Conference Programme
Abstracts

Restorying Canada
Reconsidering Religion and Public Memory in 2017

Organisers
Emma Anderson, University Of Ottawa
Hillary Kaell, Concordia University
Pamela Klassen, University of Toronto

Event coordinator
Jenny Gignoux
Memory, Commemoration and History of Quebec Residential Schools: From the Individual to the Collective?

Marie-Pierre Bousquet, University of Montreal

Is the integration of the history of residential schools into the national collective history more difficult in Quebec than elsewhere in Canada? This presentation will focus on the construction of the memory of residential schools in Quebec, and then its transformation into a history that should be both collective and national. Fueled by the works of French intellectuals who have reacted to the memorial laws of their government, my reflection will focus on three phases through which pass historical events to gain wider recognition and enter into a national narrative: the collection of testimonies, the passage from personal narratives to collective memory through commemoration, and the sharing of these commemorations by a wider audience. In studying these last two phases, I will speculate on the lack of inclusion of the particular history of residential schools in the collective history of Quebec. I pay particular attention to the commemorative processes of former residents and specialized institutions such as museums, as well as the provincial media coverage of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in order to analyze the pitfalls in the reception of this history by Quebeckers. I conclude with some approaches to remedying this situation.

The TRC and the ERC: Problematizing Québec’s Ethics and Religious Culture Curriculum

Christine Cusack, University of Ottawa

In response to an evolving landscape of diversity, the province of Québec implemented the obligatory Ethics and Religious Culture Program (ERC) in all of its primary and secondary schools in 2008. The highly-contested shift from religious education to education about religion constituted a final step in a protracted process of ‘deconfessionalization’ of the public school system. Internationally, the ERC is considered to be an innovative model for religious literacy education in plural democracies. However, the Calls to Action from the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission, particularly those regarding education and indigenous spiritual practices and beliefs, posit particular challenges to the pedagogical objectives of the current program. Based on a textual analysis of Québec public secondary school ERC student manuals, this paper seeks to problematize the privileged portrayal of the major traditions in the curriculum and to consider how future iterations of the program may be better aligned to the changes envisioned by the TRC Calls to Action.
Susette Blackbird and W.W. McLaren: An Unexpected Love Story

Peter Bush, Minister, Westwood Presbyterian Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba

While the institutional structures of Canada’s churches actively engaged in the colonization project, there were individuals, like Susette Blackbird and W.W. McLaren, who while working in the residential schools challenged the system.

Graduating in 1905 from Knox College, the Presbyterian Church in Canada’s theological college in Toronto, became the Principal of the Birtle Indian Residential School in Manitoba. Through the school and through working on initiatives with Indigenous people, McLaren made a connection with the students and Indigenous leaders on the surrounding reserves.

At the school Susette Blackbird, a Dakota, and McLaren met. Married in 1911, they asked permission to live in an apartment in the school building housing the student dormitories. Their marriage was criticized and their plan rejected by both the Department of Indian Affairs and the church.

Using letters and reports as the evidentiary base, the paper will take the form of a monologue to highlight the power of story in the task of reconciliation. In so doing the paper takes seriously the conference title of “restorying.”

"He Knows the Road to School, He Can Go If He Wants to": Indian Day Schools for The Kitigan Zibi Anishnabeg (1853 - 1958)

Anny Morissette, Concordia University

In Quebec, systemic studies of Indian day schools from the end of the nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century are non-existent. Yet, 31 Indian day schools were in operation in the province to teach Indigenous children how to become little Canadians. In Quebec, as in the rest of the country, more Indian students attended day schools than residential schools. The historiography of Indian day schools is an important and necessary undertaking to support progress in healing and reconciliation. What can the history of these day schools tell us that the Canadian collective memory seems to have forgotten? What can we learn about Euro-Canadian and Indigenous actors involved in the education of Aboriginal children? What strategies did Indian Affairs use to attract children to school and encourage the Canadian way of life?

Based on an analysis of the modus operandi of these institutions grounded in archival and historical research concerning the River Desert band and school life in the Outaouais region, I will trace the origin of the first schools in Kitigan Zibi and explore the Anishnabeg’s feelings about the proposed education along with the power play between the Indian Affairs administration and the band council on educational matters.
Public Policy and Diversity Management in A Multicultural Nation

Zaheeda Alibhai, University of Ottawa

In the 21st century nowhere does religion, citizenship, immigration, public security and national values intersect more fully than in government policies regulating and banning Muslim women from wearing the niqab in public spaces. On November 16th, 2015 Canada became the first western democracy to legally retract a policy directive banning Muslim women from wearing the niqab and burqa during the oath of allegiance at Canadian citizenship ceremonies. The retraction was framed as a symbol of the Canadian values of diversity and inclusion. Western democratic nations such as Austria, France and the Netherlands among others have taken the opposite approach by banning Muslim women from wearing the niqab in public and government spaces since they are viewed as symbols threatening western democratic values of inclusion, gender equality and peaceful co-existence. Global policy trends regulating and managing Muslim women who wear the niqab play into broader debates of modern immigration, construction of citizenship and the place of religion in the public sphere. This paper examines the relationship between the Canadian state and certain religious communities to critically analyze the role that geopolitical narratives played in the implementation of the four-year policy directive banning Muslim women from wearing the niqab during the oath of allegiance at Canadian citizenship ceremonies. This paper concludes with a discussion of the distinct qualities of Canadian pluralism that influenced the ‘niqab ban’ retraction.

Religion, Integration, and the living together in Montreal

Deirdre Meintel, Université de Montréal

Religious groups, even those predominantly composed of immigrants, are typically multi-ethnic. For the most part, they are sites of fairly egalitarian relations between people of different origins, and where the ethnic hierarchy of the wider society is not reproduced. They allow all (including those of the social majority) a to develop closer relations with people of other origins. Some religious groups contribute in various ways to the transmission of the identity of an immigrant group by offering courses in music, languages, dance, martial arts. Most immigrant groups provide significant support to newcomers in many cases and support them in adapting to the normative framework of the surrounding society. Religious groups also provide symbolic tools for migrants to reframe the difficulties and penalties associated with migration or exile, deskilling and racism; they help both migrants and native born to better deal with the typical difficulties of modern life (i.e. unemployment, personal losses, separation and divorce).

In research conducted in Quebec, we see collaboration between faith groups from different traditions. Elsewhere in the world we see that interreligious collaboration is being mobilized to strengthen what Gilroy calls “conviviality” (le vivre ensemble) and to combat violent radicalization; in Montreal, we note some promising signs of interreligious solidarity; for example, in Christian churches’ responses to the shooting at the mosque in Quebec City and in the founding of the Place de l’unité (an interreligious centre), Verdun (Montreal).
Multicultural Narratives: Making Room for Religion in Canada

Jenna Ferry, University of Calgary

Religion creates challenges for the contemporary Canadian social imaginary. Charles Taylor has noted that the shift towards secularism means that believing in God is one of many possible positions, and that often it is not the easiest position to hold. Scholars, such as Lori Beaman, have suggested that Canadian secularism so closely aligns with Christianity, that the two seem nearly indistinguishable. Despite commitments to securality in Canada, religion continues to push political and social boundaries and be a source of media interest. Banting and Kymlicka haven noted that religion remains one area, under the umbrella of multiculturalism, that requires considerably more attention. Many key philosophical assumptions that undergird multiculturalism, including ideas about recognition, accommodation, and tolerance have been heavily, and fairly, criticized by both scholars and politicians. These concepts are found insufficient, and all too often patterns of marginalization, colonialism, and discrimination are recreated, reinforced or merely repackaged. I would like to suggest that by seriously incorporating narrative as a key philosophical pillar of multiculturalism, and by grounding narrative in the process of visiting, some of the problems and criticisms associated with multiculturalism can be alleviated. By making use of philosophers such as Paul Ricouer, Emmanuel Levinas, and Hannah Arendt, I will explore the way that narrative, combined with project of “visiting” might be used to adequately incorporate the religious into multicultural discourse.

Strangers at the Table: Thanksgiving as Ritual in the Settler Colonial State

Sailaja Krishnamurti, St Mary's University

For many Canadians, the Thanksgiving holiday is a time to celebrate ‘Canadian’ traditions. This paper theorizes the Thanksgiving holiday as a cultural moment out of which a nationalist narrative about Canada unfolds. The holiday’s Protestant roots in Canada and its roots in Indigenous traditions are hidden behind the idea of a secular celebration of Canadian settlement (Stevens 2017). Participation in Thanksgiving is seen by many as a kind of initiation into Canadian identity. To explore this, the paper examines ‘Share Thanksgiving’ – a national volunteer program in which new immigrants and refugees are invited to the home of a stranger, a ‘host family,’ for a Thanksgiving feast. Volunteer hosts meet their guests for the first time when they enter the host’s home. Guests and hosts then sit down to a “traditional” Thanksgiving meal complete with turkey and fixings. The program has been in existence since 2012, and it has operated in communities across Canada. What does the reproduction of this ritual mean for migrants and refugees, many of whom are spending their first Autumn in Canada, as they are asked to perform the role of ‘guest’ in their new home? How does this enactment situate Indigenous people as outside the narrative, not invited to the table? The paper uses ‘Share Thanksgiving’ as a way to think about secular multiculturalism as bound by faith in nationalism and its implicit religiosities.
Ancient North America: Changing Chronologies of Canada

Carolyn Podruchny, York University

This presentation will discuss teaching ancient North America, and the implications this has for completely changing historical chronologies of “Canada.” Some of the questions and topics to be addressed are: whose story and whose voices? What are the ethics of history and connections to stakeholders and making history relevant? What innovative methods and diverse sources, chronologies and historical fenceposts are used for creating such histories?

In Narratives of Canada's Past, The Experiences of Indigenous Peoples...

Stacy Nation-Knapper, McMaster University

In narratives of Canada's past, the experiences of Indigenous peoples are often cast as those of religious minorities, when in fact they were for a very long time the majority population on the continent with diverse and flourishing religious practices. This presentation will outline three projects (Cultivated Pasts: Commemoration, History-Making, and Landscapes of Memory in Western Canada; Decolonizing 1867: Stories from the People; and N-lkwkw-min: Remembering the Fur Trade in the Columbia River Plateau), were the re-storying of familiar histories of Canada's past reposition Indigenous experiences as central to understanding the stories of the past, as they were for the people who lived them.

Seeds of a new story: Schools and Settler-Indigenous Entanglements

Thomas Peace, Huron College

Seeds of a new story? Over the past five years, Dr. Peace has made a transition into the early histories of Indigenous engagement with settler colonialism and systems of education. Over the course of this research, he learned from both the primary and secondary record about the complex sets of relationships that underpinned Canadian society over the course of the nineteenth century. Drawing on a handful of examples, his current research argues that closer attention to the diverse histories of schooling in the Lower Great Lakes, suggests a much more complicated narrative for Canada’s early formation.

Printing in (Native) Tongues: Christian Print Culture in Colonial Canada,

Roxanne Korpan, University of Toronto

In 1845, James Evans had a printing press delivered to the northern Manitoban Rossville Mission to print religious and educational material in Cree syllabics, a system he designed to teach Indigenous people literacy in their own language. The written word of his Cree interlocutors was
mediated through Evans’ imposition of a rigid type-form of sign-symbols and the contents of the material he printed: Christian psalms, hymns, and scriptures. This paper examines the production of Cree-language Christian texts at Rossville Mission Press in the context of mid-nineteenth century British imperialism and colonization of Canada. I examine Evans’ translation work as a case study of colonial print culture to ask: How is language translation produced by colonial ideologies and systems? How does this language work make colonization possible? This paper primarily interrogates the colonial context of Evans’ translation and print production at Rossville Mission. I excavate Evans’ colonial context to destabilize the characterization prominent in literature on Evans that the missionary printer’s work is miraculous and the product of a linguistic genius. Rather, I show how Evans’ Cree syllabics and printing rely on specific colonial ideologies and networks. I then look forward in my analysis to the forced assimilation policies of the late-nineteenth to midtwentieth centuries to examine how linguistic work and print production like Evans’ produced conceptions of racialized Indigenous speech that were mobilized in projects of forced language eradication. I conclude the paper with discussion of methodological questions related to writing histories of colonial book production and print culture.

**Materializing the Spiritual Marketplace: Fair-Trade and Ten Thousand Villages**

**Laurel Zwissler, Central Michigan University**

The concept of “the spiritual marketplace” is one result of particular conceptions of secularism, in which religious participation becomes optional and specific religions are personal choices. Such ideas of individualized spirituality are grounded in values that celebrate consumption as liberating and a sign of personal agency. In their original formulations, scholars such as sociologists Ellwood and Roof approach the concept of a spiritual marketplace as a discursive space of specific, whole traditions vying for members, rather than an assemblage of individual elements, removable from the historical and cosmological contexts of particular religions. However, in newer formulations, scholars document ways that spiritual practitioners feel free to detach elements from specific religious traditions or cultural contexts without adopting complete worldviews wholesale. Instead, they construct their own cosmologies out of hand-selected pieces, a process by turns lauded as progressive resistance against hegemonic institutions and criticized as flippant cultural appropriation. This project brings analysis of these historical and scholarly trends together with field-work on a major fair-trade organization in Canada that works with volunteers. Grounding ideas of “spiritual marketplace” in specific practices demonstrates that the term can also be redeployed to describe spaces in which consumption is directed towards products understood to possess their own spiritual power or to cultivate spiritual affect. I investigate ways that participants position themselves both within the metaphorical space of Canada’s “spiritual marketplace” and within a literal retail space that includes items produced in far-off places, some of which connect to non-Christian religious ideas and practices.

**Working for Change: The Entrepreneurial Spirit of Sikhs in Canada, Now & Then**

**Zabeen Khamisa, University of Waterloo**

In this paper, I explore the role of entrepreneurship in how individual Sikhs in Canada have challenged various societal problems (for example gender, and racial discrimination),
translating their religious values and moral positions. I compare data collected from online-media analysis about entrepreneurial activist efforts initiated by contemporary millennial Canadian Sikhs to archival materials that document the experiences of the early Sikh small-to-large business entrepreneurs and labour workers in Canada and suggest that an exploration of the dynamic entrepreneurial activities of Sikhs in Canada across different generations, allows us to see the changing attitudes of moral citizenship and the boundaries of belonging in the broader Canadian context. At the same time, I intend to demonstrate how Sikh principles vary in expression through different forms of entrepreneurial engagement across generations.

**Ghosts in the Machine: Engaging with the Dead in the 21st Century**

**Jeremy Cohen, McMaster University**

By the end of 2015, over 30 million Facebook users had died. In fact, 10,000 Facebook users die every day, leaving family and friends to negotiate their online presence post-mortem. The proliferation of digital spaces to remember the dead online has signaled a shift in Western grieving practices. This presentation is based on a content analysis of four online memorial websites and four social networking case studies. My analysis looked for patterns of communication between living and deceased to ascertain why people engage with the dead online and with whom they believe they are communicating with. The results suggest that online and social networking memorials are techno-spiritual, enchanted spaces that offer the possibility of erasing the boundaries between the world of the living and the world of the dead.

According to Charles Taylor (2007), our ancestors could rely on the hope of immortality in heaven, but in modernity, secularism has undermined meaning by denying the possibility of an afterlife. While Taylor believes that we live in an age of disenchanted individuality, evidence from online memorials suggests a more nuanced and complicated relationship to religion and the afterlife in the 21st century. I argue that these enchanted spaces provide a locus for religious imagined communities. Our relationship to technology and our interactions with the dead online indicate a desire for the postmortem continuity of consciousness in the contemporary world. This presentation will argue for the communal, communicative and ritual possibilities afforded by digital technology operating outside of designated religious sites and structures.

**2:45 PM**

**SESSION T5: PERFORMING NATIONS**

**The Vanishing Indians That Never Were: More than a Century of Dramatic Performances and Contested Narratives by the Anishinaabeg of Garden River First Nation**

**Karl Hele, Concordia University**

From approximately 1901 to the current day, members of Garden River First Nation (GRFN) have staged various plays in Canada, Europe, and the United States. From 1901 to 1969 community members annually staged “The Song of Hiawatha” as well as commemorations of
Etienne Brule’s discovery of the region, the first Anglican missionary’s arrival, and the fur trade. In the 21st century GRFN attempted to recast past performances while re-presenting the Hiawatha Play from 2006 to 2008 and to create a ‘new’ narrative in the performance of Treaty Daze in 2008 and 2009. For more than a century GRFN community members performed in a variety of plays that celebrated the region’s history. Each of these dramas concentrated on the historical and ‘mythical’ Ojibwa past. The performances from 1901 to 1969 often ended when civilization arrived while the 21st century plays focussed on continuity of past and present. Although the dramatic narratives of the past appear to represent the rise and fall of Indigenous traditions, the undertones carry different messages. The new performances moved the undertones of the past to the fore, while creating new sub-texts and tensions reflective of the 21st century. Specifically, this paper will examine how the Anishinabeg adopted and contested Western assumptions concerning Indigenous peoples while continuing to promote, protect, and maintain tradition and culture in the face of aggressive Euro-Canadian colonialism. As such, these performances represent a multifaceted and ongoing dialogue with the colonizer and a unique window on how performed history carries a myriad of meanings.

**Video Gaming Canadian Religious History**

**Jean-François Lozier, Ottawa University**

In keeping with the conference’s ambition to challenge historiographic conventions, this paper examines how Canada’s religious history has been portrayed in video games. The twenty-first century has seen the emergence of video games studies as a serious field of academic inquiry, but little work has been done as of yet with respect to how games represent Canadian and religious history. Scholars of Canadian religious history ignore video games at their own peril. Indeed, the sales of the video game industry have in recent years surpassed those of the publishing and film industry. More people, as it turns out, are encountering and engaging with religious history in the playful realm of videogames than in the pages of our books and journals. Surveying these games, we find that representations of traditional indigenous spirituality abound, as do those of colonial missionary activity. Whereas some game designers feature religion in an effort to be as faithful as possible to the historical record, adopting with mixed results mechanics that try to approximate the patterns of history, other game designers instead draw upon the supernatural elements of religion to inject a magical, fantastical element into historical setting – holy water and wendigos replacing magical wands and dragons. It is well time that scholars of history and religion begin granting video games the same sort of attention that in recent decades has been extended to other popular media such as novels and movies.

**Sacred Spaces: The Reconstitution of Muslim Identities in Multicultural Settings**

**Ateeka Khan, McMaster University**

Individuals who identify as “Muslim” in the Americas have found themselves under intense scrutiny in the last sixteen years. This homogenizing term subsumes a wide array of identities and is heavily coloured by popular images in the media and popular opinion. Yet one
can argue that the experience of Western Muslims is rooted in much earlier social and political precedents. It is rooted in earlier colonial and missionary approaches to non-Christian religions in the Americas. It is influenced by twentieth century identities, such as panafricanism, panislamism, and Indian Nationalism, that merged Islam and politics in culturally resilient ways. And most pertinently, it is shaped by the way that individuals who identify as “Muslim” reconstituted their identities in the Americas in light of these experiences. This paper will examine the formation of Muslim diasporas in the Americas in the twentieth century in light of this history. It will specifically draw on archival and oral evidences from British Guiana, now Guyana, as a case study to examine how religion and politics operated in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious post-colonial setting. It will argue that religious and cultural groups offered hybrid social spaces that shaped nationalism. However, this study will also show that an unfortunate effect of this close connection between economic and political concerns with ethnic identity was the racialized development of nationalism. These social spaces then engendered a fragmented nationalism that is constantly renegotiated when political changes occur in postcolonial Guyana. I will then draw parallels to the Canadian experience by considering how social, cultural, and religious spaces allowed for the formation of hybrid diasporic identities and the re-constitution of religious identities in this multicultural setting.

Mobile Memories: Shia Muslim Diaspora in Canada

Jafer Waged, University of British Columbia

The Shia-Sunni centuries-long divide in the Middle East has shaped the political context, war, and disputes to this very day. The current political instability in the region has its roots in that centuries-long religious divide. The current tensions, instability, war and displacement has established a condition where religion and politics are intertwined, each representing a thread that is weaving the fabric of the current tension in the region.

To Shia Muslims, “whose origin and history is steeped in grief and victimization” (Mack, 1990, 119), identity and victimhood are interwoven and inseparable concepts. Historical and political injustices, systematic persecution and misrecognition in their home countries, as well as, the embeddedness of victimhood within the fabric of their faith reinforce the idea of victimhood as an identity marker. My research focuses on the issue of political agency of this particular religious minority in the Muslim world with specific focus on Shia Muslims in Canada. My research seeks to explore the concept of a ‘victimized identity’ of a religious minority group whose doctrinal emphasis on victimhood has constructed their sense of identity for centuries. The identities of Shia Muslims, a minority within a minority in Canada, need further examination as this sense of victimhood has become so deeply imbedded in their identities, it continues to be part of who they are even after they move from their home countries where they had faced discrimination, marginalization, and persecution. Examining the concept of victimhood and its relation to religion and politics in the case of Shia Muslims has been understudied, and this research paper will shed some light on this issue.
The Appearance and Evolution of Religious “Nones” across Canada

Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme, University of Waterloo

Someone saying they have “no religion” when asked their religious affiliation has become an increasingly common phenomenon in recent years. According to Statistics Canada’s 2011 National Household Survey, an estimated 24% of the population is religiously unaffiliated. This development is one of the fundamental changes that the Canadian religious and social landscapes have seen since Confederation. Yet, we know little when it comes to the appearance and evolution of this group over the past century and a half. Using data from the 1871-2011 historic and contemporary Censuses, this presentation will trace the path of the religious “none” category from its roots in the 19th century to its current day popularity in the regions of Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario, the Prairies, British Columbia and Northern Canada.

From Blasphemy to Freedom of Expression: Stories that Speak to the Evolution of Atheism in Canada

Steven Tomlins, University of Ottawa

The sociological study of atheism is relatively new, coinciding with an increase of ‘religious nones’: those who report not having a religion. The study of atheism and religious nones is particularly new in Canada, where religious nones are considered the fastest growing ‘religion’, according to Statistics Canada. This presentation provides context to atheism in the past by using historical cases (the use of blasphemy law until 1901-1936; an immigration case from 1965) to tell the stories of some atheists, their legal plights, and popular opinion about their irreligious dispositions. It then turns to the contemporary though a brief discussion of trends in current legal cases and ‘lived’ nonreligious experience, the latter based on participant-observation with an atheist community and life history interviews with self-identified atheists from the National Capital Region. Overall this presentation seeks to re-tell largely forgotten stories, and tell new stories based on personal testimony, while providing context to how those stories were developed, and where the academic sociological study of atheism and religious nones currently stands in Canada.

The Construction of Nonreligious Identity in Contemporary Canada: Findings from the Religion and Diversity Project

Scott Craig, University of Ottawa

The Religion and Diversity Project has several different strands which are dedicated to the study of religious diversity across Canada and the rest of the world. One such project is a survey designed to examine how young Canadians, age 18-45, construct their cultural and religious identity. Within this survey there are three silos in which individuals are placed per their
answers: one silo is for individuals who identify as religious, one silo for individuals who identify as spiritual but not religious, and another for those that identify as neither religious nor spiritual; it is the final category that is the focus for discussion in this paper. In this presentation, I will be reporting results from the nonreligious silo of the online survey. The focus of the discussion will be the degree to which nonreligiosity plays a role in how these individuals construct their identity.

“From the New Jerusalem to Dismaland: The Toronto Theosophists and the Unintended Consequences of Unchurching”

Gillian McCann, Nipissing University

It can be argued that Canadian Theosophists were among the first in Canada to pioneer the development of an attitude of being “spiritual but not religious.” Helena Blavatsky, the founder of Theosophy, was vehemently opposed to both scientific materialism and the mainline churches. Blavatsky’s idea of Theosophy called for the preservation of religious ideals outside of dogma and institutions. In this paper I will chart the development of this type of unaffiliated religiosity using Toronto Theosophists in the late Victorian era to World War Two as a case study. I will conclude by speculating on the ways in which individualist spirituality may be problematic both for individual psychological health and the well being of communities.

6:30 PM to 9:00 PM

Decolonizing the Canon: An Evening of Poetry, Performance, and Painting

Featuring: Cris Derksen, George Elliott Clarke, and Kent Monkman
Location: National Gallery of Canada Auditorium

Three of the most creative artists working in Canada today will engage in an evening of performance and conversation that draws on poetry, music, and visual art to challenge what it means—and what it feels like—to remember the history of Canada. The national Poet Laureate, George Elliott Clarke, the Juno-nominated cellist Cris Derksen, and internationally-celebrated visual artist Kent Monkman will join each other on stage at the National Gallery Auditorium, in a mix of performance and dialogue. All three artists work within and against canonical forms to renarrate and resist the colonial story of Canada, with questions of religion and spirituality in play. A highlight of “Restorying Canada: Reconsidering Religion and Public Memory in 2017,” this plenary session is free for conference registrants, and open to the public as a ticketed event.
Day 2: Friday 19 May, 2017

9:00 am

**Friday Morning Plenary Session: Restorying Islam and Judaism in Canada**

**Key speakers: Zarqa Nawaz, Sheema Khan, Valérie Amiraux, & Shari Golberg**

Muslims and Jews have come to Canada from countries around the world, finding ways to adapt, adopt, and resist dominant religious and cultural structures. They have fought for rights in courtrooms and classrooms. They have engaged as interfaith partners with the Christian majority. They have found themselves at the center of debates about accommodations—and occasionally the victims of xenophobic violence. This panel brings together four “storytellers” to discuss their approach to working in different media and the publics they engage: Zarqa Nawaz (filmmaker), Sheema Khan (journalist), Valérie Amiraux (scholar and writer of children’s literature) and Shari Golberg (scholar and feminist art instigator). Panelists will discuss their ongoing projects in light of recent events and assess the impact on Canadian Jewish and Muslim communities.

11:15 am

**SESSION T7: BIOGRAPHY AND FUTURITY**

**Assimilation**

**Ayesha S. Chaudhry, University of British Columbia**

This paper is written in the form of a personal essay, and it illuminates the challenges posed by race, gender and class in the story of a South Asian Muslim woman’s attempts to assimilate into the cultural mosaic of Canada. The main character in the story is my mother, who was raised in Pakistan and arrived in Canada with a loose religious affiliation. After a decade of being rejected in her attempts to assimilate into a white Canada where her brown-ness disqualified her from being fully Canadian, my mother turned away from assimilation, an endeavour she learned she could only fail at, and turned her energies towards a fundamentalist, anti-assimilationist strain of Islam, that was appealing to her precisely because it valued the very identities that white Canada rejected — the colour of my mother’s skin and her religion. White racism, then, is the reason that fundamentalist Islam became appealing to my mother. Even though, fundamentalist Islam was foreign to my mother; she never encountered it until she arrived in Canada. And white racism became the reason that I come to be born and raised in a Muslim fundamentalist household in Toronto, Canada. The essay also experiments with form, using story-telling to explore debates about assimilation, multiculturalism, Islam and Muslims. It reflects the intellectual and moral commitment to speak accessibly to the very constituents about whom we produce scholarship.
Afrofuturism, Religion and the North
Carol Duncan, Wilfrid Laurier University

This paper will explore Afrofuturist narratives which have an explicit grounding in Canada and conceptualizations of the North such as Nalo Hopkinson’s novel Brown Girl in the Ring (1994) and the lyrics and music video of “Heaven Only Knows” (2003) by hip hop artist, K-Os (Kevin Brereton). In doing so, the paper will examine Afrofuturism as both an aesthetic movement and a critical methodology for exploring social justice issues such as racism and classism in Canada. Afrofuturism has emerged as an aesthetic movement over the last three decades with expressions in literature, film, visual arts and music. With sonic and visual roots in the cultural productions of groundbreaking 1970s funk and R n’ B bands such as Parliament-Funkadelic and Earth Wind and Fire and the science fiction writings of Octavia E. Butler, Afrofuturist influences are discernible in the works of such contemporary musicians as Janelle Monae and Erykah Badu as well as in the writing of Caribbean Canadian science fiction author, Nalo Hopkinson. Earlier roots lie in the speculative fact and fiction writings of 19th century author Charles W. Chestnutt and spanning the latter half of the 20th century into the contemporary era, Samuel Delany. While Afrofuturism is often conceptualized as an aesthetic movement, some such as sociologist Alondra Nelson consider it an intellectual methodology. In other words, the suggestion is that futurist thinking in, and of, itself is a powerful way of not only reflecting on current realities but also suggestive of alternate ways to imagine just societies.

11:15 am
SESSION T8: OBJECTIFYING CANADA

Women’s Groups, The Catholic Church, and a Patchwork Quilt
Lisa Binkley, Queen’s University

The historical record has predominantly reflected the Western religious influence on Canadian Aboriginal peoples through such works as the Jesuits Relations and work on the Residential School system; however, few histories have considered the individual experiences of Indigenous peoples through their relationships with Western religions and the Church community. With the integrated relationship between church and state during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Quebec, it was difficult, if not impossible, for Aboriginal women to openly express their opinions, experiences, and opposition in a public forum. Through Church and state-sponsored activities, such as women’s craft groups and Reserve exhibitions, Indigenous women publicly displayed their creativity and skill through their needle arts. This paper aims to bring to the surface the story of Mrs. Joseph Lalonde through an examination of her silk patchwork quilt, which won first place at the 1880 St. Regis Reserve (Quebec) Agricultural Fair. Recognized for its superb needlework by the government’s Indian Agent, Lalonde’s quilt was one of three examples of her needlework that was awarded a prize-winning ribbon. Although her needlework objects were viewed as fine example of Western stitchery, influenced by the British traditions of
lacemaking and quiltmaking, an analysis of the making and use of her coverlet investigates her experiences as an Indigenous member of the Reserve’s Catholic Congregation.

The reconciliation pole

Vanessa Udy, University of Victoria

Canadian courts and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission have ascribed different meanings to the term “reconciliation”. Whereas Courts seek to engage in reconciliation by reconciling Canadian sovereignty with prior occupation of the territory by Indigenous peoples, the TRC defines reconciliation as the reparation of broken relationships between settlers and Indigenous peoples through the reestablishment of just, respectful relationships. This paper examines the implications of the TRC’s approach to reconciliation for settler-Indigenous relations. Not only does the TRC challenge the jurisprudential definition of reconciliation, it throws into question settlers epistemologies. The TRC’s version of reconciliation tests our conceptions of history and temporality, and confronts us with the transformative potential of affect. The TRC deploys Indigenous legal traditions of truth telling and witnessing, challenging the dominant historical narrative with an alternative one and relocating the harms of colonialism in the present. These stories and the emotions they elicit act as a source of non-conformity, turning settler guilt and grief into emancipatory energy and opening up possibilities for transformative change in settler-Indigenous relationships. Reconciliation calls upon settlers to support Indigenous peoples’ right to self determination and self-governance and the restoration of relationships to the land through a renewed commitment to environmental justice. This paper engages in reconciliation by entering into a dialogue with Indigenous oral histories and legal traditions while drawing upon Western postmodern and post-human theory and her own experience as a witness to the carving of the Reconciliation Pole by Jim Hart.

Media Framing of Sikhs in the Canadian Public Sphere: Debates over turbans, kirpans, and being Sikh

Richard Mann, Carleton University

This essay explores the representations of Sikhs in the public sphere, primarily in newspaper reports on specific cases in Canada since the 1990s to the current era. The first case study examines past and current debates in Canadian media from the 1990s to the current era related to the wearing of turbans by Sikh RCMP officers and ongoing disputes in Ontario and British Columbia over helmet laws related to motorcycle use and a request from Sikh communities to be exempt from such laws due to the use of turbans. The second case examines the Multani v. Comission scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys, a Canadian Supreme Court legal case dealing with the right of a Sikh school child to wear a kirpan at school in 2006. An examination of the representations of Sikhs and the Sikh tradition by media sources and in some cases government officials in both cases questions the acceptance of Canadian society relative to minority traditions. The essay also explores the tension between Canada’s official commitment to multiculturalism and the problematic nature for some media sources when discussing the
entrance of religion into the public sphere in what many newspaper sources view as a secular society.

**Friday Afternoon Plenary Session: Museums, Religion & Public Memory**

*Jon Johnson*, First Story Toronto,  
*Aviv Milgram*, Museum of Jewish Montreal  
*Jean-François Léger*, Canadian Museum of History  
**Respondent: Joseph Weiss**, Canadian Museum of History

Bringing together curators and exhibit designers from three innovative public history organizations, “Museums, Religion, and Public Memory” focuses on creative, site-based approaches to remembering and retelling stories of religion, spirituality, and religious diversity. The Museum of Jewish Montreal started by offering walking tours of Jewish life in the storied area of Boulevard St. Laurent; now it has its own museum space right across from Schwartz’s Charcuterie Hebraique. First Story, based out of the Native Canadian Centre on Ishpadinaa Road, also centers on walking—and taking bus tours—through Toronto to reveal and remember the Indigenous history and present of the land. Working at a larger scale, The Canadian Museum of History has recently curated highly interactive exhibits focused on religion, including Vodou and God(s): A User’s Guide. The curators and designers will discuss the big ideas that drove the creation of their organizations/exhibits, how visitors respond to their tours and exhibitions, and the challenge and importance of spaces of public history today.

**3:45pm**

**SESSION T9: UTOPIAN, DYSTOPIAN, CANADIAN**

**The Canadian Way: Nationalist Myth and Indigenous-Settler Relationships**  
*Sara King*, Grand Valley State University

The classic, North American example of an ecopolitical myth is the myth of the frontier, which “enabled white colonizers to justify the dispossession and slaughter of indigenous populations” and which is also a “founding myth of American environmentalism” (Berglund & Anderson 2003, 5). These nationalist, naturalist myths also bind Canadian identity together – culturally, historically and communally – in a civil religion. Drawing from my ethnographic exploration of Indigenous settler relationships in the conflict at Burnt Church/Esgenoôpetitj (King, 2014) this paper explores the ways in which myths of Canadian civil religion operate at a national level to disrupt and repress efforts to address Canada’s colonial history and context.

The colonial experience is a mutual one insofar as it involves and has deep implications both for Indigenous people and for settlers; decolonization requires confronting these historical relationships and confronting the historical amnesia which underpins so much Canadian myth. Through critical engagement with John Ralston Saul’s argument that Canada is a “Métis Nation”, former RCMP officer and Parliamentary Sergeant at Arms Kevin Vickers’ depiction of respectful, dignified RCMP policing as “The Canadian Way”, and Taiaiake Alfred’s scathing
critique of settler denial, this paper argues for a politics of remembering which confronts the realities of settler history that have been forgotten and obscured by Canadian civil religion.

**A Sense of Common Destiny: Imperial Oil’s moral imagination and the Dominion of Canada**

**Judith Ellen Brunton, University of Toronto**

In the 1976 publication of *The Newcomers* limited first edition book, Imperial Oil president J.A. Armstrong writes a special “Message to Employees, Annuitants, and Associates,” reminiscing about Canada’s centennial year. He says, “I have noticed that people can recall 1967…with remarkable clarity. Perhaps we remember so clearly because of the inspired creativity of Expo ’67 or because we got together and did something useful …Whatever the reasons, we were a proud and happy people that year; we knew who we were and we had a sense of common destiny!” Armstrong goes on to lament that this feeling has been lost as Canadians suffer from a diminished sense of who they are, and then describes *The Newcomers* project as one possible solution to this. *The Newcomers*—which was a seven-part film series broadcast on the CBC, and a ballet, in addition to being a book—was just one of Imperial Oil’s projects that worked towards some construction of Canadian unity. Drawing from archival work in the Glenbow Archives, in this paper I summarize moments in Imperial Oil’s vast cultural contribution and cultural production projects that speak to its aspirations to participate in cultivating public memory and encouraging the growth of the ‘public good’. With these, I analyze how Imperial is imagining its own moral positioning in the Canadian public sphere, and in so doing, how it is imagining Canada. With this analysis, I then investigate what relationship Imperial’s moral idea of itself and Canada might have with the moral/religious imaginaries of the Canadian state itself.

**The Eyes of Thomas King**

**Ken Derry, University of Toronto**

Thomas King has long expressed interest in subverting oppositional us/them perspectives, especially regarding colonialism in Canada. He has said, for example, that once you get involved in whose culture is better? And in the politics of Native/non-Native relationships... you get suckered into beginning to look at the world through non-Native "eyes" (Lutz, 1991). This statement itself contains an inherent contradiction, however, since it suggests that looking at the word through non-Native "eyes" is inferior, i.e., that Native culture is in fact better. This is a suggestion also made in much of King’s fiction, as oppressive colonial figures are associated with biblical patriarchs, in contrast to the more open and supportive orientation of female figures from Native creation accounts.

Has King himself the been "suckered" into looking at the world through non-Native eyes? This paper will examine this question through two short stories of King’s not often discussed: "Borders" and "The Open Car". Both stories involve Native characters (including King himself) who see differently after crossing from Canada to the United States, both present
shifting views of national and personal identity in relation to memory and desire, and both consider what it means to see through eyes that are right and wrong at the same time.

**Visioning Utopia: First Nations Models of Governance for Transitioning From Late Capitalism to Post Capitalism,**

**Cameron Montgomery, University of Ottawa**

The increasing dangers of environmental degradation and warfare technology in Late Capitalism have inspired numerous dystopian warnings in literature envisioning a climatic collapse of human societies and the post-apocalyptic aftermath. These stories depict the darkest sides of humanity in fragmented communities beyond the nation-state. How does this storying measure up to historical accounts?

The 20 Huron villages Samuel de Champlain visited along the St. Croix River in 1604 had approximately 1000 residents each, communities with complex governing structures, shared resources, and peace and abundance. He described his awe in Mi’kmaq communities where he met tall, energetic, muscular people over 100 years old who consumed a varied diet of vegetables, lean meats and legumes, contrasted with his short European sailors, with 1/10 having birth defects from chronic malnourishment, disease and incest.

This paper will discuss recent developments in the science fiction ‘solarpunk’ literary and art movement which imagine a future—without the apocalypse—where technological automation replaces wage labour and societies move beyond money and toward collective projects grounded in hopeful dreams of human good. Without wealth accumulation driving research, solarpunk stories are set when science has innovated solutions to environmental destruction, poor nutrition, and soaring housing prices. I argue that First Nations examples of pre-capitalist economies of the commons provide frameworks for visioning futuristic settings for science fiction of what post-capitalism can look like.

**3:45pm**

**SESSION T10: MASCULINITY, SPIRITUALITY, AND CONFESSION**

**The Canadian Government’s Apology of 2008 and the Christian Confessional Tradition**

**Jane Barter, University of Winnipeg**

This paper explores the liturgical remnants of Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s 2008 Statement of Apology to residential school survivors and situates the Apology within the tradition of Christian confession. In this paper, I argue that the discharge of guilt is contingent in the Apology upon two things: the emotional character of the Apology (both in terms of the characterization of victims’ trauma and the remorse that is articulated) and the trajectory of remembering wrongdoing as a past wrong that has been overcome. In this paper, I will tie Harper’s Apology to the confessional tradition and the theological foundations that inform it, which are the Christian theologies of redemption and eschatology. In so doing, I will interrogate the manner in which Harper’s public Statement of Apology to Indian Residential School
Survivors should have served as a forewarning for his later disregard of material issues facing Indigenous peoples of Canada daily (including food security, education and housing crises, and missing and murdered Indigenous women).

The methodology that I will be using in this paper is genealogical, as I examine the vestiges of Christian public confession within the discursive and liturgical practices of state apologies. It will be guided by the theory of both Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben, two philosophers who have identified the theo-political legacy of confession and Christian theologies of glory (respectively) as abiding forces within contemporary Western politics.

Rethinking Canadian Saints

Donald L. Boisvert, Concordia University

When Alfred Bessette (1845-1937), better known as Frère André, was canonized in 2010, he became the eleventh Canadian saint. Known far and wide during his lifetime as an exceptional healer, his most lasting legacy is undoubtedly St. Joseph’s Oratory, the largest shrine to St. Joseph in the world and still today one of Montréal’s top tourist attractions. Brother André possessed an intense devotion to St. Joseph, the “earthly” father of Jesus. When people would thank him for some cure or favour obtained, Brother André would remind them that it was all done through the intercession of St. Joseph. Much of what has been written about Brother André focuses on his intense devotion to St. Joseph and his role in the building of the Oratory. This paper will propose a different approach, one that looks at Brother André from a gendered perspective. The figure of St. Joseph in Catholic piety carries with it a number of clues and expectations—some quite obvious; others less so—with respect to norms of Catholic masculinity in the late-19th and early 20th centuries. This is what I call Josephite masculinity. The paper will examine these, but, more specifically, it will look at how Brother André, in his life and devotion to St. Joseph, actually “performed” Josephite masculinity. This critical gendered perspective on a major Canadian saintly figure will hopefully cast a more nuanced light on forms of Canadian sanctity more generally.

Rescue the Parishing: Henry Budd—Constructive Transformer or Colonial Tool?

Keith Hyde, University College of the North

In 2015, the Devon Mission of The Pas, MB, celebrated its 175th anniversary. On June 21 or 22, 1840, Henry Budd (c. 1812-1875), one of the first Indigenous priests to be ordained in the Anglican Church in North America, canoed from the Red River Settlement to found what would become the first self-supporting Anglican mission north of the Red River. Budd’s achievements are even more impressive when considered against a backdrop of Victorian paternalism and inequality towards Indigenous church workers in terms of lower pay and oppressive racial stereotypes. Originally, Budd’s accomplishments were heralded as triumphs for both Anglican Christianity and Western values. Most recently, however, Indigenous scholars have re-evaluated such ‘success stories’ as glaring examples of colonialism and cultural assimilation. This paper will explore the life of Henry Budd in light of these criticisms. How is the legacy of Henry
Budd, a fatherless boy from Norway House taken to the Red River Settlement to study under the first Hudson’s Bay Company chaplain, Rev. John West, re-storied? Is Budd in need of rescuing from the ‘parishing’ colonial mechanisms in which he has been implicated? Or does he represent a brave, even heroic transformer who assisted the Indigenous people of northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan in navigating nineteenth-century cultural transitions at a tremendous personal cost? The response will be informed by a dialogue between Henry Budd’s published journals, particularly from 1870-1875, and recent scholarship in the fields of History and Indigenous Studies.

7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

The Future of Religion in Canada: Utopia or Dystopia?
Keynote speakers: Margaret Atwood and Leah Kostamo

Composed of iconic Canadian novelist Margaret Atwood and environmental activist Leah Kostamo, the panel will explore the rich, complex portrayal of religion in the Canadian imaginary as a powerful, yet ambiguous force which has the potential to renew and to shatter: bringing liberation and oppression, hope and fear. In a career spanning forty years, Atwood’s seminal work has explored the past, present, and dys/utopian future of religion in Canada: imagining religion as everything from the justificatory ideology in the terrifying patriarchy of A Handmaid’s Tale to the outmanned but idealistic eco-liberatory group, God’s Gardeners, in her Flood Trilogy. The presence of Christian environmentalist Leah Kostamo broadens the discussion from the simply the speculative by providing a unique example of how life can imitate art.
SESSION T11: WOMEN AND RELIGION IN DIASPORIC CANADA

Chair: Sailaja Krishnamurti

Diasporic Hindu Religiosities in Feminist Spaces

Sailaja Krishnamurti, Saint Mary's University

How do South Asian diasporic feminists and queer identified people negotiate with (critique, reject, embrace) 'Hindu' identities and beliefs? Could a diaspora feminist approach to Hindu religiosity have the potential to unsettle traditional discourses around nationalism, caste, gender, and sexuality? This chapter begins to explore these questions through interviews and conversations with feminist and queer community members in Canada who identify in some way with Hindu religiosity. By religiosity, I mean a broad range of spiritual and cultural practices, traditions, and beliefs that may or may not be institutionalized; these could include yoga, Ayurveda, meditation, astrology, music, and ritual in diverse forms. The paper asks how religious institutions, activism, and academia intersect or intervene in conceptualizations of religiosity for South Asian women and LGBTQ people in Canada. Conversely, it also asks how perceptions about Hindu religiosity affect women, LGBTQ, and Dalit people’s entrances into spaces of religious practice, and what new spaces might be created for these communities. What bearing might experiences of racism, multiculturalism, and interfaith political solidarity have on the formation of these spaces?

Métis Nationhood: Thoughts on Diaspora, Spirituality and Kinship,

Chantal Fiola, University of Winnipeg

Since the 1960s, the discourse on diaspora has grown from the classic examples (Jewish, Greek Armenian) to include the fields of Anthropology, Sociology, Cultural Studies and Political Studies and the experiences of diverse peoples including African, Chinese, Filipino and Iranian (Tololyan 2012, 1996; Vertovec 2000; Pulitano 2007; Clifford 2007; Butler 2001). Indigenous experiences of dispossession, forced migration and dispersal complicate the discussion, with some scholars claiming these are different from diasporas (Brydon 2000) and others suggesting they are similar (Clifford 1994; Rolls 2001; Haig-Brown 2009; Lilley 2006; McCall 2012). This chapter explores what Métis-specific experiences can contribute to the discourse on diaspora and vice versa.

The Métis, an historically nomadic people whose territory was disrupted by the international border between Canada and the United States (Hogue 2015), were forced from their homeland after the Red River Resistance of 1869-70 and the Manitoba Act of 1870. Attempts were made by the Métis to establish a new homeland in places like St. Laurent and Batoche, Saskatchewan only to be forcefully dispersed again following the bloodshed of the Northwest Resistance of 1885. Government legislation and policies (including scrip, treaties, the Indian Act,
and the residential school and child welfare systems) further dispossessed the Métis of their land, culture, spirituality, identity and kinships. From their scattered communities, the Métis Nation is reclaiming their sovereignty and re-establishing their homeland in central Canada. Excerpts from interviews with Métis people, focusing on women, identity, religion and kinship with First Nations, highlight this process of reclamation (Fiola 2015).

“Remember Who You Are”: Religion and Identity in Halfbreed and In Search of April Raintree

Ken Derry, University of Toronto

Although Maria Campbell’s groundbreaking text *Halfbreed* is explicitly autobiographical, she explains that she is not recounting her story for its own sake but in order “to tell you what it is like to be a Halfbreed woman in our country.” For Campbell, to be such a woman in Canada means to be caught in a network of conflicting religions, ideologies, social pressures, and notions of identity. These themes were taken up ten years later by Beatrice Culleton in her work of fictional autobiography, *In Search of April Raintree*. Together, these texts by Campbell and Culleton comprise the foundation of modern Native literature in Canada, as well as conversations about modern Native women in Canada.

Native people in Canada may be understood in some ways as diasporic, having been dispossessed not only of their homeland but also of their languages and traditions. In this regard both Campbell and Culleton explore the ways in which colonial Christianity has divided Native people on both communal and individual levels; how it functions as part of a power structure that denies Native women their fundamental humanity. Both authors recount that they are able to overcome to some extent the damage created by this structure only by embracing a specifically non-Christian ideal, by reconnecting with Native traditions and people. They move from being alienated and alone to being part of a caring network; from going to church to attending Pow Wows; from being ashamed of themselves and their Native heritage to accepting and embracing both, wholeheartedly. In making these changes the women begin the process of reclaiming and reconstructing their stolen traditions, their fragmented communities, and their shattered lives.

The Influence of Women on the Establishment of Socio-Cultural Institutions in the pre-Second World War Japanese Canadian Diaspora

Cary Takagaki, York University

Traditionally women had a limited role in the organization and development of religion in Japan; however, in Canada they came to have more influence on the direction of religious practice. Although religious identity did not loom strongly in the minds of most Japanese emigrants to Canada in the late nineteenth century it provided and often became a major connection to their cultural identity, language, and the social norms of their homeland. At the same time, living in a new environment meant adapting to new customs, and the desire for acceptance often resulted in the transformation of their religious traditions.
Christian ministers, often being among the few Japanese who could speak English, were an important source of practical and emotional support for the newly arrived immigrants. However, once the Japanese began to raise families Buddhist ministers began to arrive to meet the spiritual needs of this diaspora. The sense of obligation felt towards Christian ministers who had offered support to the immigrants when they first arrived from Japan and the role of Buddhist temples in the early settlements were largely influenced by the initiatives of women. The establishment of Sunday schools in Buddhist temples, as well as language schools, clubs for youths, and women’s clubs were a curious mixture of developments there were taking place in Japan, and a practical, if not necessary, method of creating a sense of community and identity for Japanese women in an often hostile and unwelcoming environment.

The Many Faces of Buddhist Nuns in Canada

Henry Shiu, University of Toronto

The increasing visibility and the elevation of religious status of Buddhist nuns in Canada are influenced and shaped by the representation of Buddhism in the West as a tradition that promotes gender equality. Through the modernization of Buddhism in the West, both western and ethnic Buddhist nuns have assumed more prominent roles, leading followers in spiritual cultivation and providing social services. Using the Buddhist nunnery as a prism, this chapter examines the emerging religious and social service roles of Buddhist nuns in Canada.

Pema Chödrön, one of the most beloved female western Buddhist teachers and the founding director of the Tibetan monastery, Gampo Abbey, in Nova Scotia, pursues the goal of spiritual perfection while also helping to guide others toward and through Buddhist teachings with ease, directness, and humour. In contrast, Chinese nuns have traditionally occupied a rather low status and had little influence. But now, like Pema Chödrön, the nuns at Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation in Canada which was founded under the inspiration of the Taiwanese nun Master Cheng Yan, take a valuable role in addressing problems related to the continuation of the nunnery tradition in Buddhism through issues like environmental protection, youth education and engaged practices. Such an examination will reveal the greater picture of related issues such as religion and modernization, contemporary development of Buddhism in North America, gender biases in power in Southeast Asian and East Asian religious communities, and the image of female religious leaders in Canada.

Pakistani Muslims, Model Minorities, and the Politics of Diasporic Piety

Nadia Hasan, York University

Gendered articulations of piety in the Pakistani diaspora relationally reproduce discourses of the “model Pakistani” and the “model minority” in Canada. The ‘rational’ student-subject of Islamic education and how the role functions as the means through which diasporic Pakistani Muslim women inhabit, affirm, and/or subvert Canadian subjecthood is drawn out using ethnographic research conducted with a Muslim women’s study circle in Mississauga. These women’s relationships with Canadian subjecthood are entangled with their relationships to Islam; their diasporic articulations of Islam are mediated by their conceptualizations of Pakistani national identity. Paradoxically, these women’s Islamic discourse coalesces with and contradicts dominant Pakistani religio-nationalist discourse through their mobilization of ‘rationality’ as part
of their notions of piety. In particular, there is an exploration of the diasporic mobilizations of Islamic concepts of biddat (innovations in Islam) and shirk (equating someone or something with Allah) in the construction of the ideal Pakistani Muslim subject as a diasporic subject. The women of the study circle occupy a fraught place: they must, as Muslim women, negotiate their position in the Canadian nationalist imaginary among stereotypes of the model minority, the “exalted subject” (Thobani: 2007), the veiled “imperiled Muslim woman” (Razack: 2004) and the dehumanized Muslim terrorist (Puar and Rai: 2002; Razack: 2008). The articulations of diasporic piety and its others shape these women’s experiences with Islamophobia and their relationships with ideals of Canadian subjecthood.

9:30 am

**SESSION T12: SACRED TERRITORIES: STORIES OF LAND**

**Sacralizing and Categorizing: Religious Sisters Finding Their Way in New Geographies and Foreign Lands.**

*Danae A. Jacobson,* University of Notre Dame

Despite copious scholarship on the settlement of North America, these stories rarely include contextualized treatments of women religious. While we do not have precise statistics, by the end of the nineteenth century women religious numbered in the tens of thousands and spanned the continent. Omitting them from our narratives obscures our understanding of religion’s influential role in the story of settlement. My current project is an environmental history of communities of sisters living on the frontier in the nineteenth century. These religious actors embody a crucial part of the story of westward colonial expansion throughout the nineteenth century. Women religious lived and worked outside of the household economy in homo-social communities—owning property, making livings, and building institutions. They often framed their labor as spiritual, yet it was also racial, gendered, embodied, and material. This paper examines the Sisters of Providence as they traveled from Montreal, QC to Montana Territory in the early 1860s. I investigate the Sisters’ engagement with the non-human and unfamiliar context they encounter. Montana Territory was a very different place from urban Montreal, which had been the locale of the sisters’ mission. I argue that they sought to do two things as they traveled: 1. map the unfamiliar landscape by categorizing and naming what they saw in familiar terms 2. frame their journey as a pilgrimage, which sacralized the landscape that was otherwise wild and foreign

**Reframing Tree Planting: Charlotte Gill’s Eating Dirt: Deep Forests, Big Timber, and Life with the Tree-Planting Tribe**

*Jessica Louise Ballantine,* University of Leeds

What role do trees have in the stories told of Canada’s past and present? What of logging, and tree planting? For many, the act of tree planting is one of ‘saving nature’: rugged work of rebuilding or conserving a notional wilderness that is integral to one version of Canadian national identity. Cultural geographers Michael Ekers and Michael Farnan have explored how tree planting in contemporary Canadian art is represented as rite of passage in which ‘subjects can access both the ‘pioneering’ moments of the nation and the promised greener tomorrow of Canada’s future’ (*Space and Culture* 13.1 [2010]).
In this paper, I explore a contemporary restorying of the popular image of tree planting through an analysis of Charlotte Gill’s 2011 nature memoir *Eating Dirt*, in which she narrates a season of her life as a professional tree planter working in the Pacific Northwest. For Gill, this involves challenging the place of logging in Canada’s history and setting a popular image of the Canadian tree-planter as redoubtable ‘green warrior’ against an ambiguous, wage-driven reality. In doing so, Gill both puts pressure on conceptions of tree planting and raises questions about how contemporary nature writing can express a relationship with nature that reflects the ambiguities of contemporary environmental practices and social relations. With this in mind, I seek to draw more general observations about how Gill’s work sits within the tradition of Canadian nature writing. Drawing on Douglas E. Christie’s work about the various connections between nature writing and spirituality, I analyse how *Eating Dirt* shares much common ground with more spiritual nature writing, while remaining a steadfastly gritty, secular text.

**Re-Storying Coast Salish Territory through Tekahionwake’s Legends of Vancouver**

Ashley Caranto Morford, University of Toronto

From the first contact between colonialisands and Indigenous peoples, colonialism has asserted power over Indigenous landscapes. In *Firsting and Lasting*, Jean O’Brien studies historical documents to argue that “local history writing...became crucial in defining Indians out of existence” (xii). As O’Brien shows, official documentation has not merely asserted the legitimacy of Western ideologies. Such documents have erased Indigenous presence from the landscape, a phenomenon that O’Brien calls “firsting.” My research aims to deconstruct Western landscapes to reclaim Indigenous ones. In this presentation, I will showcase and discuss a recently completed digital exhibition that I created, focused on Mohawk artist Tekahionwake/E. Pauline Johnson’s *Legends of Vancouver* (1911). *Legends of Vancouver* is a bestselling book that uses Squamish oral histories to re-contextualize the landscape of Vancouver, British Columbia. The digital exhibition consists of a three-part analysis: (1) The first part focuses on an 1887 map of Vancouver published by Ross and Ceperley. I study how this document has asserted a lasting myth of “firsting” that erases Indigenous presence and knowledge from the Vancouver landscape. (2) The second part conducts a de-colonial analysis of *Legends of Vancouver*. (3) The third part showcases a digital map that visually reveals how *Legends of Vancouver* re-maps colonial understandings of Vancouver in de-colonial ways. My overarching goal with this project is to analyze the ability of the oral histories told in *Legends of Vancouver* to deconstruct, de-first, and re-story perspectives of the Western Canadian landscape.


Ryan Beaton, University of Victoria

In Tsilhqot’in Nation v British Columbia, the Supreme Court of Canada turned once again to the issue of Aboriginal title to land that is not covered by treaty. In its unanimous reasons, the Court brings into sharp focus a puzzle of Canadian constitutional law: while stating that “[t]he doctrine of terra nullius (that no one owned the land prior to European assertion of sovereignty) never applied in Canada”, the Court nonetheless affirms that the Crown “acquired
radical or underlying title to all the land in the province” simply by asserting sovereignty over that land. Looking to make sense of these statements, my paper interprets the Court’s current approach to Aboriginal rights and title under s. 35(1) of the Constitution Act, 1982 as a search for the procedural legitimation of Crown sovereignty. Rejecting backward-looking “substantive” justifications of Crown sovereignty, such as the doctrine of terra nullius, the Court imposes procedural duties on the Crown to consult, accommodate, and negotiate with Indigenous peoples over their asserted rights and interests.

Drawing mainly on case law, my paper tells the story of this rise in procedural policing of sovereignty by the courts. The Supreme Court has questioned the de jure basis of Crown sovereignty over Indigenous lands, while positioning the judiciary as the linchpin institution guiding the procedural legitimation of the Crown’s “de facto control of land”. At the heart of my paper is the question: can the courts navigate this position without turning into the villains of the story?

11:00 am

SATURDAY MORNING PLENARY SESSION: SOCIAL IMAGINARIES OF QUEBEC

Secularization in Quebec: A Three-Level Analysis

Jean-Philippe Warren, University of Concordia

Karel Dobbelaere is well-known for his numerous works on secularization. However, other than a few European studies, no empirical application of his analysis model has been attempted (tried) for Quebec. This presentation therefore intends to revisit Dobbelaere’s breaking it down into three levels (societal, institutional, individual) from an historical perspective, going back schematically to the nineteenth century. This will allow a better understanding of the sometimes-conflicting dynamics of the secularization process, which do not always follow converging directions. Between the relationships of State and Church, the enchantment or disenchantment of religious practice, and the common culture of believers exist frictions, tensions and reinforcements that enlighten the heated debates that once shook up French-Canadian society and continues to rattle Quebec society today. We will thereby be able to provide a better answer to the central but always-eluded question of classic sociology: what is a secularized society?

A story largely untold?

Solange Lefebvre, University of Montreal

On Sunday, some churches are empty, some are full. What do we know about Quebecers’ religion? We know about the statistics on regular practice and religious vocations, mostly very low. Quebec's relation to religion is also largely based on diverse narratives, more or less negative and positive: the ‘grande noirceur’ for instance, is a strong metaphor that young historians have tried to nuance during the last twenty years. I would say that the relation of Quebecers to religion is marked by ambivalence: rejection and attachment, angriness and gratefulness [vous pourriez également le rendre comme 'anger and gratitude'], identity-based
relation and secularism, proximity and distance, Marxist influence around emancipation ‘from’
religion and a certain form of establishment. That is why, for instance, we still find a high
number of Quebecers declaring affiliation to a religion. What we called in the 1980’s and 1990’s
a ‘school religion’ was expressing this ambivalence. A majority of Quebecers were sending their
kids to denominational religion classes but were not involved in parishes. Most of the
contemporary analyses are based on statistics about regular religious practice and religious
vocations, but what we know about Quebecers and the complexity of their relation to religion is
largely untold. And this is also a paradox: after so many decades of public debates on religion
in Quebec, can we say that the story is untold? Which story?