girls' lives were constrained within the social spheres of the Victorian era. The gender they held at birth constituted their ability to carve into concrete terms their dreams and aspirations. Rigid expectations of social conventions and predetermined futures as wives, mothers, and household hosts shaped the format of education. Trends can be drawn through both domestic and public education. Girls grappled with parents or governesses who were not adequate teachers, used questionable lesson books and operated under overwhelmingly poor teaching styles. Focus often fell on their eventual usefulness and servitude to others, rather than learning for their own benefit. Their intellectual capabilities were neglected. But girls also had the benefit of various avenues to different, non-traditional forms of education. They self-educated through household libraries, went to schools with a wealth of teachers, some which proved to be much better at engaging with students, and built relationships with others. The topics they learned allowed them to successfully fit into and thrive in their future roles, with many of them going on to become teachers and reformers.

Frances Cobbe, reflecting on her life and the experiences given to her because of her class or taken away from her because of her gender, embodied the paradox this paper discusses. She said that perhaps if she was born a man, she could have made a better mark, done a better service to her community. But at the same time, the woman's destiny which she had been given was "the best and happiest" for her.<sup>119</sup> There are countless lost experiences by virtue of being born a woman in this time. Many of those come to fruition when considering education. But it would be negligent to cast off the benefits of being born into a higher social class, one that creates its own opportunities. Life, its privileges, and its disadvantages, are not drawn in black and white. Like anything else, they are full of complexities and entanglements which create diverse, unique life stories.

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<sup>117</sup> Shillito, Dorothea Beale, 6.

<sup>118</sup> Arthur H. D. Acland and H. Llewellyn Smith, eds, *Studies in Secondary Education* (New York: Macmillan and Co, 1892), 219.

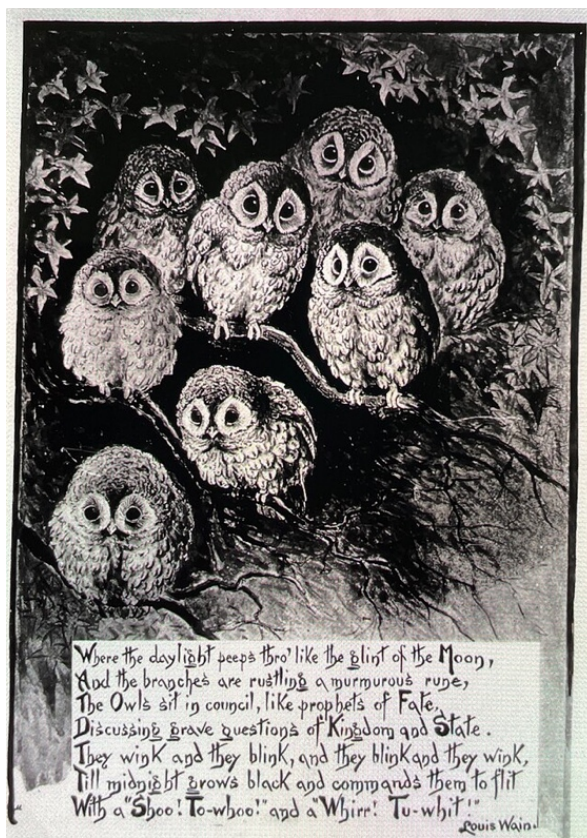
<sup>119</sup> Cobbe, *Life of Frances Power Cobbe*, 2.

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Louis Wain, Owls, 1895, Wikimedia Commons

In the fall of 1972, a young woman, who recently resettled to Edmonton from Ottawa, complained to her husband that there were no good Canadian feminist magazines, stating that she felt left out of the feminist movement as it spread to the west: "What we need is a new magazine, something that talks about Edmonton, about Ottawa, about the people and places we know. I want something to read!"<sup>1</sup> To this complaint, her husband responded, "So start one." Within minutes, the idea had taken hold, and thus *Branching Out*, Canada's first national, general-interest feminist magazine was born.<sup>2</sup> Susan McMaster was the catalyst of its founding, but she quickly found many people to support her endeavor. Thirty women responded to her initial advertisement for a production team, and seventeen stayed through the first three months.<sup>3</sup> The first issue of the magazine boasted writing from some of the pillars of Canadian literature, like Margaret Atwood and Dorothy Livesay, and was supported by important figures in the women's movement, such as Isabel Munroe, the Dean of Women at the University of Alberta, and Jenny Margetts, chairperson of the Indian Rights for Indian Women organization.<sup>4</sup>

McMaster introduced the magazine as a place for Canadian women to express their opinions and discover their identity within Canadian society, which had not been explored by "male-run general interest magazines, or traditional women's magazines."<sup>5</sup> Stating that the magazine would be authored and administrated solely by women, McMaster emphasized that the founding team felt that any oppressed group must "separate themselves for a period in order to gain a sense of accomplishment and self-worth."<sup>6</sup> By creating a women-only space in Canadian periodicals focused on feminism and women's contributions to Canadian culture, the contributors and editors created a unique microcosm of Canadian feminism, distinct from other women's liberation movements in America and Europe.<sup>7</sup> *Branching Out* exemplified Canadian feminism in many ways, but also distinguished itself from some of the pitfalls associated with the movement.

This paper seeks to explore how *Branching Out* staff and contributors dealt with these issues of women's liberation, and what they, as activists and participants in the movement, saw as integral to its success and continuation. It also explores the importance of Canadian nationalism to the women's movement, and challenges modern notions of the second wave as being a movement exclusively for middle-to-upper-class white women who were either unaware of other forms of oppression, or who actively rejected them.

The magazine engaged with many of the topics most common to the second wave, such as the status of women in the workplace and in relation to government and the legal disadvantages women faced. While the magazine featured about 30% art, poetry, and fiction, the other 70% off each issue was dedicated to exploring Canadian feminisms and gender oppression, and promoted building communities focused on uplifting and aiding women. Three articles that fall under each of these categories have been used to demonstrate the contribution *Branching Out* made to feminist discourse, but in a way that was accessible to the average, working woman. Editors and contributors were not overly concerned with producing highbrow theory, but rather with creating an educational platform that made participation in the women's movement accessible. This focus on application over theory was characteristic of Canadian feminism. In the Fifth-Anniversary edition of *Branching Out*, the position of the Canadian movement was investigated, identifying its strengths and weaknesses, and distinguishing it from other contemporary

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<sup>1</sup> Susan McMaster, *The Gargoyle's Left Ear: Writing in Ottawa* (Windsor: Black Moss Press, 2007), 14.

<sup>2</sup> Susan McMaster, *The Gargoyle's Left Ear*, 14.

<sup>3</sup> Susan McMaster, *The Gargoyle's Left Ear*, 15.

<sup>4</sup> McMaster, *The Gargoyle's Left Ear*, 16.

<sup>5</sup> Susan McMaster, "Branching To?" *Branching Out*, Preview Issue (1973), 3.

<sup>6</sup> McMaster, "Branching To?" Preview Issue, 3.

<sup>7</sup> Constance Backhouse, "The Contemporary Women's Movements in Canada and the United States: An Introduction," In *Challenging Times: The Women's Movement in Canada and the United States* eds. Constance Backhouse and David H. Flaherty (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 3.



movements. This issue demonstrated how contributors and editors saw national identity fitting into feminist activism. Finally, an assessment of the discussions of race within the magazine counter the long-held notion that the second wave was a predominately white, upper-middle-class movement that ignored issues related to race in favour of promoting a female-identity-first movement.

The historiography of the women's liberation movement is a still-growing field. Due to the many streams of feminism, it can be challenging to write a comprehensive history of the women's movement. Nancy Adamson, Linda Briskin, and Margaret McPhail, an interdisciplinary trio of scholars, note that the Canadian second wave was characterized by its focus on activist approaches to change, and that the earliest participants lacked skill in analyzing women's oppression.<sup>8</sup> Though the analytical skills of second-wave feminists improved over time, the need for action continued to outweigh the need for analysis, and Adamson et al. state, "Our analyses continue to form an essential, and now more comprehensive, framework; in themselves, however, they are insufficient for achieving an end to women's oppression."<sup>9</sup> Student and community feminist groups were focused on creating tangible results, creating services that directly aided women.<sup>10</sup> Joan Sangster, a leading expert of feminist and socialist history in Canada, similarly notes that though the Canadian movement was influenced by theory from America and Europe, they were not determined by it; Canadian feminism was itself something distinct.<sup>11</sup> Tessa Jordan, who authored the only history of *Branching Out* to date, examined the magazine in relation to not only its feminism but its contribution to Canadian culture, and the relationship between culture and the women's movement.<sup>12</sup> She also actively sought to combat the exclusion of *Branching Out* from many feminist histories, and situate it within the historiography as Canada's first national feminist publication.<sup>13</sup>

The fusion of patriarchal criticism with Marxist/socialist theory was characteristic of Canadian women's liberation, as it blended the pursuit of sexual liberation with "total human liberation", leading to the development of Marxist feminism.<sup>14</sup> Decolonization theory, stemming from Quebecois nationalism and from the Red Power movement, was applied to socialist feminist theory as well.<sup>15</sup> There was an awareness within the women's movement of the "double or triple" oppression faced by Indigenous women, though many mainstream participants remained ignorant of the institutional racism within Canada, resulting in the movement being characterized as an upper-middle-class white movement.<sup>16</sup> As feminist scholar and activist Judy Rebick notes, middle-class women did play an important role in the women's movement, but it was the "radical feminists, Marxists, anarchists, black consciousness militants, Quebec nationalists, union activists, left-wing NDPers and plain old kick-ass shit disturbers" who were the movers and shakers of the movement.<sup>17</sup>

Much of the activism of the 1970's stemmed from the findings of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW) spearheaded by Laura Sabia; she orchestrated the communication of more than 30 women's organizations regarding common goals and concerns.<sup>18</sup> This report, tabled in 1970 and based on three years of investigation, advocated for women's access to work, a balance of household tasks between a woman and her partner, for maternity support, and advocated for affirmative action to assist women in overcoming discrimination.<sup>19</sup> The RCSW also flagged the particular struggles of "disadvantaged groups of women" who faced intersecting forms of

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<sup>8</sup> Nancy Adamson, Linda Briskin, and Margaret McPhail. *Feminist Organizing for Change: The Contemporary Women's Movement in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988), 165.

<sup>9</sup> Adamson, Briskin, and McPhail, *Feminist Organizing for Change*, 165.

<sup>10</sup> Alison Prentice, *Canadian Women: A History* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (Scarborough: Nelson Thomson Learning, 2005), 424.

<sup>11</sup> Joan Sangster, *Demanding Equality: One Hundred Years of Canadian Feminism* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2021), 25.

<sup>12</sup> Tessa Jordan, *Feminist Acts: Branching Out Magazine and the Making of Canadian Feminism* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2019), xxix.

<sup>13</sup> Jordan, *Feminist Acts*, xxix.

<sup>14</sup> Sangster, *Demanding Equality*, 258.

<sup>15</sup> Sangster, *Demanding Equality*, 264.

<sup>16</sup> Sangster, *Demanding Equality*, 315.

<sup>17</sup> Judy Rebick, *Ten Thousand Roses: The Making of a Feminist Revolution* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2005), 21.

<sup>18</sup> Prentice, *Canadian Women: A History*, 415.

<sup>19</sup> Prentice, *Canadian Women*, 418.

discrimination such as race, gender and class.<sup>20</sup> As Sangster notes, the success of the report was “not because it offered a radical critique of oppression, but because it legitimized the problem of women’s ‘status,’ then shaped how that ‘problem’ was defined by the government for some time to come.”<sup>21</sup>

A plethora of feminist sub-movements arose to meet the needs of Canadian women, whose intersecting identities based on class, race, or region meant that no single, unified movement could address everyone’s concerns and challenges. Two of the more popular sects were socialist and radical feminism. Where socialist feminists saw liberation from capitalism as a primary component of liberation from patriarchy, radical feminists were more focused on the unique situation of gender oppression, believing society to be fundamentally patriarchal and therefore tended to ignore other forms of oppression in their pursuit of liberation.<sup>22</sup> Rebick asserts that within these umbrella movements, differences in approach to feminism emerged as well; some groups were more focus on reform and improving the existing system, while some groups were more militant in their approach, relying on revolutionary activism, which advocated for overthrowing existing systems in favour of something better.<sup>23</sup> Beyond these divides, it was necessary for women of non-white and non-middle-class backgrounds to find their own paths to liberation; Indigenous women, working-class women, queer women, Black women, immigrants, artists and other groups all dealt with intersecting forms of oppression and formed organizations to directly address those, and, as Sangster notes, “Even seemingly cohesive identity-based groups were not of one political mind, as women debated the why of oppression and the how of liberation”.<sup>24</sup>

There was also a divide between grassroots and institutional feminism. After the RCSW report was published, the Liberal Party proposed an Advisory Council on the Status of Women be instituted to monitor women’s rights issues, but radical feminists pushed back against this, with trade unionist Madeline Parent arguing, “what we need is not an advisory council responsible to parliament but a parliament responsible to the women of Canada.”<sup>25</sup> An independent National Action Committee (NAC) was founded, though even it faced criticism from grassroots feminist organizations for its hierarchical structures.<sup>26</sup> More marginal groups also existed, such as a splinter group of poor, single mothers who advocated for state assistance to allow women to access retraining options and affordable daycare if they wished to enter the workforce, or government support to allow single mothers to stay home if they wished.<sup>27</sup> Many of these various Canadian feminisms were present in *Branching Out*, as it welcomed contributors on a wide range of topics, resulting in a diverse range of perspectives.

The women’s liberation movement proliferated in part because of the explosion of feminist publishing instigated by women’s dissatisfaction with lived experiences of bigotry.<sup>28</sup> Periodicals were “gathering places for emerging ideas,” accessible in ways monographs were not, both in their production and readability.<sup>29</sup> Following the Second World War, women’s daily lives were changing rapidly, with more girls and women entering colleges and the workforce. Consequently, more women were becoming aware of the disadvantages facing them. The second half of the twentieth century was also a period of intense social change; women’s groups were not the only ones lobbying for liberation, and were joined by revolutionary civil rights, anti-war, and student movements. Periodicals were the ideal forum for exploring these new ideas and allowed mass participation by women interested in the movement.

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<sup>20</sup> Prentice, *Canadian Women*, 418.

<sup>21</sup> Sangster, *Demanding Equality*, 249.

<sup>22</sup> Prentice, *Canadian Women*, 425.

<sup>23</sup> Rebick, *Ten Thousand Roses*, xiii.

<sup>24</sup> Sangster, *Demanding Equality*, 257.

<sup>25</sup> Sangster, *Demanding Equality*, 318.

<sup>26</sup> Sangster, *Demanding Equality*, 318.

<sup>27</sup> Lynne Marks, Margaret Little, Megan Gaucher, and T.R. Noddings. “‘A Job That Should Be Respected’: Contested Visions of Motherhood and English Canada’s Second Wave Women’s Movements, 1970-1990,” *Women’s History Review* 25, no. 5 (2016), 771-72.

<sup>28</sup> Sangster, *Demanding Equality*, 264.

<sup>29</sup> Jordan, *Feminist Acts*, 52.

Despite the initial support McMaster witnessed in requesting contributions and editorial support, the *Branching Out* faced many struggles. Print costs for the first issue totalled over \$4000, though they began the operation with only \$500 in capital; the remainder was made up with loans from staff.<sup>30</sup> Despite being enthusiastic volunteers, the contributors had no experience in creating a magazine, and many of them struggled to meet the needs of the publishing process. However, they persevered:

Overriding our financial and organizational problems is our desire to produce a magazine which reflects the women of Canada— reflecting what they are doing, their concerns, dreams and realities.

We have come to recognize more than ever that *Branching Out* does answer a real need.<sup>31</sup>

Unfortunately, these financial strains would never be fully alleviated. In July 1980, the magazine published its final issue, citing financial strain as the reason it was ceasing publication. The chief editor, Sharon Batt, who had succeeded McMaster in 1975 and had worked since then full-time without a salary, was forced to retire from the magazine to find paid work, and no other volunteers were able to give up their jobs to take over.<sup>32</sup>

The first issue of *Branching Out* was published as a preview in December 1973, and afterwards, published four to six volumes a year, depending on its financial situation. At its height, it boasted 2500 subscriptions, with 4000 units in circulation at newsstands across the country.<sup>33</sup> Considering the independent, volunteer-run status of the magazine, these figures are quite impressive, especially given the financial difficulties that plagued them. At the end of 1976, the magazine published its September/October issue, and did not publish again until March/April of the following year. Sharon Batt wrote an editorial within that volume, sharing that “Reports of *Branching Out*’s death have been exaggerated— at least a little bit. We can’t really deny feeling rather desperate last fall, when near bankruptcy, understaffed and faltering editorially, we decided to suspend publication.”<sup>34</sup> Despite its small readership, the *Branching Out* base was dedicated. Batt acknowledged the outpouring of support they experienced during this time, from donations to individuals purchasing subscriptions for their family and friends. Batt herself stated that she was ready to walk away from a magazine with “too little money and too few readers,” though other members of the staff were steadfast in their commitment.<sup>35</sup> It was the ongoing support of the readers that led Batt to rededicate herself to the magazine and reinvigorate publication.

The enthusiasm of *Branching Out*’s readership speaks to its valuable position in the Canadian periodical landscape. In 1980 *Ulrich’s Global Serials Directory* was published, which listed other feminist periodicals that were contemporaries of *Branching Out*, and their reach. There was *The Feminist Broadside*, which had 2500 copies in circulation.<sup>36</sup> However, it was not created until 1979,<sup>37</sup> and therefore was not an alternative in 1976/1977 when *Branching Out* was facing bankruptcy. Another publication was *Kinesis*, which was founded in 1974<sup>38</sup> and had 1500 units in circulation,<sup>39</sup> but did not have the variety offered by *Branching Out*’s content. Furthermore, for the readers who enjoyed the art and fiction offered by *Branching Out*, *Kinesis* was not a comparable alternative, as it focused on articles about social change, oppression, and women’s liberation. The final contemporary was *Room of One’s Own*, a literary magazine founded in 1975 by a Vancouver collective that published fiction, poetry, creative non-fiction, and art.<sup>40</sup> This magazine still did not answer the need of the *Branching Out* reader as it lacked the political and social commentary articles that so many valued. This magazine also had the lowest circulation numbers when surveyed in 1980, with only 1000 units in print.<sup>41</sup> *Branching Out* offered a variety of content and availability that contemporaries could not compete with, which explains the readers commitment to keeping it afloat in 1976.

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<sup>30</sup> Mary Alyce Heaton and Roberta Kalechofsky, “About Us,” *Branching Out*, Vol. 1, no. 1 (1974), 3.

<sup>31</sup> Heaton and Kalechofsky, “About Us,” Vol. 1, no. 1, 3.

<sup>32</sup> The *Branching Out* Staff, “‘Dear Reader’ letter,” *Branching Out*, Vol. 7, no. 2 (1980), 2.

<sup>33</sup> Jordan, *Feminist Acts*, xxiii.

<sup>34</sup> Sharon Batt, “Editorial,” *Branching Out*, Vol. 4, no. 1 (1977), 3.

<sup>35</sup> Batt, “Editorial,” Vol. 4, no. 1, 3.

<sup>36</sup> Jordan, *Feminist Acts*, xxiii.

<sup>37</sup> Philinda Masters with the Broadside Collective (Eds.), “Inside Broadside: A Decade of Feminist Journalism,” *Quill & Quire*, <https://quillandquire.com/review/inside-broadside-a-decade-of-feminist-journalism/>

<sup>38</sup> “Kinesis,” UBC Library Open Collections, <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/kinesis>

<sup>39</sup> Jordan, *Feminist Acts*, xxiii.

<sup>40</sup> “Frequently Asked Questions,” *Room*, <https://roommagazine.com/frequently-asked-questions/>

<sup>41</sup> Jordan, *Feminist Acts*, xxiii.

By 1980, when *Branching Out* ceased production, the women's movement was considered by many to be dead in the water. The magazine staff had been questioning for a while if *Branching Out* still served a purpose in the Canadian landscape. In the first issue of 1976, Batt commented that a man outside the women's movement had said to her that he was relieved that "'libbers' had gone the way of 'flower children', 'ecology freaks' and other period personae."<sup>42</sup> Prominent feminists such as *Maclean's* columnist Myrna Kostash and American journalist Nora Ephron had recently communicated in their writing that they were feeling burnt out, and Batt said that similar feelings of depression and resignation had set in amongst *Branching Out* staff.<sup>43</sup>

One of the major concerns of the Canadian feminist movement was the need to distinguish itself from American feminism. Susan McMaster's desire for a Canadian feminist publication is indicative of this goal. Prior to the founding of *Branching Out*, there were no national feminist publications, and even after it began publishing, it had few contemporaries. *Ms. Magazine*, a major feminist publication, contained interesting and relevant articles, but it was American.

The need to be culturally distinct from the USA was not a uniquely feminist impulse in Canada. The latter half of the twentieth century was marked by resistance to American cultural imperialism and a desire for Canadian products. The 1951 Massey Commission was tasked with investigating the state of Canadian arts and culture and found that American influences posed a risk of "impair[ing], and even destroy[ing]" the integrity of Canadian culture.<sup>44</sup> While the report acknowledged that there were benefits to cultural exchange and objected to limiting the freedom of Canadians to enjoy American cultural products, it also warned:

It cannot be denied, however, that a vast and disproportionate amount of material coming from a single alien source may stifle rather than stimulate our own creative effort; and, passively accepted without any standard of comparison, this may weaken critical faculties. We are now spending millions to maintain a national independence which would be nothing but an empty shell without a vigorous and distinctive cultural life.<sup>45</sup>

"Pan-Canadian nationalism" was a unifying force within the women's movement, and anti-American sentiment was prevalent.<sup>46</sup> As a result, it seems only natural that Canadian feminists sought to distinguish themselves from their American counterparts through their publications, and address issues specific to their cultural and political realities. One reader even expressed to *Branching Out* that the first reason they read was for the feminism, the second was for the Canadian chauvinism.<sup>47</sup>

As Dorothy E. Smith, a prevalent sociologist and women's rights activist, noted in the anniversary issue in her article "Where There is Oppression, There is Resistance," most of the great, well-known feminists of the second wave were American. "We haven't made stars here," she writes, continuing:

In Canada, a star in the west is a mere glimmer in the east and vice versa. The great luminaries of the women's movement—media version—have been mostly American. They have risen over our horizon, strode majestically across the sky crying their battle cries and departed again over the 49th parallel, leaving us to wonder about our own women's movement.<sup>48</sup>

With so many American influences in the global women's movement, distinguishing Canadian feminism became both difficult and important. Smith explored the dynamics of Canadian feminism in her article, and what stood out, to her, was the socialist nature of the movement.<sup>49</sup> Smith herself was a Marxist feminist who identified common

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<sup>42</sup> Sharon Batt, "Editorial," *Branching Out*, Vol. 3, no. 1 (1976), 5.

<sup>43</sup> Batt, "Editorial," Vol. 3, no. 1, 5.

<sup>44</sup> Canada, "Part II: Introduction," *Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences*, Report (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1951), 271.

<sup>45</sup> Canada, "Chapter II: The Forces of Geography," *Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences*, Report (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1951), 18.

<sup>46</sup> Prentice, *Canadian Women*, 424.

<sup>47</sup> "About Our Readers," *Branching Out*, Vol. 2, no. 1 (1975), 44.

<sup>48</sup> Dorothy E. Smith, "Where There is Oppression, There is Resistance," *Branching Out*, Vol. 6, no. 1 (1979), 10.

<sup>49</sup> Smith, "Where There Is Oppression," Vol. 6, no. 1, 10.

struggles between the working class and women, and a common enemy in the ruling class. She also praised the division within the women's movement that so many derided it for: "Women are half or more than half the population. What society has ever seen a monolithic unitary organization among its male members, unless maintained by force? Then we call it fascism."<sup>50</sup> It was this plurality of viewpoints that had allowed for the growth of the movement, for the distinction of Marxist versus non-Marxist feminism. She acknowledged that while there were some struggles faced by all women, there were some that were situational, based on race, sexuality, occupation, location, etc. Those distinctions created the need for multiple feminisms, and the discourse between strains promoted growth.

Lynn McDonald, a contributor to the Fifth Anniversary Issue and a co-founder of the Ontario Committee on the Status of Women, opened her article by stating that though Canadian feminists had made no significant published contributions to feminist theory, they had made significant strides in seeing the demands of women met, as much as any other nation with a strong feminist movement that also produced theory.<sup>51</sup> McDonald compared Canada's women's movement with those of Britain, Russia, Germany, and France, and came to three conclusions about the Canadian movement. Firstly, it was defined by "a political position slightly left of centre, progressive/reformist, revolutionary in some aspects, but with little questioning of capitalist institutions."<sup>52</sup> McDonald described the Canadian movement as being more unified than the European movements, which were more divided between conservative and radical sects, each further to the right and left, respectively, on the political spectrum than the Canadian movement. The second of the defining characteristics she identified in the Canadian movement was solidarity across class lines, whereas the conservative and radical European sects were as likely to do damage to each other than the very systems from which they were seeking freedom.<sup>53</sup> The final characteristic, as she saw it, was that the Canadian movement was committed to ordinary political processes.<sup>54</sup> Canadian feminists were focused on change from within existing systems through public education— often referred to as "consciousness raising"— and the persuasion of politicians within major parties. This was, in her estimation, a stark contrast to Europe feminism, where women's liberation parties were founded and theory about women's oppression was developed alongside socialist theory.

One example McDonald gave of the "left-of-centre" position of the Canadian movement was that feminists were not "inordinately concerned" with the struggles and demands of the middle class, "but neither has it gone so far as to challenge such basic institutions as private property."<sup>55</sup> Another example concerning solidarity across class lines was how the verbiage surrounding the "equal pay for equal work" movement shifted to "equal pay for work of equal value," to better support and protect women in manual labour and working class women.<sup>56</sup> The former statement, according to McDonald, was sufficient in supporting women in the middle class, whose work was comparable enough to men's, or did not face physical barriers which prevented them from entering "men's" roles, but failed to meet the needs of working class women. Many working-class women who entered traditionally masculine fields, such as construction or factory work, were not completing identical work to men, while those in "women's" fields, such as daycare providers and hairdressers, did not have male counterparts. These women were thus failed by the sentiment of "equal pay for equal work", leaving them without access to fair wages. In shifting their approach, Canadian feminists were better able to meet the needs of the working class. The women's groups undertaking this battle also resisted provincial offers of affirmative action, an "American import" as McDonald put it, which would have aided a handful of well-educated women in breaking into highbrow jobs but would have done nothing to aid the majority of women workers in their pursuits for equal wages and job opportunities.<sup>57</sup> The goal of

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<sup>50</sup> Smith, "Where There Is Oppression," Vol. 6, no. 1, 10.

<sup>51</sup> Lynn McDonald, "The Evolution of the Women's Movement in Canada," *Branching Out*, Vol. 6, no. 1 (1979), 39.

<sup>52</sup> McDonald, "The Evolution of the Women's Movement in Canada," Vol. 6, no. 1, 39.

<sup>53</sup> McDonald, "The Evolution of the Women's Movement in Canada," Vol. 6, no. 1, 39.

<sup>54</sup> McDonald, "The Evolution of the Women's Movement in Canada," Vol. 6, no. 1, 39.

<sup>55</sup> McDonald, "The Evolution of the Women's Movement in Canada," Vol. 6, no. 1, 39.

<sup>56</sup> McDonald, "The Evolution of the Women's Movement in Canada," Vol. 6, no. 1, 39.

<sup>57</sup> McDonald, "The Evolution of the Women's Movement in Canada," Vol. 6, no. 1, 40.

affirmative action was not to improve wages but to meet quotas, "is inimical to the tradition of inter-class solidarity."<sup>58</sup>

McDonald stated that while Canadian feminists were particularly skilled at producing "excellent briefs, with analyses of particular problems, and detailed recommendations for change," they failed in producing significant theoretical works, and had nothing comparable to Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* or the work of theorists in Europe. However, she closed out her article stating, "Nevertheless, the Canadian women's movement has been no less successful than those of these other countries [Britain, France, Russia, Germany]. An elaborate theoretical perspective is not necessarily better than a simpler, implicit one, nor necessarily more likely to be put into practice."<sup>59</sup>

The *Branching Out* approach to feminism was committed to progressive policies, but largely in the form of reform, seldom calling for full scale revolution. It can be best characterized as "everyday feminism," in that the topics the contributors were concerned with were focussed on how feminism impacted normal activities in the lives of everyday women, and how the movement could be utilized to improve their situations. According to a survey conducted by the magazine, *Branching Out* readers came from a multitude of backgrounds, which included educated professionals such as teachers, professors, and economists, but also women from working class backgrounds, such as retail supervisors, as well as women with creative backgrounds, such as writers and artists.<sup>60</sup>

One of the most obvious ways that this recognition is apparent is how *Branching Out* dealt with issues concerning wage parity, equal access to work, and other labour topics, such as an article published in 1978 concerning urban sprawl and its impacts on women. Gerda R. Wekerle, a professor of environmental studies at York University, and Novia Carter, a professor with the School of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Waterloo, studied the impacts of sex role bias in North American urban planning. Families living in suburbs could only access urban areas by car, which, in most families, men controlled, resulting in female isolation.<sup>61</sup> Drawing on research about urban living in Sweden, the writers illustrated how urban design could be used to benefit women by creating apartment complexes with little domestic upkeep, such as yard work, to allow women to prioritize work and other pursuits, with robust transit systems, daycares, and dynamic job markets nearby to suit the many societal roles modern woman played.<sup>62</sup> Swedish conditions were offered as a point of comparison to those in Whitehorse, where a women's collective was forced to found an entire bus system because there was no public transit in a city covering 164 square miles.<sup>63</sup> This article not only highlighted problems facing women, but also provided a solution, and, because it was written by two women in the field of urban design, gave hope that change was possible as more women broke into male-dominated fields.

*Branching Out* contributors also investigated misogyny in specific occupations. The first issue of 1977 was titled "Fashion and Feminism" and focussed on women in the textile industry, second hand clothing, an exposé on the depiction of women in the Eaton's catalogue, and a photo collection exhibiting "New Looks for Spring". Within this issue, fashion was situated as a feminist issue for how it impacted the lives of working-class women. One such article was an interview with Yvette Rousseau, who at the time was serving as the head of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women and had previously been a union activist in the textile industry for decades. In her interview, Rousseau commented that unions were looked down upon in the fifties, when she was initially forming her factory's union, stating that it was the "shame of her family" that she was a union organizer.<sup>64</sup> Rousseau demonstrated that conditions in the textile factory were not only a worker's rights issue, but a feminist one. For example, women who had caught the eye of the boss were granted better machines, allowing them to produce more and therefore meet higher piece quotas, which determined pay. Furthermore, women were blocked from the higher-paying positions in

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<sup>58</sup> McDonald, "The Evolution of the Women's Movement in Canada," Vol. 6, no. 1, 40.

<sup>59</sup> McDonald, "The Evolution of the Women's Movement in Canada," Vol. 6, no. 1, 43.

<sup>60</sup> "About Our Readers," Vol. 2, no. 1, 44.

<sup>61</sup> Gerda R. Wekerle and Novia Carter, "Urban Sprawl: The Price Women Pay," *Branching Out*, Vol. 5, no. 3 (1978), 12.

<sup>62</sup> Wekerle and Carter, "Urban Sprawl," Vol. 5, no. 3, 12.

<sup>63</sup> Wekerle and Carter, "Urban Sprawl," Vol. 5, no. 3, 12.

<sup>64</sup> Michele Baril, "Women in the Textile Industry: An Interview with Yvette Rousseau," *Branching Out*, Vol. 4, no. 1 (1977), 11.

the factory, such as weaving, dye-works and pressing, which were reserved for men.<sup>65</sup> When she was appointed president of the Advisory Council, Rousseau brought her union and textile industry history with her, and advocated for the council to be able to lay fines against "industrial magnates" who infringed on the rights of workers.<sup>66</sup> This article demonstrates how socialist politics were integrated into feminist activism, and that the women leading this movement came from diverse backgrounds. Rousseau's background in factory work was an important element of ensuring that the Advisory Council advocated for women of all backgrounds. As part of its edict was to educate the government and the public about women's issues, interviews like the one published in *Branching Out* played an important role in the women's movement.

Another example of the concern the magazine showed for working-class women, and which demonstrates the integration of socialism into Canadian feminist thought, was an article published about the housing crisis faced by single women. Because of sex-role bias, single women (divorced, widowed, or never married) were seen as undesirable tenants. The article was about a woman named Annie, a single mother who worked full-time as a bank teller, held a university education, and had a good credit rating, yet, on seeing her nineteenth apartment in five days, was denied because she "wouldn't be able to maintain the apartment."<sup>67</sup> The writers identified not only the pervasive views of sex and gender as the root of the women's housing crisis, but also the capitalist view of property as an investment or market commodity, calling for it to be seen as a social right.<sup>68</sup> The notion of for-profit investment is an core component of a capitalist economy, and advocating for housing for all challenged this and would have been outside the scope of what many average Canadians would have considered as an aspect of the women's liberation movement. *Branching Out* presented this opinion by appealing to the emotions of their readers, presenting Annie as a sympathetic figure to whom they could relate, and in doing so broadened the horizons of their readers.

The magazine also looked at how law, government, and politics impacted or disadvantaged women, and how they could be used to invoke change. One of the major concerns of the women's movement was the vulnerability of women to physical attacks by men. Marital rape was not yet criminalized, and though physical violence against women was prolific, prior to the 1970s intimate partner violence was not recognized as abnormal or problematic by Canadian law, much less the public.<sup>69</sup> Feminist activists sought to change this, eventually leading to the recognition of spousal abuse as a crime. They were also responsible for the proliferation of rape crisis centres opening across Canada as a response to the rising epidemic of sexual assault. A report to the Solicitor General from 1977 legitimized the problem, stating:

Rape is on the increase, the reporting of rape to the police is rare, and convictions of rapists are negligible; the concerns about the community's attitude toward rape victims [sic] -- of despair, benign neglect, if not overt hostility; of dissatisfaction with agencies which dealt with rape victims which tended to view the victim of rape mainly as an object, as a source of information, a piece of evidence for the court. Their approaches to the victims were found to be detached if not outright resentful, which often worsened the victim's condition due to the existence of "sexist" ideology in a society which nurtures rape.<sup>70</sup>

These circumstances led *Branching Out* in 1976 to launch a legal column which gave legal advice to women.

The first of these legal columns was authored by Linda Duncan, an Edmonton-based lawyer who sat on the board of directors for the Rape Crisis Centre of Edmonton. The first topic she tackled was pursuing compensation for sexual assault. She outlined the many challenges faced by victims who pursued a criminal investigation, such as prejudice based on the victims' outfit or behaviour at the time of the assault, evidentiary laws which often required corroboration, and the gruelling nature of testifying in court, which often resulted in further humiliation for the

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<sup>65</sup> Baril, "Women in the Textile Industry," Vol. 4, no. 1, 11.

<sup>66</sup> Baril, "Women in the Textile Industry," Vol. 4, no. 1, 11.

<sup>67</sup> Lynn Hannley and Marsha Mitchell, "The Castle Revisited," *Branching Out*, Vol. 5, no. 3 (1978), 16.

<sup>68</sup> Hannley and Mitchell, "The Castle Revisited," Vol. 5, no. 3, 16.

<sup>69</sup> Walter S. DeKeseredy and Molly Dragiewicz, "Woman Abuse in Canada: Sociological Reflections on the Past, Suggestions for the Future," *Violence Against Women*, Vol. 20(2) (2014): 229.

<sup>70</sup> Menachem Amir and Delila Amir, *Rape Crisis Centres in Ontario: An Appraisal (A Report to the Solicitor General)*, 1977, ii.

victim. Duncan asserts that “the existing criminal sanction is blatantly ineffective in combating rape,”<sup>71</sup> especially in light of low conviction rates.<sup>72</sup> Duncan advocated for significant legal reform that would deter perpetrators and better support victims, but until that reform took place, Duncan offered an alternative path to criminal proceedings; under tort law, a woman could sue her attacker for damage for assault. In a civil suit, she would not be a witness for the prosecution but would be able to control the proceedings as the plaintiff, and had access to the direct guidance of her lawyer, not the crown lawyer.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, the onus of proof in civil proceedings, where it only needed to be shown to be “reasonably probable” that the perpetrator was guilty, was lower than in a criminal case.<sup>74</sup> Finally, perhaps the most notable difference in civil proceedings, was that if the victim was seen to have “contributed” to the assault, it did not mean a verdict of not guilty for the perpetrator, though it may have reduced damages awarded to her.<sup>75</sup>

Another *Branching Out* article also explored the ramifications of tort law, this time examining the injustice of interspousal tort immunity and how it perpetuated sexist views of women as property. For women living in an abusive marriage, Duncan’s proposal of suing for damage to address assault was inapplicable. This “protection” between spouses dated back to early English common law, which legally recognized women as a man’s property, and, since property cannot sue its owner, and an owner cannot sue property, there was no option for tort cases between spouses.<sup>76</sup> Proponents of maintaining immunity argued that allowing tort cases between spouses would disrupt spousal harmony, but Bailey argued that if one spouse was suing another for assault, then the harmony had probably been effectively disrupted.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, Bailey argued that women could already sue their husbands for the “protection and security of their property,” spouses could sue each other for breach of contract, and spouses could bring criminal proceedings against each other.<sup>78</sup> In other words, there was not good legal reason for wives not to be permitted to bring tort cases against abusive husbands. Although less practical than Duncan’s article, Bailey’s was focused on education, and for those women interested in pursuing politics or pressuring their political leaders, indicated a target to direct their energies at.

Government and politics were prevalent topics in *Branching Out*. Interviews with prominent figures in the women’s movement and Canadian society were popular, and most volumes featured an interview-format feature. In December 1977, the magazine published a series of interviews with four “politically-minded” feminists who shared their experiences of “getting power and using it.”<sup>79</sup> These interviews were to celebrate the women breaking into politics, to share strategies for women interested in running a political campaign, and to raise important questions about the role of government in the women’s movement. For example, interviewee Laura Sabia stated, “once we’re at the top we’ll be different.”<sup>80</sup> Maureen Hynes, who performed the interview, was less certain of this assertion, though, and questioned whether there was a path to liberation by using the oppressive system, or if there were inherent dangers in that. Her criticism of this ideology was primarily concerned with how the working class would be affected, writing,

Is it possible to get elected and then purify our ideals and methods of getting our due? Should we choose the same parliamentary path that has rarely operated in the best interests of housewives, welfare recipients, unemployed women, immigrant women, unionized and non-unionized female workers? Would, in fact, a sizeable number of women in the House assure representation for these

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<sup>71</sup> Linda Duncan, “Rape Logic: Hit ‘Em Where it Hurts,” *Branching Out*, Vol. 3, no. 1 (1976), 28.

<sup>72</sup> Duncan, “Rape Logic,” Vol. 3, no. 1, 28. NOTE: Duncan gives the example that, in Edmonton in 1974, 149 cases of assault were reported, 21 went to trial, and only 6 ended with a conviction, or 4.02%. In Toronto, only 10% of assaults were reported, and the conviction rate even then was only 30%.

<sup>73</sup> Duncan, “Rape Logic,” Vol. 3, no. 1, 29.

<sup>74</sup> Duncan, “Rape Logic,” Vol. 3, no. 1, 29.

<sup>75</sup> Duncan, “Rape Logic,” Vol. 3, no. 1, 29.

<sup>76</sup> Stella Bailey, “He Can Break Your Leg but Not Your Watch,” *Branching Out*, Vol. 4, no. 2 (1977), 5.

<sup>77</sup> Bailey, “He Can Break Your Leg but Not Your Watch,” Vol. 4, no. 2, 6.

<sup>78</sup> Bailey, “He Can Break Your Leg but Not Your Watch,” Vol. 4, no. 2, 6.

<sup>79</sup> “Political Power: How and Why,” *Branching Out*, Vol. 4, no. 5 (1977), 8.

<sup>80</sup> Maureen Hynes, “We Need a National Network of Power Brokers: Laura Sabia Interviewed,” *Branching Out*, Vol. 4, no. 5 (1977), 11.



women? (Has the large number of *men* in elected office assured representation for *male* welfare recipients or immigrants?) What's to prevent women in office from becoming a female elite? Would they not be led down the old familiar path of excelling in competition?<sup>81</sup>

She closed the article by asking if a government system that had historically and continuously failed to meet the needs of 52% of the population was even capable of reform, or if it should be "abandoned rather than reformed."<sup>82</sup>

Hynes' question, which challenged to the position of a prominent feminist, demonstrates the freedom the magazine gave to its contributors. *Branching Out* was a forum for its contributors to share diverse thoughts and ideologies. For example, contrast the Hynes interview of Sabia to the article written by Lynn McDonald, where she claimed that the women's movement had not challenged private property ownership. Though these passages deal with different topics, they give two different perspectives within the Canadian women's movement. Advocating for or suggesting fundamental government reform, such as the abandonment of existing structures, to address misogyny is an extreme proposition to make, perhaps more extreme even than challenging private property ownership, yet both arguments appeared in consecutive issues.

This propensity for sharing diverse opinions, rather than committing to a particular perspective, led some readers to criticize the publication's moderate approach to feminism. However, there is an argument to be made that hosting authors with varied perspectives on feminism was, in itself, a bold and radical approach to the women's movement. It demonstrates *Branching Out's* flexibility and commitment to growth, and that the magazine staff were not rigid in their thinking. It is an indicator of their goal of helping Canadian women discover their own identity and the form of feminism with which they best identified, which Susan McMaster outlined as a primary goal of the magazine in the first issue.<sup>83</sup> For example, a letter to the editor in 1976 stated, "I feel I am becoming more liberated in my old age and your magazine certainly has its influence,"<sup>84</sup> which demonstrates the reach *Branching Out* had in promoting education for women.

The letters also demonstrate that this diversified approach was key to reaching a wide audience. Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate how differently women were perceiving the same content. Figure 1 shows two reader comments, one telling the magazine to keep content serious, and one begging them to publish a humorous article. Figure 2 demonstrates a similar diversity of reader opinion, with one instructing the magazine to increase its radicalism, and another two telling them to lessen it. An exclusively radical or conservative approach, however, would likely immediately drive away a reader of a diametrically opposed opinion. By publishing so diversely, *Branching Out* ensured that, to a degree, there was something for every woman, regardless of where she was in her feminist journey.

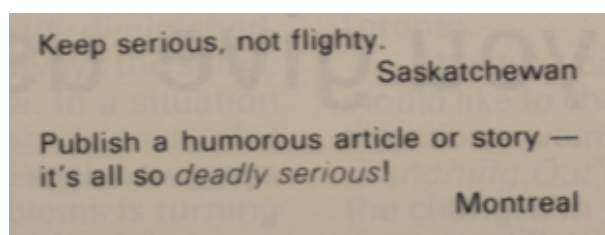


FIGURE 1. "LETTERS," *BRANCHING OUT*, VOL. 3, NO. 1 (1976), 3.

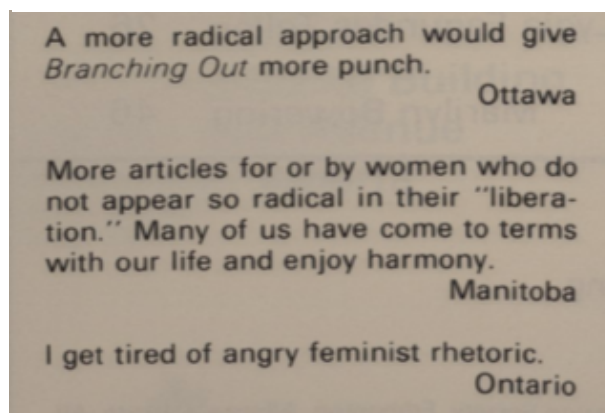


FIGURE 2. "LETTERS," *BRANCHING OUT*, VOL. 3, NO. 1 (1976), 3.

<sup>81</sup> Hynes, "We Need a National Network of Power Brokers: Laura Sabia Interviewed," Vol. 4, no. 5, 11.

<sup>82</sup> Hynes, "We Need a National Network of Power Brokers: Laura Sabia Interviewed," Vol. 4, no. 5, 11.

<sup>83</sup> Susan McMaster, "Branching To?" Preview Issue, 3.

<sup>84</sup> "Letters," *Branching Out*, Vol. 3, no. 1 (1976), 3.

Another letter sent to *Branching Out* stated that the reader wished for “More items on women’s progress and less on the actual liberation aspect. Most women who read *Branching Out* are already liberated.”<sup>85</sup> Such perspectives have given rise to the perception that the women’s movement was predominately a white, middle-upper-class movement that failed to recognize race or class as additional systems of oppression that added to women’s experiences of misogyny. Though there is no way to know for certain what the racial or economic background was of this writer, it is likely that she enjoyed a degree of economic security and did not face racial discrimination, or else she would not be implying that she was “already liberated.” However, this was not the experience of many Canadian women at this time. In addition to the inequalities facing women in the working class, the magazine also explored issues surrounding race.

Modern perceptions of the second-wave feminist movement are that it was, if not always overtly racist, at least blind to the harms of systemic racism. This is likely due in part to the realities of the suffragist/first-wave feminist movement, where prominent, middle-upper-class white suffragettes upheld racism in their own pursuit of the vote.<sup>86</sup> Second-wave feminism was also associated with an affluent, privileged group of women whose ideas could be a detriment to the pursuit of equality. As Joan Sangster notes, there were many women in liberation movements who would have identified as equal rights advocates or liberationists, who “were for women’s equality but against feminism,” but because of this perception that it was a white, upper-class movement, whose proponents would push down other women to get on equal ground with white men, they distanced themselves from feminism.<sup>87</sup> *Branching Out* proves, however, that even when members of the feminist movement were middle or upper-class white women, they were not always ignorant of issues relating to race.

From the first issue, *Branching Out* explored race as a critical form of oppression. In the magazine’s first article, Roberta Kalechofsky challenged the assertion made by Gloria Steinem that racism and sexism were equivalent forms of oppression rooted in economic exploitation. She warned that such false equivalencies were dangerous, stating:

Is there no difference between a male chauvinist and a lynching mob? No difference between a female lawyer who has been snubbed and kept down by her male colleagues and a black cotton picker? No difference between a suffragette movement that began in 1865 with women who had sufficient education and self-awareness to demand the vote as their starting point, and a movement that began in 1865 with a people just freed from slavery, whose every move upward for many generations has been accompanied by real— not metaphoric— danger to life and limb?<sup>88</sup>

Kalechofsky did not seek to downplay the harms of misogyny with her argument, but to illuminate critical differences, and, in so doing, aid in the fight against both forms of oppression. As she argued, attempting to blindly link the oppression of Black and Indigenous people and women to a single source risked relying on “cliché generalizations” rather than deconstructing the oppression to effectively combat it.<sup>89</sup> She concluded that, “the Women’s Liberation Movement in good part was originated by and is led by well-educated, middle and upper middle class white women for whom the language of exploited and oppressed peoples fits as badly as the Victorian bustle.”<sup>90</sup>

The Preview Issue of *Branching Out* also featured an article by Jenny Margetts, a chairperson and founding member of Indian Rights for Indian Women (IRIW). Margetts outlined the challenges facing Indigenous women due to the unjust nature of section 12(1)(b) of the *Indian Act* that caused a woman to lose her status based on her marriage, where there was no such consequence for men.<sup>91</sup> Margetts demonstrated the racism of Canadian law by citing the recent case of Jeannette Lavell, who protested the loss of her status on the grounds that section 12(1)(b), in targeting women, was a violation of the *Canadian Bill of Rights*, which prohibited sexual discrimination. Lavell’s case

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<sup>85</sup> “Letters,” Vol. 3, no. 1, 2.

<sup>86</sup> Joan Sangster, *One Hundred Years of Struggle: The History of Women and the Vote in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997): 271.

<sup>87</sup> Sangster, *Demanding Equality*, 4.

<sup>88</sup> Roberta Kalechofsky, “Both Sides Now,” *Branching Out*, Preview Issue (1973), 6.

<sup>89</sup> Kalechofsky, “Both Sides Now,” Preview Issue, 6.

<sup>90</sup> Kalechofsky, “Both Sides Now,” Preview Issue, 7.

<sup>91</sup> Jenny Margetts, “Indian Rights for Indian Women,” *Branching Out*, Preview Issue (1973), 8.

was eventually brought to the Supreme Court, and it was ruled that because Indigenous women gained equality with all other women upon marriage, there was no infringement of rights. However, Margetts still considered the case a partial victory, because four out of nine Supreme Court judges supported the position of Lavell and IRIW, and because the issue gained national attention.<sup>92</sup> With these two articles featuring prominently in the first pages of the first-ever issue of the magazine, *Branching Out* made a bold statement about what the editors deemed important to the Canadian women's movement, where issues of race were not an afterthought but incorporated from the magazine's inception.

One of the legal columns introduced in 1976 dealt with a similar issue related to Indigenous women's rights. In her article "Fishing Rights for Inuit Women," Constance Hunt stated that, since the Lavell case, an awareness had been growing about the plight of Indigenous women in Canada and demonstrated the importance of this awareness. She discussed an amendment that had been made to Northwest Territories Fisheries Regulations which excluded women from their traditional practices through a redefinition of who qualified as an "Eskimo," and consequently for associated fishing rights.<sup>93</sup> These changes were made without consulting the Inuit Tapirisat, the governing body, and the minister responsible for these changes ignored the invitation that was sent to attend the Tapirisat Annual Conference to explain and defend the changes.<sup>94</sup> The Tapirisat was unable to force the restoration of Inuit women's fishing rights until an Edmonton journalist's article, which supported the Inuit position, was sent by a reader to the Minister of Health and Welfare, who oversaw the status of women, who elevated the issue to the Minister of the Environment, who had the ultimate say in fisheries regulations. Consequently, one year after Inuit women lost their fishing rights, they were restored.<sup>95</sup> Without the coverage about the Jenny Lavell case, or the subsequent coverage of the Tapirisat Annual Conference, however, these issues never would have reached a general audience. Public backlash was what instigated the government to address the Inuit fishing rights case, and in featuring articles about Indigenous women, *Branching Out* contributed to educating their readers on inequalities facing Indigenous women that differed from their own.

The magazine addressed other forms of racism as well. In 1975, Marianne English authored an editorial addressing racism in the Canadian South African embassy. While attending a Canada Day celebration in Pretoria, English was shocked that the embassy was going along with racist apartheid policies that dictated Black waitstaff be paid five to ten times less than their white counterparts, and were required to address guests as "boss", "master", or "missus."<sup>96</sup> English challenged the hypocrisy of Canada spouting "pious words of condemnation of South Africa's racial policy" while not being willing to challenge apartheid norms by hiring white waiters, which who were more costly to employ but would not face the infantilization that Black waitstaff were subjected to by white patrons.<sup>97</sup> She argued that "international travellers who frequent the five-star hotels [where white waitstaff are employed] would find it disconcerting to be addressed as 'boss' or 'master' by a cowering black waiter, and so the hotels find it worthwhile to pay the extra cost."<sup>98</sup> She also notes that many businesses which were foreign owned and objected to South Africa's apartheid policies would hire white waitstaff in protest, so that there were instances where Black patrons from abroad would be granted "honourary white" status and be served by white staff.<sup>99</sup> English's proposition was informed by what her experience was living in South Africa; while the idea of not hiring Black staff might seem counter-intuitive to addressing the issue, for her, this was a logical suggestion based on what was the norm for foreigners objecting to apartheid policy.

The following issue, however, contained a letter to the editor by novelist Cam Hubert responding to English's grievance, stating that though the letter writer sympathized with English's outrage at Canadian hypocrisy regarding racism, she disagreed with English's argument that the embassy should have addressed the issue by hiring white

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<sup>92</sup> Margetts, "Indian Rights for Indian Women," Preview Issue, 8.

<sup>93</sup> Constance Hunt, "Fishing Rights for Inuit Women," *Branching Out*, Vol. 4, no. 1 (1977), 6.

<sup>94</sup> Hunt, "Fishing Rights for Inuit Women," Vol. 4, no. 1, 6.

<sup>95</sup> Hunt, "Fishing Rights for Inuit Women," Vol. 4, no. 1, 7.

<sup>96</sup> Marianne English, "Both Sides Now: Canada Day in South Africa," *Branching Out*, Vol. 2, no. 4 (1975), 6.

<sup>97</sup> English, "Both Sides Now," Vol. 2, no. 4, 6.

<sup>98</sup> English, "Both Sides Now," Vol. 2, no. 4, 6.

<sup>99</sup> English, "Both Sides Now," Vol. 2, no. 4, 6.

waiters. What she proposed instead was that Black South Africans, who far outnumbered the white South African population, should be paid five to ten times as much as their usual wages when working embassy events to challenge the apartheid policy.<sup>100</sup> This exchange of ideas is demonstrative of the general nature of the women's movement, which encouraged discussion amongst different proponents of feminist thought.

*Branching Out* was a predominately white organization, as revealed by the article "Our First Ring", published one year after the inaugural issue. The article features short biographies by each of the staff, all of whom were young white-presenting women who mostly self-identified with a middle-class background.<sup>101</sup> On a staff of eighteen, having no visible minorities could be seen as promoting the elitism the movement was sometimes accused of, but likely had more to do with the magazine's financial difficulties. The women who worked for *Branching Out* did so as volunteers, in addition to other work and domestic duties they held, and they invested their own money into the start-up costs. Their privilege was what allowed them to do so, but that privilege did not translate to ignorance of racial oppression. The women of *Branching Out* did what they could to span the distance and bring issues of race to a privileged readership. Furthermore, women of colour tended to organize liberation groups specific to their identities, as evidenced by Indian Rights for Indian Women, the Canadian Negro Women's Association, or the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada.<sup>102</sup> While in part this may have been to avoid discrimination within the mainstream movement, it was also to address the specific problems facing their communities.

The women's liberation movement of the late twentieth century was diverse, covering a plethora of issues relating to women's rights. As Canada's first national feminist publication, *Branching Out* attempted to present as many of these issues as possible, and in doing so, portrayed the richness of the Canadian second-wave. The magazine published articles that sometimes seemed to contradict each other, as with Smith and McDonald, or between English and Hubert, but that ultimately worked in conjunction to convey a profusion of feminist perspectives and to promote discussion. Alongside theoretical issues, the magazine presented the readers with the practical applications of feminism. While feminist theory was an important framework for the movement, it lacked everyday application. Recognizing the contours of oppression and having the tools to deal with it are two separate issues, and for most women, knowing how to utilize the courts in cases of assault was more useful than exploring theory.

That did not mean the magazine ignored some of the "bigger" issues, however, and it still explored topics such as race and socialism in a way that sought to broaden the horizons of the reader by presenting them with topics that they may not have encountered before. Articles such as "Fishing Rights for Inuit Women" demonstrated why a caring and informed public was important to aiding Indigenous women in pursuing their rights, and calls for housing as a social right and not a commodity challenged entrenched ideas about property ownership. Despite objections from readers for being either too radical or too reserved, *Branching Out* was a dynamic publication that attempted to educate readers without alienating them through the multiplicity of perspectives that it shared. In doing so, it demonstrated the characteristics of the women's movement that were specific to Canada. Susan McMaster set out to found a Canadian women's magazine that helped women to discover their identities, and in so doing opened the door for six years of cultural exploration and publication. As Jordan notes, the magazine has largely "fallen out of the historical record," which she hypothesizes is due in part to its location in the west but also because of its "more moderate approach, both of which make it relatively invisible to historians of the feminist revolution."<sup>103</sup> However, this moderate approach was, in fact, integral to its success and reach, which allowed many readers to be introduced to the women's movement.

*Branching Out*, as a historical document, unlocks a perspective of the women's movement that is unique and exciting in how it challenges modern assumptions about second wave feminism, complicating the narrative of it being a predominately white, middle-to-upper-class movement. While it is true that many women involved in the feminist movement were of this background, *Branching Out* demonstrates that this did not mean that the movement

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<sup>100</sup> Cam Hubert, "Letters," *Branching Out*, Vol. 2, no. 5 (1975), 2-3.

<sup>101</sup> Staff, "Our First Ring," *Branching Out*, Vol. 1, no. 5 (1974), 30-34.

<sup>102</sup> Prentice, *Canadian Women*, 431-432.

<sup>103</sup> Jordan, *Feminist Acts*, xxix.

was only concerned with white, middle-class liberation. The findings of this project are similar to what has been previously established by historians such as Joan Sangster; she likewise notes that though there was strong participation amongst upper-and-middle-class white women, there was also collaboration with women of “marginal” identities, a sentiment captured in a 1973 speech by Black feminist trailblazer Rosemary Brown, when she stated, “Unless we are all free [...] none of us will be free.”<sup>104</sup> Sangster similarly identifies a strong labour movement within the feminist movement, which is exemplified by *Branching Out*’s many articles concerned with the working class. These findings are integral to the subfield of feminist history, as they highlight that the movement was more diverse than received wisdom has dictated, and actively sought the liberation of all women.

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Owl City, 29 November 2010, Kolbingen, Germany, Wikimedia Commons

<sup>104</sup> Sangster, *Demanding Equality*, 245.