

The *Nonsuch* Replica:
the Hudson's Bay Company, Commemoration, and Local Identity at the Manitoba Museum

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Abstract

In December 1974, the Manitoba Museum celebrated the grand opening of a new gallery. It was a highly anticipated event in Winnipeg, advertised for years leading up to it by the *Winnipeg Free Press*. The gallery, housing a full-sized replica of a 17th century ship, was one of the first of its kind in Canada: a diorama gallery that immersed the visitor in the sights, sounds, and smells of another place, and transported them across time and space to Deptford, England in 1668. The replica, called *Nonsuch*, was a period-accurate recreation of a ship that had sailed three centuries earlier into Hudson Bay, on an expedition for the English crown to determine the viability of a northern fur trade that would bypass the existing system of taxation in New France and open the area north of the Great Lakes to an English trade monopoly. This successful voyage resulted in the creation of the Hudson's Bay Company with the granting of a royal charter for a parcel of land that encompassed 40% of what is now Canada. The reconstruction of the *Nonsuch* in the 1960s was part of the Company's 300th anniversary celebrations, and was used in the hopes of strengthening the emotional connection between the Company and Canadian citizens. The *Nonsuch* replica has since been used by the Company and the Manitoba Museum to continue this project of commemoration and collective identity, situating the Company as an important character in the origin story of the country. This thesis traces the journey of the *Nonsuch*, from the 17th century to the present, and examines the critical roles the replica and Gallery have played in the construction and maintenance of local heritage and identity in Manitoba.

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Introduction

“There’s a mighty wind in the Manitoba Museum’s sails,” declares a seven-page featurette in the *Winnipeg Free Press* from 2 June 2018. The piece begins with a full-page colour photo of something Manitobans had never seen before in such behind-the-scenes detail: the *Nonsuch* under construction. This full-sized replica of a 17th century English ship owned by the Hudson’s Bay Company (hereafter HBC) is a beloved staple of tourism and local culture in Manitoba, housed in the province’s most-visited museum. In the featurette’s images, workers in neon vests and hard hats scale the extensive rigging that climbs up her 25 metre mast, bringing down ropes and sails that had not been touched in four decades for cleaning, restoration, and in some cases, replacement.¹ The replica, a working ship before she² retired at the Manitoba Museum (formerly the Museum of Man and Nature), has been in the provincial capital since 1974, but the Gallery surrounding her had remained mostly unchanged in the 44 years since she was permanently ‘docked’ at the Museum. A common destination for both local residents and visiting tourists, the Gallery has been “enchancing visitors to the Manitoba Museum, bringing a whiff of adventure and the romance of the sea to our landlocked city.”³ For decades, children in school groups have clambered around on her uneven deck by the thousands, often returning years later with their own children to share in the nostalgia the Gallery elicits.

In 2018, for the first time since its opening, the Gallery was closed for five months for extensive renovations. This was necessary both because the ship itself required maintenance – as the physical preservation of the Museum’s largest and most valuable artifact – and because the

¹ Jill Wilson, “Ready To Launch,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 2, 2018, F1.

² The use of feminine pronouns for watercrafts is a tradition that has recently fallen out of favour. I have continued it because the Manitoba Museum has done so in places such as annual reports, funding applications, and didactic panels. It is also worth noting that while using gendered pronouns for inanimate objects is rare in the English language, it is common in other languages.

³ Wilson, “Anchors Aweigh!”, *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 2, 2018, F4.

narrative the Gallery presented to visitors was in desperate need of modernization. She has been used since the renovation to tell new stories to steady streams of daily visitors, and is the face of the *Bringing Our Stories Forward* campaign, an effort to update the ways in which the Manitoba Museum fosters place and community identity by constructing a sense of ‘who we are’ for the people of Manitoba, using shared pasts as the vehicle for this endeavour. In demonstrating how the Manitoba Museum has used the *Nonsuch* Gallery as their centrepiece and as a tourist destination, I argue it has continued to play an important role in the construction of local identity in Winnipeg and Manitoba and serves as an icon of local heritage and a local connection to national history. The replica, in the language chosen by Museum designers and curators, is “the Museum’s most iconic artifact” and provides meaning to visitors both as the most beloved attraction, and as “a symbol of the creation of the nation-defining Hudson’s Bay Company.”⁴ In addition to daily visitors and school groups, the Gallery is a common destination for tour groups, business events, and weddings. It has at times been used as a stage for official ceremonies or announcements to the Winnipeg press corps. The Museum engages in *Nonsuch*-specific programming throughout the year, such as Christmas-themed events in December. It has, therefore, contributed to the culture and local identity of Winnipeggers and Manitobans by acting in three separate, but related, capacities: museum gallery, heritage site, and act of commemoration that shapes public memory. The replica is a symbol of constructed Canadian nationalism, built at a moment when Canadians were hungry for stories of the past that could

⁴ Manitoba Museum placard, “Bringing Our Stories Forward”, transcribed February 13, 2019. The use of the word ‘iconic’ here and throughout the thesis has been chosen because it is the word often used by the Museum to describe the *Nonsuch* replica and Gallery. The word is meant to be interpreted in its more recent definition, not to describe the representation of Christian saints but to mean revered, well-known, and representative of something larger than itself. Because the image of the *Nonsuch* is so often used in advertisements, it has become iconic because it is symbolic of the Museum in local culture.

become vehicles for the creation of national identity. It is culturally significant to Manitobans because it has been *made* significant by both the HBC and the Manitoba Museum.

The Manitoba Museum is what some scholars of museum studies would call a ‘local museum.’⁵ These spaces, rather than featuring world history told through a varied collection of artifacts or the history of a specific event or narrow topic, tell the stories of geographical regions. They are situated within the physical territory that they represent, narrating a timeline that often spans from pre-human eras to the 20th century. The Manitoba Museum relates a history of the geographical area that makes up Manitoba. If visitors move through the galleries as directed by the arrows on the floor, they move through this history chronologically. They begin in prehistory, surrounded by local fossils and marine skeletons from the Mesozoic Era, circa 95 million years ago when ‘Manitoba’ was the bottom of a massive glacial lake. They then move through galleries that depict the province’s four distinct ecosystems: Arctic/Sub-Arctic, Boreal Forest, Parklands/Mixed Woods, and Grasslands, along the way learning about indigenous nations that inhabited the land before European contact. Finally, visitors experience several waves of European settlement, ending in an immersive diorama depicting Winnipeg in the 1920s. In telling the history of both the land and its human inhabitants, the Manitoba Museum accomplishes what local museums aim to accomplish: constructing local identity by anchoring Manitobans’ shared present in their shared past. Local museums are established as showcases of regional artifacts that strive to build a sense of identity and community.⁶ As globalization can make local place identities more difficult to separate from other forms of identity, cultural

⁵ Fiona McLean, “Museums and the construction of national identity: A review,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 3(4) (1998): 244; Hilde Hein, *The Museum in Transition: A Philosophical Perspective* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), 30; Kevin Walsh, *The Representation of the Past. Museums and heritage in the Post-modern world* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 149.

⁶ McLean, “Museums and the construction of national identity,” 244.

centres like local history museums allow for the localities where people spend the majority of their lives to be more easily knowable, and reinforce the social connections across time and space that are vital to these identities.⁷

If a visitor follows the suggested path, halfway through their visit they will encounter a dramatic disruption in the continuity of this chronological narration. At the end of a narrow hallway, they will suddenly find themselves face-to-face with the bow of a massive wooden ship. The *Nonsuch* replica is housed in a gallery with theatrical lighting, an immersive soundscape playing over hidden speakers, and a ceiling over eight storeys high. For the first and only time, visitors are transported abruptly away from Manitoba, and suddenly dropped into a 17th century English shipyard. Along the cobblestone path is a row of low two-storey buildings, including a tavern and a haberdashery. Visitors can enter two of these buildings. They are like life-sized dollhouses, filled with period-appropriate furniture and trade goods such as beaver pelts and beads. Visitors can also board the ship, imagine sailing it across the ocean, marvel at the cramped sleeping quarters, and learn the ship's history from the Museum's committed army of volunteer interpreters. On the opposite wall is a mural depicting the River Thames, and on the ground below, a partial landscape of the mud and driftwood of low tide. The strong smoky smell that wafts through the space is often cited by repeat visitors as the most memorable quality of the Gallery, and the one most instantly recognizable upon revisiting. This effect is achieved with 'Stockholm tar', a thick, molasses-like substance made by boiling the roots of pine trees and used in the 17th century to waterproof the natural fibre ropes of sea-going vessels. The lighting and the soundtrack run through three different day-to-night cycles, each lasting 17 minutes and simulating atmospheres such as the bustle of busy afternoon at a shipyard and a thunderstorm.⁸

⁷ Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, 149.

⁸ Wilson, "Anchors Aweigh!", F7.

The *Nonsuch* Gallery is the highlight of the Museum for most visitors, and has allowed the Manitoba Museum to become one of the most beloved tourist attractions in the province. The Museum estimates over four million visitors have boarded the deck of the *Nonsuch* replica in the last four decades,⁹ and the Museum regularly features the replica in advertising, making use of it as a visual icon to attract both new and returning visitors. The Gallery was the first to be renovated in a multi-million-dollar project that will eventually bring much-needed updates to the entire Museum. It is well understood by Museum personnel to be a crowd favourite, and as a common destination for school groups it is rare for lifelong Winnipeggers to be unaware of its existence. In recent years, the far newer Canadian Museum for Human Rights often gets top billing on tourism websites in categories related to education or culture, and yet the Manitoba Museum continues to draw nearly twice as many annual visitors.¹⁰ The *Nonsuch* Gallery is not the sole reason for the Museum's success, but it plays a starring role. Yet, the Gallery seems out of place. In a museum that tells the history of Manitoba, in a city over 1000 kilometres from the nearest ocean, the replica of a ship built in England, one that never sailed to a destination in Manitoba, does not logically belong. To begin connecting these dots requires travelling 6000 kilometres to the east and 400 years into the past, to early modern England at the beginning of the 17th century.

The story begins not with ships, but with hats. Canadian grade-schools have for decades centred their history and social studies curricula around the fur trade, and students learn early of the unlikely connection between the creation of Canada and the 'beaver hat'. It is perhaps difficult from a modern perspective to imagine something as simple as a hat possessing social

⁹ Manitoba Museum, *2015-2016 Annual Report*, 23.

¹⁰ Sean Kavanagh, "Manitoba Museum campaign gets major gift, but province offers up half of \$10M promised by previous government," *CBC News*, May 3, 2018; Canadian Museum for Human Rights, "Forward. 2017-2018 Annual Report."

importance on such a scale that it could bring about the founding of a modern nation. In 17th century England, beaver felt hats did just that. For European men, hats of all styles did more than keep the wearer's head warm – they were symbols, objects of silent social communication. Hats conveyed status, occupation, and wealth. Strict social codes existed dictating the type of hat that should be worn depending on situation or occasion, and when it was appropriate for a man to remove his hat. Communication of wealth and social position occurred through the size and height of the garment.¹¹ A larger or taller hat required superior material, and used more of it than a short cap, and so it was therefore more expensive.¹² There are several animal pelts suitable for felting, but the pelt of the Eurasian beaver yielded hats of the highest quality. The hairs on a beaver pelt are tightly spaced, and the underfur has tiny barbs that mat the hairs together. When felted (a process that uses vibration to evenly distribute the fibres, pressing the pelts with steam, and then drying¹³), the surface feels smooth, almost like leather.¹⁴ In addition to their high quality, hats made of beaver felt were valuable in 17th century England because they were rare. In premodern Europe, furs of local origin were ordinary, unremarkable items owned by rich and poor alike. They were common but highly useful, regarded for their warmth and not as objects of fashion or social prominence. By the beginning of the 16th century, Europe's fur stocks were being overhunted, and by mid-century, scarcity had turned a once-common item into a luxury, out of reach for everyone except the wealthy.¹⁵ Upon the near extinction of the Eurasian beaver,

¹¹ Penelope Byrde, *The Male Image: Men's Fashion in Britain 1300-1970* (London: The Anchor Press Ltd, 1979), 14.

¹² Paul Chrisler Phillips, *The Fur Trade, Volume 1* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 3; Byrde, *The Male Image*, 173.

¹³ E.E. Rich, *Hudson's Bay Company, 1670-1763* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1960), 47.

¹⁴ J.F. Crean, "Hats and the Fur Trade," *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 28(3) (August 1962): 375.

¹⁵ Fiona Clark, *Hats* (London: The Anchor Press, 1982), 85.

beaver felt hats became so highly sought after that they were often bequeathed in wills.¹⁶ This shortage of desired raw materials left a vacuum in the market that was filled a century later by the European discovery of the slightly smaller North American beaver.

In 1670, English monarch Charles II granted a charter to a company of 18 investors. The charter gave them a monopoly on trade around Hudson Bay, an enormous parcel of land encompassing nearly 40% of modern Canada. The HBC was not the first or last of the chartered companies. Vital to the success of the Atlantic Empires between the 16th and 19th centuries, dozens of these companies operated in the Americas, Asia, and Africa. Other notable charters include that of the Virginia Company, the first English company to successfully establish a colony in the New World, and the East India Company, formed at the beginning of the 17th century to trade in the Indian Ocean region and ultimately responsible for the colonization of the Indian subcontinent. These companies were simultaneously private and public companies; private in that their funding came from private investors, and public in that they required royal approval – the charters – to carry out their intended functions in territories claimed by various European monarchs.¹⁷ They enjoyed a kind of selective sovereignty in the colonized world, free on New World soil to manage their own affairs while still under the larger umbrella of Empire. During the era of the beaver hat, the hat industry was the main source of demand for the fur trade.¹⁸ After 1670, beaver pelts began to be imported from the territory in enormous quantities and beaver felt hats became more affordable, for the first time not restricted by price to the aristocracy.¹⁹ This was one of the main spokes of what Lorna Weatherill has called “The

¹⁶ Stephen Bown, *Merchant kings: when companies ruled the world, 1600-1900* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2009), 201.

¹⁷ Rich, *Hudson's Bay Company*, 11.

¹⁸ Crean, “Hats and the Fur Trade,” 385; Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Rethinking the Fur Trade: Cultures of Exchange in an Atlantic World* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 317; Murray Lawson, *Fur: A Study in English Mercantilism, 1700-1775* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1943), 65.

¹⁹ Clark, *Hats*, 84.

Consumer Revolution” in which globally-traded goods, from North America and elsewhere, were no longer strictly luxury items. Advances in shipping technology and extended trade networks made it easier to transport these items to Europe, decreasing the price of each item, but sharply increasing the demand for them.²⁰ The affordability of beaver felt hats stimulated a social revolution as well, as they allowed more men the chance to present themselves publicly as occupying a higher economic station than might have been the reality. It was no longer as easy to discern someone’s social status simply by appearance.²¹ The demand for these hats continued to grow even as prices dropped in the wake of overproduction, and despite occasional fluctuation in the market, they would remain crucial to this rise of consumerism.²² The HBC was (and remains) the largest of the fur trade companies, dwarfing others and absorbing competitors to uphold their dominance in Canada and beyond. At its height, the Company operated hundreds of trading posts in Canada, and dozens internationally, some as distant as California, Hawai’i, and Siberia.²³ Their hats as finished products were exported to over 50 countries.²⁴ In 1869, after two centuries of independent operation, the HBC surrendered much of their trading territory to the British crown so that it could be annexed to the newly-formed Dominion of Canada.²⁵

Hudson Bay, a large body of saltwater in northeastern Canada with a drainage basin that spans over three million square kilometres, had been first visited by Europeans in 1609. Henry Hudson’s expeditions in the area, rather than for trade, were part of an ongoing attempt by

²⁰ Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1760* (London: Routledge, 1996), 197.

²¹ Hugh Grant, “Revenge of the Paris hat: The European Craze for Wearing Headgear Had a Profound Effect on Canadian History,” *The Beaver* 68(6) (November 1988): 37.

²² Chrisler Phillips, *The Fur Trade*, 27.

²³ Wilson, “Anchors Aweigh!”, F9; William St. Clair Jr., “HBC History Has a Hawaiian Chapter,” *Canada’s History*, April 29, 2014, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.canadashistory.ca/explore/fur-trade/hbc-history-has-a-hawaiian-chapter>.

²⁴ Sleeper-Smith, *Rethinking the Fur Trade*, xvii; Lawson, *Fur*, 37.

²⁵ “Deed of Surrender”, HBC Heritage, accessed January 7, 2019, <http://www.hbcheritage.ca/history/fur-trade/deed-of-surrender>.

multiple European empires to locate the Northwest Passage, a fabled sea route linking the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific via the Arctic Ocean. Hudson was never successful in this endeavour, nor was anyone until the early 20th century. Even once discovered, the route remained impassible for most of the year, and its hypothetical use for international trade became obsolete only a decade later with the construction of the Panama Canal. Hudson's exploration of Hudson Bay and the surrounding drainage basin managed to briefly pique English interest in a northern fur trade, but nothing would come of it for decades. It is here that the *Nonsuch* enters the story. A small, generally unremarkable ship, built for a merchant and sold to the HBC in 1668, the *Nonsuch* sailed across the Atlantic that same year, through Hudson Strait, and into Hudson Bay on an exploratory mission to assess the viability of a fur trade in the area north of the French colony in the St. Lawrence River Valley. The success of this voyage enabled the creation of the HBC, and by extension, at least according to the Company, the creation of Canada. 300 years later, the HBC commissioned the construction of a replica as part of their lavish tercentennial celebrations. It is this replica that now sits in a museum, in the centre of a Canadian prairie city with at best loose ties to the original ship. While the HBC has engaged in extensive acts of commemoration over its 350-year history, historians have not treated the voyage of the original *Nonsuch* as a significant event. The *Nonsuch* replica and Gallery tell a much different story. The ambition and attention to detail of the replica project, and the grandeur of the Gallery, suggest to consumers that the ship was vitally important, continuing the effort started by the HBC to tie the ship to the creation of Canada. The *Nonsuch* Gallery is an example of an institution engaging in the construction of history.

A museum is a multi-disciplinary institution, and so I have sought to employ a multi-disciplinary method for this study. In addition to work done by historians, I have made use of

scholarship from museum studies, archaeology, anthropology, material culture, philosophy, sociology, architecture, human geography, and tourism studies. I have also made use of international scholarship, primarily from the United States and the United Kingdom, but also from China and Scandinavia. In the following four chapters, I will trace the history of the *Nonsuch* from the 17th century to the present, examining its different meanings in different times and spaces. As this is a story that spans multiple centuries with important pieces in multiple geographical locations, it will be told thematically rather than chronologically. The first chapter functions as an object biography. It begins with an introduction of two Frenchmen, Pierre Radisson and Médard Chouart, celebrated by the HBC as the founders of the Company. The chapter details the original voyage of the *Nonsuch* in 1668, as well as the circumstances that led to the granting of the charter in 1670 and the formation of the HBC. It then leaps forward three centuries to the 1960s, where executives and advertisers positioned the HBC of the 20th century as inextricable from both the history of Canada and the relentless march of progress and post-war modernization. It follows the *Nonsuch* replica from idea to physical reality, and the three summers she spent sailing in Europe and North America before retiring to the Manitoba Museum. Chapters Two through Four focus on the three aforementioned spaces the *Nonsuch* Gallery has occupied in Winnipeg. The second chapter deals with the history of museums, with a particular focus on the postmodern museum and its function in modern Western society as an important institution of cultural dissemination and public education, and details how the *Nonsuch* Gallery and Manitoba Museum fit into this scholarship and methodology. This chapter is a foundation upon which to build the rest of the analysis, as an understanding of both the historical and modern functions of museums as institutions is necessary to contextualize the meaning of the *Nonsuch* Gallery within the spaces of Canadian history and local culture. The third chapter

examines several key concepts related to the construction of heritage. First, it examines the HBC in the 20th century and the steps taken by the Company to present their history as Canadian history through heritage branding and the marketing of patriotism. The ‘heritage boom’ of the 1960s-1980s, that saw a dramatic increase in heritage sites for the purposes of national unity through a romanticization of the past, was integral to both the construction of the *Nonsuch* replica and of the Manitoba Museum. It altered how history was presented in public spaces, and contributed to burgeoning middle-class tourism. Authenticity is a key concept here, and I have attempted to give it the treatment necessary to clarify its many different and complex meanings, and to explain why it matters at heritage sites and museums. I then move to the specific brand of Canadian nationalism that emerged in the 1960s, in conjunction with the country’s 100th anniversary, and the ways in which culture and heritage were used as the building blocks of this national project. The final chapter attends to the 2018 renovation of the *Nonsuch* Gallery, and to acts of commemoration, arguing that both contribute to public memory in a way that is meaningful for collective identity. Scholars of heritage such as Kevin Walsh, David Lowenthal, and Susan Crane have argued that the consumption of commemorative heritage serves to enhance the identity and cultural capital of individuals and groups.²⁶ In its cultural construction as a piece of history that can be traced directly to the founding of Canada, the *Nonsuch* replica and Gallery constitute such an act of national commemoration.

Upon the Gallery’s reopening in 2018, Amelia Fay, curator for the HBC Collection at the Manitoba Museum, called Winnipeggers “*Nonsuch*-obsessed” and fiercely protective of the replica and its nostalgic and emotional value.²⁷ Assistant curator Cortney Pachet noted the

²⁶ Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, 127; David Lowenthal, “Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory,” *Geographical Review* 65(1) (January 1975): 14; Susan Crane, “Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory,” *American Historical Review* 102(5) (December 1997): 1372.

²⁷ Amelia Fay, quoted in Wilson, “Anchors Aweigh!”, F9.

Gallery is well-loved because it is unique, not something one would expect to find in a local prairie museum, and allows visitors to take “a very cheap international vacation.”²⁸ Former Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger, in a provincial funding announcement in 2015, called the Museum and the *Nonsuch* Gallery cherished cultural assets that tell “the story of our shared history.”²⁹ Courtney Anderson, an American expert in historical rigging hired to assist in the 2018 renovations, when asked about the Gallery, remembered his lecture at the Museum on his work drew in huge crowds for such a specific topic, and stated “that really just shows how excited people are about the museum and the Nonsuch.”³⁰ Laird Rankin, hired by the HBC in 1967 to plan and publicize the replica’s Canadian tours (and to whose written account of this endeavor this project is heavily indebted), called the *Nonsuch* replica an extraordinary ship, one of the Museum’s stellar attractions, and something “literally millions have come to treasure.”³¹ These accolades are only pieces of a complex broader picture, but they offer a glimpse into the warm reception the replica and Gallery have enjoyed in Manitoba. The Gallery’s generally beloved status combines with the ship’s national significance, crafted by the HBC, and the local cultural significance, maintained by the Museum. The result is a well-visited tourist destination that occupies a critical space in the construction of local heritage.

²⁸ Cortney Pachet, interview with Andrea Smorang, February 13, 2019.

²⁹ Greg Selinger, quoted in Michael Fazio, “Manitoba Museum gets \$10M from province for renewal”, *CBC News*, October 15, 2015.

³⁰ Courtney Anderson, quoted in Wilson, “Anchors Aweigh!”, F8.

³¹ Laird Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch: the Ship That Launched An Empire* (Winnipeg: Heartland Associates Inc, 2004), 10, 131.

Chapter One – “The Ship that Launched an Empire”

Radisson and des Groseilliers

E.E. Rich, noted historian of the Hudson’s Bay Company, described Pierre Esprit Radisson and Médard Chouart, Sieur des Groseilliers, as adventurers with “between them ... more experience and knowledge of the French-Canadian system of fur-trading than any other two men could claim.”³² A generation apart in age, they were both emigrants from France, and had settled at Trois-Rivières in the French colony along the St. Lawrence River. The details of their lives have been pieced together through primary sources that are often sparse, and at other times details vary depending on the source. Radisson kept thorough diaries for much of his adult life, however some of his writings have been deemed unreliable due to his tendency for self-aggrandisement. Some of his writings were intended as promotion for their proposed fur trade endeavours, and so these sections should be viewed through that lens: he was the salesman of the operation, and was likely not above exaggerating for self-promotion.³³ We know that the pair were the first to suggest trading in the Hudson Bay drainage basin, and were instrumental in turning this vision into reality. They are celebrated by the HBC as founders. A book published by the HBC in 1920 in celebration of its 250th anniversary credits Radisson and des Groseilliers for the entire northern fur trade, stating that in 1661 they constructed the first fur trading post “between Missouri and the North Pole”, somewhere around what is now Duluth, Minnesota. This post, the HBC claims, opened up the West for exploration and is the “tangible origin of the modern life of the great North-West.”³⁴

³² Rich, *Hudson’s Bay Company*, 24.

³³ Douglas MacKay, *The Honourable Company: A History of the Hudson’s Bay Company* (Indianapolis & New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1936), 17.

³⁴ Sir William Schooling, K.B.E., *The Hudson’s Bay Company 1670-1920* (London: The Hudson’s Bay Company, 1920), 14.

Médard Chouart was born in Carly-sur-Marne, in northern France, around 1620.³⁵ He emigrated to New France when he was a teenager. He served at a Jesuit mission in Huronia (now southern Ontario), and was the Colonel Sergeant Major of the French militia at Trois-Rivières.³⁶ He adopted the title *Sieur des Groseilliers* in the early 1640s after the military appointment,³⁷ the name taken from his family's farm in France – 'Les Groseilliers' meaning 'Gooseberry Bushes'.³⁸ HBC papers would later refer to him as 'Mister Gooseberries', the nickname given to him by English crewmembers who could not properly pronounce his name.³⁹ He married Hélène Martin in 1647, and became a widower shortly after in 1651. His discovery of the lucrative lands north of Lake Superior occurred during missions for the Governor of New France. The purpose of these missions was to assist western indigenous tribes in breaking through the Iroquois blockade that had halted the trade of furs to Montréal in 1652.⁴⁰ Around this time, he met Marguerite Radisson, and her brother Pierre. Des Groseilliers grew quickly fond of them both, and married Marguerite in 1653 while simultaneously striking up a business partnership with her brother.⁴¹

Pierre Esprit Radisson, the younger of the two HBC founders, was born between 1636 and 1640 in southern France, near the town of Avignon. His family were Huguenots (Protestants) who emigrated to New France when he was a child to escape persecution in France. In 1652, as an adolescent, he was captured during a Mohawk raid on Trois-Rivières and lived for the next two years as an adopted member of a Mohawk family. According to his own writings, he spent

³⁵ Rich, *The Hudson's Bay Company*, 26; Arthur Adams, editor, *The Explorations of Pierre Esprit Radisson* (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, Inc., 1961), xix.

³⁶ MacKay, *The Honourable Company*, 16.

³⁷ Beckles Wilson, *The Great Company (1667-1871). Being a History of the Honourable Company of Merchants-Adventurers Trading into Hudson's Bay* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1900), 10.

³⁸ Peter Newman, *Company of Adventurers. Volume 1* (Markham, Ontario: Penguin Books Canada Ltd., 1985), 63.

³⁹ MacKay, *The Honourable Company*, 25.

⁴⁰ Rich, *Hudson's Bay Company*, 26.

⁴¹ Wilson, *The Honourable Company*, 11.

those two years learning what the Mohawk could teach him about living off the land but looking secretly for an avenue to escape.⁴² In 1653 he briefly succeeded, although he was captured after two weeks by a group of Iroquois. He was tortured as part of an interrogation, and then returned to his adoptive Mohawk family, only to escape again a year later.⁴³ The second time he made it to the Dutch settlement at Fort Orange (present-day Albany, New York) and was sent back to France, and then finally back to Trois-Rivières, where his sister had already been courting des Groseilliers.⁴⁴

Separately, they had both heard rumours of a great wealth of furs in the ‘Bay of the North’ from indigenous traders they encountered on their own journeys throughout New France.⁴⁵ After their serendipitous meeting, they endeavoured to find out for themselves if these stories were true. They ventured north several times, without permission from the Governor of New France. In 1661 their most successful expedition, with sixty canoes from the assembled Cree Nation of the Lake Superior region, did not go as far as Hudson Bay. They paddled instead along many of the dozens of rivers that make up the vast Hudson Bay drainage basin; rivers that would become the arteries of the English fur trade.⁴⁶ The stories they had heard of the resource-rich territories between the Bay and the Great Lakes were confirmed. Radisson and des Groseilliers returned to New France with a large private fortune in prime furs. Instead of the celebratory reception they were expecting, they were heftily fined for illicit trading and, according to Radisson years later, des Groseilliers was briefly imprisoned.⁴⁷ They travelled to Paris after des Groseilliers’ release in the hopes of gaining restitution and a pardon from the

⁴² Schooling, *The Hudson’s Bay Company*, 10.

⁴³ Newman, *Company of Adventurers*, 63; Mark Bourrie, *Bush Runner. The Adventures of Pierre-Esprit Radisson* (Windsor: Biblioasis, 2019), 51-71.

⁴⁴ Rich, *Hudson’s Bay Company*, 27.

⁴⁵ Rich, *Hudson’s Bay Company*, 28.

⁴⁶ MacKay, *The Honourable Company*, 25.

⁴⁷ Rich, *Hudson’s Bay Company*, 28; Schooling, *The Hudson’s Bay Company*, 3; Bourrie, *Bush Runner*, 164.

King, and to generate interest in and financing for an official expedition into Hudson Bay. They received neither.

Their proposal on its face was a good one. There was an enormous, untapped wealth of furs much further north than European traders were venturing. In addition, established trade in New France was often subject to conflict with the Iroquois Nation, and trade via Hudson Bay was a way around this frequent and expensive problem. Finally, the indigenous populations further north were inexperienced in trading with Europeans – some during this period were still entirely uncontacted – and so des Groseilliers in particular shrewdly recognized it would be much easier to form and profit from a partnership that benefited European interests with people lacking prior knowledge of how such a partnership would work.⁴⁸

Upon returning to Trois-Rivières, Radisson and des Groseilliers discovered the reason their idea had been turned down in France. All existing Canadian trade was required to access the trading territory through the St. Lawrence, where there was an established system of taxation on the cargo ships that used this route. There was no such system in the area surrounding Hudson Bay, and the French had never claimed ownership by royal charter of the territory. Allowing European ships to access Canada via Hudson Bay, collecting furs and completely bypassing the St. Lawrence, would threaten the revenue of the colony.⁴⁹ Radisson and des Groseilliers understood they were therefore unlikely to get what they wanted from the French crown, and turned their sights instead to the English. Planning to approach the English crown with more information to bolster their chances of success, Radisson and des Groseilliers travelled to New England, where they convinced a sea captain in Boston to take them to the Bay in the late summer of 1663. They left too late in the season, however, and were forced to turn back off the

⁴⁸ MacKay, *The Honourable Company*, 26.

⁴⁹ Rich, *Hudson's Bay Company*, 24.

coast of Labrador as sea ice blocked their path.⁵⁰ Two years later they employed Captain Zachariah Gillam, another native of Boston, and on that voyage they made it into Hudson Strait.⁵¹ They did not sail right into the Bay, but knew from both the discoveries of Henry Hudson and now their own experience that a sea route into the Bay was passable during the summer months. It was enough to take their proposal to London.

Arriving in plague-riddled London in 1664, Radisson and des Groseilliers moved quickly through courtly circles. Through their acquaintance with ‘father of chemistry’ Robert Boyle, who believed in the potential of a Northwest passage for both profit and scientific discovery, they garnered a successful audience with Charles II.⁵² They met with Charles on 25 October 1666.⁵³ The 36-year-old monarch was receptive to their proposal, and retained the explorers with a modest pension, requesting they provide an extensive written account of the land and inhabitants of the area surrounding Hudson Bay. It would take two years for Radisson and des Groseilliers to compile the necessary information. Meanwhile, the King passed responsibility for the expedition to his cousin, Prince Rupert, and Rupert spent those two years assembling a network of wealthy and powerful financial backers. By 1668, the groundwork had been completed, and the stage was set for the next leg of the plan: the inaugural voyage.

The *Nonsuch*, the *Eaglet*, and the HBC Charter

Prince Rupert charged Sir George Carteret, the Treasurer of the Royal Navy and Commissioner of the Board of Trade, with procuring sea vessels for the expedition. The *Eaglet* was leased from the Navy in early 1668, and on 30 March the *Nonsuch* was bought from Sir

⁵⁰ MacKay, *The Honourable Company*, 19.

⁵¹ Newman, *Company of Adventurers*, 64.

⁵² Rich, *Hudson's Bay Company*, 25.

⁵³ Newman, *Company of Adventurers*, 69.

William Warren.⁵⁴ Both ships were *ketches*, a vessel classified by size and by only two masts (most ocean-going vessels had three). A ketch had a tall mainmast with a shorter mizzenmast behind, and square sails.⁵⁵ A ketch is on the smaller end of the spectrum of vessels that qualified as ships, and was significantly smaller than vessels that were meant to cross large bodies of water. Ketches were usually employed for coastal voyages, not crossing the ocean. The *Eaglet* was one of the smallest ships in Royal Naval fleet, and the *Nonsuch* was even smaller, by 11 tons.⁵⁶ The size of these ships was purposeful, however. James Bay – the bay off the southeast corner of Hudson Bay where the expedition was expected to land – freezes over in the winter. If a voyage planned to spend the winter in northern Canada, a ship would need to be light enough that the crew could drag her onto the beach. If left in the water, ice would shatter a ship's wooden hull, leaving the crew stranded. The balance between a vessel large enough to safely cross the ocean and small enough to be beached for the winter was precarious, and Carteret had to engage in a considerable amount of guesswork in an attempt to strike that balance.

The two ships were put into the River Thames in early June 1668. The bellies of both were heavily stocked with items the crew would need to survive the harsh winter, such as tools, weapons, paper, ink and quills, clothing and shoes, gallons of lemon juice (to ward off scurvy), non-perishable food such as dried fruit and salted meat, and copious amounts of wine and brandy. They were also loaded with items for trading with the indigenous people they would encounter, including 'wampum': shell beads that had become the standard currency of trade with indigenous tribes.⁵⁷ The plan was relatively simple. Radisson would travel on the *Eaglet* with Captain William Stannard, and des Groseilliers on the *Nonsuch* with Captain Gillam, the same

⁵⁴ "Nonsuch", HBC heritage, accessed January 7, 2019, <http://www.hbcheritage.ca/things/technology/the-nonsuch>.

⁵⁵ Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 31; Rich, *Hudson's Bay Company*, 36.

⁵⁶ Rich, *Hudson's Bay Company*, 36.

⁵⁷ Newman, *Company of Adventurers*, 82.

Boston man who had captained their previous unsanctioned voyage into Hudson Strait.⁵⁸ Other passengers on the *Nonsuch* included chief mate Thomas Shepard, mate James Tatnam, and Pierre Romieux, a French surgeon. Although there is no surviving record of other crew members, a ketch would require no more than a dozen men for a trans-Atlantic voyage.⁵⁹ Both ships would winter on the Bay, spending the months procuring furs both from trapping and trading with local bands. In the spring of 1669, the captains were to switch ships. Captain Stannard and des Groseilliers would return to London on the *Nonsuch* with the year's supply of furs, while Captain Gillam, the *Eaglet*, and the much younger Radisson would stay on James Bay for a second year.⁶⁰ It was the hope of all involved that the first winter's haul of furs would stimulate further investment in London, and that the second winter's haul would be definitive proof of the Hudson Bay trade's viability.

On 3 June 1668, the *Nonsuch* and the *Eaglet* departed from Gravesend, a small town close to the ocean on the River Thames. The two vessels sailed north up the eastern coast of England, then turned west around the northern coast of Scotland. Only weeks into the voyage, somewhere off the coast of Ireland, they sailed through a violent storm that damaged the *Eaglet* and forced her to turn back.⁶¹ This incident could have spelled complete disaster. Not only was the *Eaglet* carrying half the mission's supplies, she was also carrying Radisson – arguably the expedition's most valuable asset. He was far more experienced as an adventurer than was des

⁵⁸ Schooling, *The Hudson's Bay Company*, 4.

⁵⁹ Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 19. Several articles printed in the *Manitoba Free Press* during the 1920s, including "When Nonsuch Sailed" from June 19, 1926, 19, claim the crew to have been 42 men. It is unclear where that number came from, and given the size of the vessel and the recorded amount of provisions, it is unlikely the voyage could have supported a crew this large.

⁶⁰ Rich, *Hudson's Bay Company*, 37.

⁶¹ There is discrepancy here. Schooling's account claims the *Eaglet* did cross the Atlantic and had to turn back while approaching Hudson Strait. Most other accounts claim this happened much earlier in the voyage and the *Eaglet* never crossed the ocean: Newman, *An Illustrated History of the Hudson's Bay Company* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1989), 34; Rich, *Hudson's Bay Company*, 38; Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 15; Bourrie, *Bush Runner*, 202.

Groseilliers; skilled at navigating rough terrain and canoeing up difficult rivers, with both practical wilderness experience and familiarity with the type of landscape they would encounter. His absence would have been a terrible setback that could have jeopardized the entire expedition. Regardless, the *Nonsuch* carried on. After 118 days at sea she reached James Bay. On 29 September 1668, after a likely harrowing Atlantic crossing spanning nearly four months, the *Nonsuch* was beached at the mouth of a river that the crew named for Prince Rupert. They assembled a small palisaded fort that they named after the King. Fort Charles was unofficially the HBC's first trading post, even though at the time of its construction the Company did not yet exist. Captain Gillam's log has not survived, so there is very little information on the year he and des Groseilliers spent on James Bay with their crew of 8-12 men.⁶² Radisson was the one with a habit of chronicling his adventures in diaries, and so it is unfortunate that he was aboard the ship that was forced to turn back, negating the possibility of extensive and detailed records of their activities on the Bay. It is known that a few of the crew were weakened by scurvy, but no lives were lost over the winter.⁶³ In the spring, they began to trade with Cree hunters, loading the hold of the *Nonsuch* with beaver pelts, and when the ship was "loaded to the waterline,"⁶⁴ they departed the Bay and made the slow journey back to England.

On 10 October 1669, the *Nonsuch* arrived home and docked at the London shipyards.⁶⁵ The furs she brought back with her sold quickly, although there is a dramatic discrepancy in the sources on how much they were sold for. Laird Rankin claimed the amount fetched for the furs was less than the cost of the expedition.⁶⁶ This estimate echoes Peter Newman's *Company of*

⁶² Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 15-19.

⁶³ Newman, *An Illustrated History*, 35.

⁶⁴ Schooling, *The Hudson's Bay Company*, 4.

⁶⁵ MacKay, *The Honourable Company*, 26.

⁶⁶ Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 18.

Adventurers in which the total amount made from the sale of the goods is stated to be £1379 (the equivalent of just over £200,000 in 2019).⁶⁷ Alternately, historian Douglas McKay claimed the number to be over £19,000, which would convert to well over £4 million, rendering the return on investment for the men who had financed the voyage more than satisfactory.⁶⁸ Setting this aside, the *Nonsuch* brought back something much more significant. The voyage had proven the theory of Radisson and des Groseilliers. Survival on Hudson Bay over the harsh Canadian winter was possible, and the supply of beaver in the area was as plentiful as they had been told. Seven months later, on 2 May 1670, Charles II granted a charter to 18 investors calling themselves the “Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson’s Bay”, more commonly known as the Hudson’s Bay Company.⁶⁹ The total investment in 1670 was £4720.⁷⁰ The charter gave the newly created Company a monopoly on trade and commerce in the lands drained by rivers flowing into Hudson Bay. The territory was called Rupert’s Land, named for Prince Rupert, the Company’s first Governor.

Radisson and des Groseilliers returned to Fort Charles after the signing of the charter. Des Groseilliers died during another expedition somewhere between 1682-1683. Radisson was with him at the time, but did not record the date, location, or cause of his death, so these remain unknown. Radisson continued to trade for the HBC, while at the same time playing the English and the French against each other, taking commercial advantage of existing geopolitical tensions between the two empires. He would make deals with French king Louis XIV while simultaneously signing exclusive contracts with the HBC. He was given a generous pension by the HBC after the charter, and he withdrew the last quarterly installment in 1710. He would have

⁶⁷ Newman, *Company of Adventurers*, 83.

⁶⁸ MacKay, *The Honourable Company*, 37.

⁶⁹ Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 19.

⁷⁰ MacKay, *The Honourable Company*, 36.

been 70 years old, well exceeding the average lifespan of a person in the early 18th century. After that, he largely disappeared from the records. Their legacy lies in their contribution to the formation of what is now the world's oldest operating company. The HBC of the 17th century was more than a fur-trade syndicate, it was a 'company-state' that would employ a kind of independent sovereignty over the enormous parcel of land granted to it by Charles II.⁷¹ For perspective using modern political geography, this land encompassed all of Manitoba, Québec north of the Laurentian watershed, most of what is now Ontario, Saskatchewan, Nunavut, and the Northwest Territories, roughly the southern half of Alberta, and the northern halves of North Dakota and Minnesota. The HBC, up to the present, actively intertwines their history with the history of Canada and often uses the *Nonsuch*, "the ship that launched an empire,"⁷² as a main character in their corporate story of adventure, exceptionalism, and nation building.

The Replica: "Maximum Possible Authenticity"

In April 1966, 299 years and five months after Radisson and des Groseilliers were granted an audience with Charles II, Ontario-born Melbourne Smith was at the HBC's Winnipeg office to propose a series of paintings of the Company's historic ships. Smith was a former sailing master, part owner of a shipbuilding company, and an accomplished marine artist. For several years the Company had been debating how best to celebrate their upcoming tercentenary in 1970. The series of paintings was just one of several ideas explored during the 1960s. The *Nonsuch*, of course, would have made the list of paintings. By coincidence, during his visit to the Winnipeg office, Smith encountered plans for a replica of the 17th century vessel. The idea to

⁷¹ Edward Cavanagh, "A Company with Sovereignty and Subjects of Its Own? The Case of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1670-1763," *Canadian Journal of law and society* 26(1) (April 2011): 48.

⁷² Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 131.

create a working replica of the *Nonsuch* had been considered a few times in the early 1960s by HBC executives in their quest for appropriately grand anniversary celebrations. They had decided, without obtaining an estimate from experts, that it would be too costly, and that there would be nowhere to put the massive replica once the Company was finished with it. By 1964, the idea had been definitively scrapped. Smith, upon examining the discarded plans, estimated it could be done for around \$100,000. This was a much smaller budget than Company executives had been imagining, and although the problem of where to put the replica after the anniversary celebrations still existed, the idea was tentatively put back on the table.⁷³

The HBC used every anniversary, even ones without large round numbers attached, as an opportunity to advertise and to connect the history of the Company with the history of Canada. These included HBC anniversaries and Canadian ones. Commemorations of the founding of Canadian cities or provinces were also opportunities to market the HBC brand. The HBC was not the only Canadian retail company to engage in this kind of heritage advertising, and arguably Eaton's was more successful than the HBC in associating itself with a Canadian identity that could make use of nationalism, patriotism, and nostalgia. This is the thesis of Donica Belisle's *Retail nation: department stores and the making of modern Canada*⁷⁴ and will be discussed further in Chapter Three. The HBC was therefore planning for years to honour Manitoba's 1970 centennial in some way, and they hoped to do so in a way that could coincide with the celebration of their own 300th anniversary. A few days after Melbourne Smith reinvigorated the potential for a replica of the *Nonsuch*, the Manitoba Centennial Corporation approached the HBC in search of a donation to the cultural complex it was planning to build in downtown Winnipeg.

⁷³ Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 22.

⁷⁴ Donica Belisle, *Retail nation: department stores and the making of modern Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011).

The country would celebrate its own 100th anniversary in 1967, and so centennial groups emerged across the country, planning large-scale projects that would become symbols of Canada's path from colonial outpost to modernity.⁷⁵ The Centennial Centre in Winnipeg would include a concert hall, two theatre centres (a main stage and a warehouse), museum, and planetarium and would be erected near Portage and Main, Winnipeg's most famous downtown intersection. The HBC was interested in donating to this project, but wanted the complex to have something to do with the Company in order to justify the donation as advertising, rather than just charity. The timing was fortuitous, as the proposed museum was the missing link: if the HBC could construct the replica at a relatively low cost, and the museum in Winnipeg could be her final resting place, the idea was finally feasible.⁷⁶

Winnipeg in the 1960s was not simply another Canadian city as far as the HBC was concerned. The city and the Company were already deeply connected before the replica was to retire at the proposed museum. The HBC's commercial enterprise was almost entirely Canadian, even though the board of directors still met in London and its governor was always English. 'The Bay' department stores never existed in the United Kingdom, and while it was still technically a British company, its administrative office had been relocated from London to Winnipeg in 1912, and day-to-day operations were almost entirely run out of the Winnipeg office. The London office was a figurehead. The Company had an impressive presence in Canada in the mid-20th century, with around 15,000 employees, 33 department stores, over 200 Northern Stores, and mineral rights to 4.5 million acres of land.⁷⁷ It remained the world's largest private fur trader, although this aspect of the business had shrunk considerably since the 19th century. In May 1970,

⁷⁵ *Centennial. Canada 1967 – Manitoba 1970: concert hall, art gallery, museum, research building, theatre centre, planetarium* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Centennial Centre Citizens' Campaign, 1966), 12.

⁷⁶ Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 23.

⁷⁷ David Cobb, "The ship that launched the Canadian West," *Winnipeg Tribune*, December 20, 1969, 64.

on the Company's 300th anniversary, the London office was to be closed for good and the Winnipeg office would become Company headquarters, along with the appointment of the Company's first Canadian governor to complete the symbolic transfer of power and the acknowledgement that it had become, for all practical purposes, a Canadian company.⁷⁸

Winnipeg was, in the view of the HBC, the perfect final resting place for the *Nonsuch* replica, and the proposed museum was an extraordinarily well-timed coincidence. Officials of the HBC and the Manitoba Centennial Corporation announced the project on 20 July 1967, describing the replica as a 'gift' from the HBC to the people of Manitoba.⁷⁹ Centennial Corporation chairman Maitland Steinkopf, in an official statement, declared: "an authentic 17th century ocean-going vessel with full rigging and sails located in the heart of the Canadian prairies would add dramatic interest to the centennial complex and should become one of Manitoba's principal tourist attractions."⁸⁰

The builders' specifications prepared by the HBC instructed designer Warrington Smyth to seek "maximum possible authenticity."⁸¹ Replicas of historical ships are not uncommon, but they are often constructed to *appear* authentic, rather than constructed with period-appropriate tools, materials, or methods. The concept of authenticity is a complex one that will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Three, but for the purposes of this section, I will use the word in C.S. Pierce's sense of *indexical authenticity*, in which an object contains cues that have a spatiotemporal likeness to something else – a historical replica made in the way it *would* have been made in the specific period, as opposed to *iconic authenticity*, in which an object is simply

⁷⁸ Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 23. George Richardson, of the prominent Winnipeg business family, would become governor and would remain in the position until 1982.

⁷⁹ "'Return' Of Ketch Nonsuch Centennial Gift of the Bay", *Winnipeg Free Press*, July 21, 1967, 3; Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 30.

⁸⁰ "Nonsuch To Sail Again," *Winnipeg Free Press*, August 19, 1967, 60.

⁸¹ Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 31.

similar in appearance to something else – an object made with modern techniques and materials to appear aesthetically or stylistically similar to historical objects.⁸²

The difficulty for early planners, designers, and builders wanting to follow this directive was a lack of information about the original *Nonsuch*. Important dates were recorded in the ship's naval records, at least until shortly after her voyage to Hudson Bay. She was built in 1650 in Wivenhoe, Sussex, by a Mr. Page. In 1654, she was purchased by the Royal Navy, captured by the Dutch in 1658, recaptured by the Navy in 1659, and then sold to Sir William Warren in 1667. Warren sold her to Prince Rupert for £290 in 1668, to be used in the exploratory expedition across the Atlantic. After she returned to London in 1669, she was sold to a Captain Chappell, and disappeared from the records.⁸³ Her name is something of a mystery with possible ties to the extra-marital activities of Charles II. While 'nonsuch' means 'none such' (unequaled, unrivaled, etc.) it has been suggested the *Nonsuch* was at first called something else that was never recorded, and then renamed by Charles to honour his mistress Barbara Palmer. She bore five illegitimate children by Charles between 1661 and 1665, and he allowed her to live at Nonsuch Palace in Surrey (built in 1538 for Henry VIII). Palmer was made Baroness Nonsuch by Charles in June 1670, one month after granting the HBC charter. After her affair with Charles ended, the Baroness would give birth to one more illegitimate child, a daughter, fathered by John Churchill, the First Duke of Marlborough. He became the HBC's third Governor in 1685. The Manitoba Museum has not been able to confirm the claim that the ship *Nonsuch* was named for

⁸² C.S. Pierce, *Collected papers of Charles Saunders Pierce* (Bristol: Thoemmes, 1998), cited in Maree Thyne & Anne-Marie Hede, "Approaches to managing co-production for the co-creation of value in a museum setting: when authenticity matters," *Journal of Marketing Management* 32 (15-16) (2016): 1480; and Kent Grayson and Radan Martinec, "Consumer Perceptions of Iconicity and Indexicality and Their Influence on Assessments of Authentic Market Offerings," *Journal of Consumer Research* 31(2) (September 2004): 298.

⁸³ Manitoba Museum Archives, Box: Gallery Info, Folder: Nonsuch History.

the Baroness, but it is the most compelling origin of the name, too fitting to be entirely coincidental.⁸⁴

The final piece of information on the original *Nonsuch* in existence in the 1960s was her dimensions from 17th century naval records. With little to go on beyond her approximate size and the general appearance of ketches, Smyth conducted weeks of extensive research on historical ships. At the National Maritime Museum in London, he investigated what ships of similar size would have looked like in the 17th century, and the materials and techniques used in their construction.⁸⁵ After the plans were finalized, J. Hinks & Company of Appledore, Devon received the contract for construction. The family shipbuilding company, then belonging to Alan Hinks, had existed since 1844, and Appledore was one of the most highly-trafficked English ports during the fur trade years.⁸⁶ It was an enormously complicated task. The HBC had demanded that the tools, techniques, and materials all be as indexically authentic to the mid-17th century as was possible. The materials were the easiest of the three to obtain, while the techniques and tools were tougher to master. Many of the skills employed to build wooden ships had been out of common use for over a century, with little to no reason for modern commercial shipbuilders to learn them other than nostalgia. Ships of a similar size were never made from wood in the 1960s, and only a handful of builders at Hinks & Co. had experience working with wood in any capacity. Before construction could begin, builders learned how to use a wide range of hand tools, such as the adze and the trunnel mute. The making of wooden nails, or ‘tree nails’, and the use of them in place of steel ones, proved to be particularly tricky. This was an entirely

⁸⁴ Manitoba Museum Archives, Box: Gallery Info, Folder: Internet Research 2003 on the Nonsuch, and Box: Nonsuch specific, Folder: Naming the Nonsuch, Origin.

⁸⁵ “Voyage of the *Nonsuch*,” documentary produced by Nonsuch Films Limited, 1968, <http://www.hbcheritage.ca/classroom/videos/canadas-history/voyage-of-the-nonsuch>.

⁸⁶ Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 29.

obsolete technology, but a crucially important one to get right, as mistakes would render the ship unsafe on the open sea.⁸⁷ The masts were solid pine – as masts nearly always were, given pine trees’ usually straight, cylindrical shape. The main mast was a piece of seasoned lumber acquired from a nearby shipyard. It had been intended for a replica of the *Endeavour* (the ship Captain James Cook commanded to European ‘discovery’ of Australia), and Hinks was able to obtain it when that project fell through.⁸⁸ The hull and decks were elm and oak. The flax sails were hand-sewn, and the nearly 3 kilometers of rope was made with hemp and hand-woven.⁸⁹ Carvings were characteristic of the 17th century, including female nudes believed by sailors to placate the gods of the sea. These were also carved with period-accurate tools, meaning no sandpaper. A final obsolete practice was resurrected for sealing the planks of the decks in place of modern caulking: oakum, a mixture of shredded hemp rope fibres and Stockholm tar, was used to make the ship water-tight. Even the paint was as authentic as possible, with colours determined from the study of numerous old paintings.⁹⁰

On the subject of recreated historical ships, Maritime historian Philip Reid wrote: “replica ships have to be able to represent their world and function in ours at the same time. Like every ship ever built, every replica is a set of compromises.”⁹¹ This was true of the *Nonsuch* replica, as even the HBC’s call for maximum possible authenticity could not transport the builders to another century or let them ignore stringent modern governmental safety standards. The *Nonsuch* replica was required by law to install an emergency electrical system, a toilet, and a diesel engine – by the 1960s many ports prohibited larger vessels from entering and leaving the harbour on

⁸⁷ “Voyage of the *Nonsuch*,” Nonsuch Films Limited.

⁸⁸ James Perrin, “300 years later Nonsuch to sail again to Canada”, *Globe and Mail*, March 29, 1969, 42.

⁸⁹ Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 31; “Voyage of the *Nonsuch*,” Nonsuch Films Limited.

⁹⁰ Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 35.

⁹¹ Phillip Reid, “The Time Machine? Using Replica Analysis to Understand Merchant Ships and the Development of the British Atlantic, 1600-1800,” *The Northern Mariner / Le marin du nord* XXVI (3) (2016): 311.

only wind power.⁹² Fire regulations also required there be two entrances to the hold, while 17th century ships would have had only one. Despite these necessary concessions, the *Nonsuch* replica was still something of an outlier in the attention paid to her authenticity. Many other historical ship replicas use synthetic materials and modern techniques to make construction quicker and easier. The *Nonsuch* replica is not the only replica ship to prioritize historical accuracy – the *Mayflower II* constructed at a different shipyard in Devon in the 1950s also used authentic materials and some authentic practices – but this was a rare practice, and the attention to detail that went into her construction seems generally unmatched by other replica ships. The *Nonsuch* project, for example, didn't simply use wood in her construction, but used wood from regions of England where 17th century shipbuilding timber would have been harvested. The outdated techniques and technologies used were for no purpose other than authenticity. The only modern additions were those required by law, and most of those were never used during her voyages. Nothing modern was added for the comfort of the crew. By comparison, the Swedish replica ship *Götheborg* used natural fibres for ropes and sails and looked period-accurate from the outside, but was constructed with modern techniques and had a modern interior and propellers powered by a diesel engine.⁹³ The Australian replica ship *Duyfken* similarly boasts historically accurate materials for a 17th century Dutch vessel including European oak, flax sails, and hemp rope, however modern caulking and sealing compounds were used.⁹⁴ The *Nonsuch* replica's builders reached their goal of 'maximum possible authenticity', making it one of the most historically accurate replica ships in existence.

⁹² Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 32; "Diesel powers Nonsuch into harbor", *Globe and Mail*, August 6, 1970, W3.

⁹³ Reid, "The Time Machine", 312.

⁹⁴ Howard Worth, "The 'Duyfken': An Exploration of the Roles of a Replica Ship," *The Great Circle* 35(1) (2013): 91.

On 26 August 1968, after nearly 12 months of construction, the *Nonsuch* replica was launched into the River Torridge in early evening, with over 30,000 people in attendance on the banks and in boats at the mouth of the river.⁹⁵ HBC Governor the Rt. Hon. Derick Heathcoat Armory attended, and his aunt christened the ship, officially naming her *Nonsuch* and breaking the traditional bottle of champagne over the bow.⁹⁶ Ceremonial cannons fired, fireworks exploded overhead, and the Union Jack waved in the crowd. The mast and the rigging were installed once she was in the water.⁹⁷ The original plans did not include sailing the replica throughout Great Britain, but rather transporting her to Canada as soon as she was complete. During the year it took to construct her, local interest and enthusiasm built, with the shipyard becoming a tourist attraction and the visitors' book filled with hundreds of signatures from not only England, but Europe and Canada.⁹⁸ Plans were altered, and the replica spent the summer of 1969 sailing the English Channel. A captain had been appointed a month before the replica was completed. Adrian Small was 39 years old and a resident of Brixham, Devon. He had an established career of sailing historical ships, including as second mate on the *Mayflower II* in 1957, so he was well suited to command another ship that not only looked but also functioned as a 17th century vessel.⁹⁹ Having been constructed on the west coast of Southern England, the *Nonsuch* and her small crew sailed around the southern point, stopping in Land's End, Penzance, Falmouth, Exmouth, Ramsgate, and London. She also crossed the Channel to visit Cherbourg, France.¹⁰⁰ Sailing across the ocean on such a small and antiquated vessel was never considered, as it would have posed too much of a risk to both life and the HBC's monetary investment.¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ "Nonsuch Launched Again", *Winnipeg Free Press*, August 28, 1968, 2; Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 35.

⁹⁶ Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 35.

⁹⁷ "Voyage of the *Nonsuch*," Nonsuch Films Limited.

⁹⁸ Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 30.

⁹⁹ Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 41.

¹⁰⁰ Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 47.

¹⁰¹ William Spencer, "Return of the Nonsuch", *Winnipeg Free Press*, January 4, 1969, 10.

The *Nonsuch* had already nearly succumbed to disaster, lost for 11 hours in a storm during the trip back around the Cornish Coast to Bristol.¹⁰² Upon arrival in Bristol in the spring of 1970, she was de-rigged and loaded onto the deck of the S.S. *Bristol City*, for transport to Canada. The HBC head office in Winnipeg did not publicize the crossing of the *Nonsuch* on the deck of a larger modern ship, worrying the trip would be mocked in the media after their advertising campaign boasting that the *Nonsuch* replica embodied the spirit of the original ship.¹⁰³

In the summer of 1970, the *Nonsuch* began her Canadian tour in Montréal. There was some apprehension about this among the tour planners, as the separatist group *Front de libération du Québec* had only a year earlier engaged in a bombing campaign in Montréal, causing dozens of injuries and extensive property damage. The *Nonsuch* replica was an enormous, showy celebration of the British Empire and English Canada, and would reasonably have been a perfect target for further attacks. The HBC took a chance, and the Canadian launch went off without incident. She then sailed up the St. Lawrence, and around Lake Ontario, visiting 16 ports including Kingston, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Hamilton, and Toronto. This tour was part of the original plan, before the European tour was added as a last-minute improvisation, and again, the HBC had not intended the *Nonsuch* to sail on after docking in Hamilton in late fall. And again, the plans were changed.¹⁰⁴ The museum in Winnipeg was experiencing construction delays and could not accurately estimate when it would be ready to receive the vessel. The Lake Ontario tour had, for the most part, been a resounding success – a local newspaper in Niagara claimed the crowd that assembled to see the replica was the largest ever assembled in the small town.¹⁰⁵ Excitement grew in Winnipeg as well. In 1970, something about the *Nonsuch* appeared

¹⁰² Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 50.

¹⁰³ Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 54.

¹⁰⁴ “Nonsuch To Sail An Extra Year,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, August 26, 1971, 3.

¹⁰⁵ Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 75.

in the *Winnipeg Free Press* nearly every other week, and at times more often. The HBC began organizing for the next summer, and after wintering in Hamilton, the *Nonsuch* was put back into the water in early April.¹⁰⁶ The replica sailed the remainder of the Great Lakes in 1971. She covered nearly 4000 kilometres, visiting Sarnia, Chicago, Kenosha (Wisconsin), Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay, and Duluth.¹⁰⁷ For the third time, she was set to retire at the end of the season, and for the third time, continued enthusiasm and further delays in Winnipeg resulted in the addition of another tour. The *Nonsuch* was de-rigged and trucked overland to the Pacific coast, where unexpectedly, the final tour would be the most successful of the four summers the *Nonsuch* spent at sea. Heavy crowds gathered everywhere she stopped in the summer of 1972, including Vancouver, Victoria, and Tacoma, Washington.¹⁰⁸ On 28 September 1972, one day short of exactly 304 years after the original *Nonsuch* landed in James Bay, the replica docked in Seattle, where she would see the ocean for the last time.

In the fall of 1973, the museum in Winnipeg was finally ready to receive the ship and begin construction of her final home. One last time she was de-rigged and loaded onto a truck, transported to Winnipeg and lowered into place on 20 November 1973 behind what had already been constructed of the museum. Quickly the walls and ceiling were constructed around her, and by the spring of 1974 she was enclosed.¹⁰⁹ In a documentary released by the HBC on the creation of the replica, closing narration over majestic music and footage of the sailing replica grandly intones “in the hope that future generations of Canadians may know the kind of men and craft it was that opened up such an important chapter in Canadian history and gave birth to a company that has forged unbreakable chains of trade and friendship between Great Britain and Canada for

¹⁰⁶ “Nonsuch Sailing Again,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, April 13, 1971, 17.

¹⁰⁷ Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 69.

¹⁰⁸ Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 105.

¹⁰⁹ Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 119.

300 years.”¹¹⁰ The life of an object does not end once it enters a museum, it simply enters a new phase of its life that can be similarly studied. The *Nonsuch* replica began as fundamentally a giant advertising campaign for the HBC. The grand opening of the *Nonsuch* Gallery on 8 December 1974 began a new chapter in the biography of the replica, moving from working ship and anniversary commemoration to popular tourist attraction, immersive museum gallery, and interactive heritage site.

¹¹⁰ “Voyage of the *Nonsuch*,” Nonsuch Films Limited.

Chapter Two – Museums: ‘Cabinets of Curiosity’ to the ‘Post-Museum’

A few weeks after the *Nonsuch* replica docked for the final time in Seattle, in October 1972, Captain Adrian Small travelled to Winnipeg to meet with the team in charge of designing the space where the replica would retire. He had been quietly wrestling with his aversion to the idea that a working ship would spend the rest of her days on land, entombed in steel and concrete, never to see the ocean again. Other historic ship replicas have remained docked at sea ports and become floating museums, such as the *Endeavour* replica in Sydney, Australia and a replica of the Columbus expedition’s *La Niña* in Corpus Christi, Texas. Winnipeg, however, is landlocked on the prairies, and the only bodies of water within its borders are shallow rivers that are frozen for half the year. Small had developed an alternate idea of his own: to surround the *Nonsuch* replica in an immersive gallery that at least looked and felt like a sea port, if she couldn’t retire to a real one.¹¹¹ He brought with him to the meeting sketches he had done of a life-sized diorama that would engulf the visitor in a multi-sensory experience, transporting them to 17th century England, where the original ship would have been outfitted for her journey to Hudson Bay. The proposed gallery would situate the *Nonsuch* replica at low tide in a shipyard on the morning of the 1668 voyage. Provisions for the voyage would line the dock, ready to be loaded into the cargo hold. On the quay (land) side, Small imagined a row of 17th century buildings including a tavern and a warehouse. A three-dimensional, multi-sensory experience, that resembled a recreated heritage site more than a museum gallery, had not occurred to the planners, but they loved it. This type of museum gallery was a relatively new invention in 1972, but now is fairly common in many different kinds of museums.

¹¹¹ Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 121.

This chapter will give a brief history of the museum as an institution, including an overview of some of the core criticisms museums have faced. It will then delve more deeply into the evolution of the ‘modern museum’, explaining the ways these institutions have changed since the 1960s and how museums in the present day view their roles in society, demonstrating the circumstances that have led to the increase in galleries such as that of the *Nonsuch*. The Canadian Museums Association lists over 2800 museums currently in operation in the country, with close to 200 in Manitoba. This broad classification includes not only traditional museums, but also institutions such as science museums, art galleries, cultural centres, military forts, and heritage sites. They vary in size from single rooms to large buildings with multiple storeys like the Royal Ontario Museum. An estimated 59 million people visit Canadian museums each year – approaching twice the nation’s population, suggesting both that there are many citizens who regularly visit multiple museums per year and that Canadian museums are popular destinations for international tourists.¹¹² In the introduction to an edited volume on new museum theory, Janet Marstine wrote: “museums are such a dominant feature of our cultural landscape that they frame our most basic assumptions about the past and about ourselves.”¹¹³ Archaeologists Peter Stone and Brian Molyneaux believe humanity is defined by a connection to the past, and that the preservation of the past “seems necessary to help define our place in a social group and community.”¹¹⁴ Usually located within the physical territory of the communities they seek to represent,¹¹⁵ museums in the latter half of the 20th century sought to tell communities who they were by displaying where they have come from. Museums contribute significantly to collective

¹¹² Andrée Gendreau, “Museums and Media: A View From Canada,” *The Public Historian* 31(1) (Winter 2009): 36.

¹¹³ Janet Marstine, “Introduction,” in *New Museum Theory and Practice: An Introduction* ed, Janet Marstine (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2008), 1.

¹¹⁴ Peter Stone and Brian Molyneaux, *The Presented Past. Heritage, museums and education* (London: Routledge, 1994), 9.

¹¹⁵ Hein, *The Museum in Transition*, 30.

group identity by exhibiting a shared past, or multiple shared pasts. They also function as secular temples, places dedicated not to the public worship of deities but to the public worship of knowledge.¹¹⁶ Museums are “involved in the practice of ‘showing and telling’”, displaying artifacts and information in purposeful ways that communicate specific cultural meaning and values.¹¹⁷ They engage in the process of exhibiting culture, but also creating and perpetuating it in the transmission of shared identity and values from one generation to the next.¹¹⁸

The first museums were private collections, existing in the sprawling homes of European nobility. Public museums became popular in the late 18th century, displaying valuable objects collected (often without consent or consultation) from foreign lands.¹¹⁹ These ‘cabinets of curiosities’ were little more than repositories for items of interest as defined by the collectors. Objects were displayed behind glass with small placards identifying their purpose and place of origin. Early public museums, according to historian Tony Bennett, were part of the “reorganization of social space within the formation of the bourgeois public sphere as well as the commodification of culture.”¹²⁰ Hoping to inspire non-landowning people to “adopt the mores and identify with the values ascribed to such collective entities as ‘the state’, ‘the nation’ and ‘the community’,”¹²¹ curiosity cabinets were created to be patronized by regular people, but were not built to reflect regular peoples’ experiences. Only men with generational wealth could afford to spend six months in the Orient hunting for treasures, and curiosity cabinets displayed this reality. Finally, they functioned to create what in the present would be referred to as historical ‘Othering’. Filled with aesthetically pleasing items from sites of European imperial expansion,

¹¹⁶ George Stocking, “Essays on Museums and Material Culture,” in *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, ed. George Stocking (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 4.

¹¹⁷ Tony Bennett, *Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 6.

¹¹⁸ Hein, “The Authority of Objects,” *Curator: The Museum Journal* 50(1) (2007): 78.

¹¹⁹ Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 19.

¹²⁰ Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 25.

¹²¹ Hein, “The Authority of Objects”, 82.

curiosity cabinets were places where the Other was constructed and consumed by a curious public. The cabinets paid little attention to contextualizing the objects in their societies of origin or acknowledging qualities these societies might possess that were superior to aspects of European society. Museums developed in Europe in a way that, like the discipline of anthropology, allowed white, middle and upper-class Europeans to create both entertainment and academic knowledge out of observing and scientifically categorizing societies of humans who were perceived as different enough to be objects of fascination.¹²²

The museum as a historical institution did not receive much in the way of academic or critical analysis until later in the 20th century. Until the 1980s, the history of museums was written mostly by museum professionals and appeared to be of little interest to historians.¹²³ The work done in museums and by historians followed different professional tracks, and while topics and information regularly overlapped, the disciplines rarely did. This was to some extent caused by a rigid separation of the disciplines based on the primary source bases used. Historians, until the last few decades, have favoured the written word – archives and documents – leaving other forms of knowledge to other areas of scholarship. Museums, in that they deal mainly in objects, tended to overlap more frequently with archaeology. To explain this separation between two seemingly similar disciplines, the theory most often put forth does not cast historians in a flattering light. Historian Randolph Starn, in an extensive historiography of museum studies, wrote: “it is no stretch, except perhaps for our professional egos, to suppose that museums actually deliver more history, more effectively more of the time, to more people than historians

¹²² Gendreau, “Museums and Media”, 38.

¹²³ Randolph Starn, “A Historian’s Brief Guide to New Museum Studies,” *American Historical Review* 110(1) (February 2005): 71; Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 3.

do.”¹²⁴ Starn believes that until the 1980s it was common for historians to consider the museum beneath them as an object of study. Since the 1980s, this has changed drastically, and a previously ignored area has received the attention it had been lacking. A related blurring of previously rigid lines has taken place within several disciplines in the social sciences, leading to historians becoming less insular and adopting methods previously associated with disciplines such as archaeology, anthropology, economics, and philosophy. The museum, too, has become a multi-disciplinary body, no longer run exclusively by curators. Modern museums are staffed with educators, artists, marketing teams, administrators, and publicists, in order to create exhibits and, more importantly, programming that appeals to the widest variety of visitors.¹²⁵ Curators often continue to possess training in archaeology, as has long been the norm, but they can also be archivists, oral historians, or trained in the physical sciences (biology, geology, etc.) depending on the type of collection they curate. A shift in the way that historians study history has led to interest in the museum as an institution that disseminates knowledge and culture, and therefore creates, maintains, and interrogates group identities within the reach of their influence.

Criticisms

The bulk of modern academic criticism of the museum as an institution comes in the form of accusations of racism, classism, cultural appropriation and theft, and the romanticization of the past. These accusations frequently have merit. Museums and historic sites are sometimes preoccupied with presenting a static, well-understood past that reflects romanticized national achievements.¹²⁶ Understandably, and perhaps unfortunately, it is ‘better business’ for a museum

¹²⁴ Starn, “A Historian’s Brief Guide to New Museum Studies,” 68.

¹²⁵ Hein, *The Museum in Transition*, 5.

¹²⁶ Stone and Molyneaux, *The Presented Past*, 15.

or a heritage site to present a familiar vision of the past rather than to challenge preconceived notions visitors may have absorbed from other sources. Nationalism and Othering have long been among the allegations levied against museums by historians and other critics, especially when considering older, more institutionalized museums whose collections include stolen objects of religious or ceremonial importance. Equally contentious are those that often exhibit non-white cultures in the Eurocentric framework of ‘civilization’ (or lack thereof), or default to the trope of the ‘noble savage’ when presenting indigenous communities of the past. Nation building is common in museums that deal in ethnography (the study of people and culture), as they often seek to tell the general chronological history of a nation, or a more distinct community within a nation such as a city or an ethnic group, from its origins to the present.¹²⁷ A further examination of how museums, particularly in the 20th century, have been among the driving forces in the construction of nations is in the next chapter.

Historians have also regarded museums as places of ‘public history’, a subsection of the discipline that is sometimes seen as a lesser kind of history. Information in a museum is usually presented at the reading level of an adolescent, so that it can be understood by a public with a wide range of abilities, and this is seen by some historians as a ‘dumbing-down’ of complex and important information. Historian Patrick O’Bannon wrote that because museums produce content that is meant to be consumed by the uneducated, historians consider the role of the public historian to be a less noble profession. O’Bannon opposes this view, and argues an important difference in skill exists between the work of an academic historian, whose work is almost entirely consumed by peers, and a public historian who must take academic work and translate it

¹²⁷ Chantal Knowles, “‘Objects as Ambassadors’: Representing Nation Through Museum Exhibitions,” in *Unpacking the Collection: Networks of Material and Social Agency in the Museum* ed. Sarah Byrne, Anne Clarke, Rodney Harrison, and Robin Torrence (New York: Springer, 2011), 242.

into language that can be consumed by a diverse audience, most of whom do not possess academic training.¹²⁸ Larry Tise, former director for the American Association for State and Local History, argued in 1989 that while academics had lost the public ear, history museums had their full attention.¹²⁹

The social fetishization of preservation can result in what Andrée Gendreau called the “mummification of public spaces,” or the idea that the only way anything can retain authenticity is if it remains unchanged.¹³⁰ Historians of material culture would argue that although a museum changes the context of an object, this should not necessitate an automatic criticism of the institution, as this criticism relies on two false assumptions: first, that objects remain static and unchanging outside of the museum space, and second, that true authenticity only exists in the realm of the unchanged. All objects change and experience shifts in their meaning and value over the course of their existence, so if the only authentic object is the completely fixed object, then authenticity cannot exist and any discussion of it is purposeless. Authenticity as a concept will be put aside until the next chapter, because as important as authenticity is in a museum setting, it is arguably more important at a heritage site, as will become clear.

Of all the ways museums have been and will continue to be criticized, the most warranted criticism may be directed at the public perception of the museum as a place of ultimate authority and infallible knowledge, and at the ways that museums have acted to uphold this perception. A survey conducted by the American Association of Museums in 2004 found that nearly 90 percent of respondents deemed museums trustworthy. By contrast, only 50 percent trusted television

¹²⁸ Patrick O'Bannon, “Nothing Succeeds Like Succession: Ponderings on the Future of Public History,” *The Public Historian* 24(3) (Summer 2002): 13.

¹²⁹ Larry Tise, quoted in Michael Wallace, “The Future of History Museums,” *History News* 44(4) (July/August 1989), 7.

¹³⁰ Gendreau, “Museums and Media,” 32.

news.¹³¹ The expertise of the authoritative and patriarchal figure of the curator seems to come with an assumed assurance that museum objects are authentic and express universal truths without the corruption of human opinion.¹³² Museums, therefore, are publicly perceived almost unequivocally as places of neutral and infallible information, and are endowed by the public with cultural capital. Programmers at the Manitoba Museum stressed the importance in a modern museum of a willingness to continually update galleries, correct mistakes, recontextualize information as social norms change, and to be honest with visitors about the process of doing so. They are at the same time aware that a museum admitting to a mistake can diminish the authority of the institution in the eyes of the public, although this is not always a negative consequence.¹³³ Museums are not, nor have they ever been, neutral spaces, and museum professionals are unlikely to claim that they are. Museums collect, conserve, and classify objects, but the manner in which those objects are displayed and explained delivers specific messages and makes arguments that the average visitor is unlikely to question.¹³⁴ ‘Slice of life’ galleries such as the *Nonsuch* Gallery are not an actual slice of life lifted from the past and transplanted under the roof of a museum. They are carefully constructed attempts to tell a story. What they include is often as important as what they leave out. Despite the public perception that objects are, if not entirely neutral, certainly *more* neutral than written word, objects do not speak for themselves. The labels that exist in museums to explain an object are as significant as the object itself. Change the label, and the object takes on new meaning.¹³⁵ Even more theoretically simple concepts such as

¹³¹ Marstine, “Introduction,” 4. This study is illustrative of the argument being made but was also conducted over a decade ago, and given the current political climate it would not be surprising if a more recent study found an even greater public distrust in mainstream news media.

¹³² Marstine, “Introduction,” 9.

¹³³ Anya Moodie-Foster, interviewed by Andrea Smorang, July 25, 2018; Rachel Erickson and Rob Gendron, interviewed by Andrea Smorang, February 1, 2019.

¹³⁴ Starn, “A Historian’s Brief Guide to New Museum Studies,” 71.

¹³⁵ Starn, “A Historian’s Brief Guide to New Museum Studies,” 81-83.

historical dates and the events they relate to are not neutral markers of infallible historical narrative, but rather they are “contests over various kinds of legitimacy, subject to the dynamics of the context in which they are articulated.”¹³⁶ Almost nothing in a museum gallery is put there by accident. Everything from the lighting to the paint colours on the walls to the physical organization of artifacts is designed to contribute to the story the gallery seeks to tell. Exhibit designers are conscious of the space in which they work and use that space deliberately.¹³⁷ And yet, the public perception of neutrality seems to persist undeterred. Given this assumption, museums that make no effort to counteract it are deserving of this criticism. Many museums in the 21st century, including the Manitoba Museum, take steps to broaden the scope of their knowledge base by including traditionally ignored sources like the oral histories of indigenous groups, and they update their older exhibits as often as budgets allow to remove outdated language or theories. The *Nonsuch* Gallery after its 2018 reopening is a good example of an older gallery being updated to modernize not only the information presented in it, but also the way that information is presented, to keep up with evolving social norms and to combat the antiquated ‘top-down’ method in which history has traditionally been presented. The final chapter will explain this in more detail.

Museums and Objects

In the earliest museums, the responsibility of curators was to the preservation of the objects in their collections. Education and entertainment of the public were secondary

¹³⁶ Melissa Aronczyk, “‘Providing Emotions since 1534’: The Politics of Visibility of Québec’s Tourism Brand,” *Québec Studies* 48 (2009/2010): 35.

¹³⁷ Saul Carliner, “Modeling Information for Three-dimensional Space: Lessons Learned from Museum Exhibit Design,” *Technical Communication* 48(1) (February 2001): 71.

functions.¹³⁸ While these museums operated more as storehouses for objects with at best a nametag to explain their existence and importance to visitors, museum practices since the 1960s have attempted to “de-materialize objects as mere semiotic indicators [and] to re-materialize them in social, political, and economic contexts ... objects are not supposed to ‘speak for themselves’ but are spoken for” by curators, gallery designers, and tour guides.¹³⁹ Most museums have continued to focus on objects as the primary medium with which to contextualize their larger narratives, but have begun using them in different ways. A common assumption in museum theory is that an untrained eye will derive more from an object than from the written word, as most people are far more connected to objects than to academic writing.¹⁴⁰ Approaching the history of museums through the lens of the objects within them requires a multidisciplinary method that includes the work of anthropologists, archaeologists, and scholars of material culture. Igor Kopytoff has also recommended the method of the biographer when telling the life story of an object, urging the interrogation of an object with questions concerning the key moments of its career, any changes in status, and possible political and social climates that might have coloured the lens with which the object has been viewed or received.¹⁴¹ Samuel Alberti suggested museum objects can be traced “from acquisition to arrangement to viewing, through the different contexts and the many changes of value incurred by these shifts.”¹⁴² Others, such as Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, would include ‘creation’ or ‘production’ on this career map, as objects do not come into being at a museum, the museum is simply the beginning of a new phase in their existence. Ethnographic objects do not begin as ethnographic objects, but rather become

¹³⁸ Hein, “The Authority of Objects,” 78.

¹³⁹ Starn, “A Historian’s Brief Guide to New Museum Studies,” 80.

¹⁴⁰ Starn, “A Historian’s Brief Guide to New Museum Studies,” 83.

¹⁴¹ Igor Kopytoff, “The Cultural Biography of Things,” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986): 66-67.

¹⁴² Samuel Alberti, “Objects and the Museum,” *Isis* 96 (2005): 561.

ethnographic when humans decide these objects have cultural or knowledge value beyond their practical purpose.¹⁴³ Creation and pre-museum use are fundamental to the life of an object, as these can be the reasons for the object ending up in a museum, although this is not always the case. Conversely, thinking of objects that were not of value in their previous lives becoming valuable to a museum, philosopher and prominent scholar of museum studies Hilde Hein wrote that museum objects have value “independently of the material properties [they] may possess and partially independently of the object’s status in an earlier incarnation.”¹⁴⁴ A piece of ancient Greek pottery might be highly valued in a museum because it is a particularly well-preserved specimen, while during its previous life, it was an inexpensive water vessel without any apparent emotional or cultural significance. Objects have social lives – they do not exist on their own devoid of relation to other things, but instead are understood and at times transformed by their interactions with and relationships to other objects. The human forces involved in this lengthy process include the object’s creators, those who owned and used it during its pre-museum life, collectors, conservators, curators, and visitors or audiences. Things are inanimate, and so they do not carry meaning on their own, but require people to give them meaning.¹⁴⁵

The *Nonsuch* and other replicas do not fall as neatly into the same category as the majority of museum objects, as they were not ‘collected’ in the way that artifacts are.¹⁴⁶ Objects that were created specifically to be museum pieces cannot be studied in quite the same way. However, the reason for the creation of the *Nonsuch* replica does not mean it had no life before

¹⁴³ Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 3.

¹⁴⁴ Hein, *The Museum in Transition*, 55.

¹⁴⁵ Alberti, “Objects and the Museum,” 561.

¹⁴⁶ The term artifact here refers to a historical object of human construction that has been given cultural or academic value by humans because it contains informational cues about the society in which it was created and used. The function of an artifact changes after it is collected for use in a museum, as its primary or original function was for practical rather than educational purposes. Artifact replicas, alternately, do usually exist for the purpose of modern education on past peoples.

its museum existence. As the previous chapter outlined, the *Nonsuch* replica, between conception, construction, and commemorative tours, lived many adventurous years before she came to her current home at the Manitoba Museum. The *Nonsuch* replica does fit into one of the categorized processes by which objects come to be owned by museums: the gift. This process can include collectors, patrons, descendants of historical figures, and institutions. It demonstrates a reciprocal relationship between benefactor and recipient, as the benefactor usually expects certain things of the recipient such as continued conservation of the object, and that the object will not be given or sold at a profit to a private collector. The gift also manifests in a paradox of giving-while-keeping, in which the benefactor transfers both the storage and preservation to an institution, while retaining symbolic ownership of an object in that the institution is usually obliged via social norms to gratefully and publicly acknowledge the donation.¹⁴⁷ While the *Nonsuch* replica is the legal property of the Manitoba Museum, the HBC's gift is continuously acknowledged, keeping the HBC an active participant in the *Nonsuch* replica's continued life cycle.

As the keepers of objects, museums become "depositories of subjectivity,"¹⁴⁸ but they are not passive actors in this process. Once in a collection, an object's life does not cease evolving. Often, incorporation into a museum collection is one of the more significant events in an object's life, as this tends to be the point in which documentation of its provenance and pre-museum life is the most extensive. Museum spaces, as already mentioned, are not static, unchanging spaces, but are dynamic and flexible, as are the objects in their collections. Once owned by a museum, objects are often restored and therefore altered, classified and categorized, and added to and removed from collections, exhibits, and galleries. Their meaning continues to shift during their

¹⁴⁷ Alberti, "Objects and the Museum," 564.

¹⁴⁸ Hein, *The Museum in Transition*, 76.

lives as museum pieces. The ways they are displayed can greatly impact their meaning. The significance of an object also varies depending on its audience, and a visitor's response to an object is comprised of the individual visitor's personal history and interests, combined with the response that the museum is striving to elicit.¹⁴⁹ Visitors are considered in museum theory as additional active participants in the construction of the meaning of objects. A kind of socialized subjectivity is maintained through the phenomenon of culturally understood objects communicating culturally understood values. This process can happen over large reaches of time and space. As an example, a person in the present who is familiar with the concept of a teapot will recognize a teapot that is 400 years old and comes from a country they have never visited. Museums naturalize "the notion that generations of humans can communicate with one another through objects that transmit real presences" and it is through this use of objects that museums both create and perpetuate culture.¹⁵⁰

It is in this dissemination of culture and knowledge that museums, predominantly since the mid 20th century, perform their most important modern function: as contact zones between academics and the wider public sphere. Mary Louise Pratt introduced the framework of the contact zone in 1992, defining these spaces as where "peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations."¹⁵¹ The museum as a contact zone embodies this model of ongoing, often changing, reciprocal relationships. These relationships, as in Pratt's model, are not always relationships of *equal* power and influence, but are always reciprocal in some capacity. The entity with power and authority (in this case, the museum) would have little purpose without the entity lacking power and authority (the

¹⁴⁹ Alberti, "Objects and the Museum," 565-568.

¹⁵⁰ Hein, *The Museum in Transition*, 76,

¹⁵¹ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 6.

visitor).¹⁵² In addition to the collection of objects, museums are collections of stories and of relationships.¹⁵³ The modern museum attempts to be an agent of social inclusion, community engagement, and education.¹⁵⁴ Hein has argued that at times, democratization of the museum has a tendency to turn into “mass indoctrination programs that prey upon people’s weaknesses and gullibility instead of enhancing their strength and imagination”.¹⁵⁵ However, the modern museum, in attempting to function as a space where the general public can interact with academia, is often structured by curators and gallery designers in a way that is meant to empower the communities it represents, rather than reflecting the distribution of power. Presenting indigenous oral histories as of equal importance to European written histories is a good example. Modern museums accomplish this to varying degrees, but this is the ideal to which they are generally striving.

The ‘Post-Museum’

As early as the 1930s, museum professionals noticed they could no longer justify their existence merely by their impressive collections.¹⁵⁶ Between the 1960s and the 1980s, many museums in the Western world redefined themselves, moving away from being storehouses for artifacts and toward becoming institutions of public learning.¹⁵⁷ In response to external pressure to defend government funding and to begin generating more of their own income, museums

¹⁵² James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 192.

¹⁵³ Sarah Byrne, Anne Clarke, Rodney Harrison, and Robin Torrence, “Networks, Agents and Objects: Frameworks for Unpacking Museum Collections,” in *Unpacking the Collection: Networks of Material and Social Agency in the Museum* ed. Sarah Byrne, Anne Clarke, Rodney Harrison, and Robin Torrence (New York: Springer, 2011), 4.

¹⁵⁴ Martin Phillips, Anna Woodham, and Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, “Foucault and museum geographies: a case study of the English ‘Renaissance in the Regions’,” *Social & Cultural Geography* 16(7) (2015): 734.

¹⁵⁵ Hein, “The Authority of Objects,” 83.

¹⁵⁶ A.E. Parr, *Mostly About Museums* (New York: The American Museum of Natural History, 1959), 9.

¹⁵⁷ Carliner, “Modeling Information for Three-dimensional Space,” 66.

since the 1960s have made a conscious effort to broaden their audience bases, hoping to draw in crowds more diverse than primarily middle to upper-class educated white people and their children, to reflect their communities more fully, and to enhance their role as educational destinations. In 1974, the International Council of Museums, under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNESCO), defined the museum as “a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates, and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of man and his environment.”¹⁵⁸ Modern museums therefore are part of a sociocultural system that creates and circulates value, and are expected (but not required) to exist within a framework that provides a public good beyond the acquisition and commodification of historical objects.¹⁵⁹ The increase in tourism in the latter half of the 20th century has been a driving factor in this reorganization as well, with museums in the modern age competing for both customers and government resources against other leisure activities, and against each other.¹⁶⁰ Over half of the museums in the Western world have been opened since 1950,¹⁶¹ which is part of the ‘heritage boom’ that will be discussed in the next chapter. Both museums that existed before this shift and museums that have been opened since are increasingly striving to present themselves as cultural marketplaces and centres that provide vital public services, as well as architectural showpieces.¹⁶² The Canadian Museum for Human Rights, opened in Winnipeg in 2014, is an excellent example of a new museum using architecture to

¹⁵⁸ Quoted in Hein, *The Museum in Transition*, 2.

¹⁵⁹ Hein, *The Museum in Transition*, 35.

¹⁶⁰ Graham Black, *The Engaging Museum. Developing Museums for Visitor Involvement* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 266-267.

¹⁶¹ Stephen Weil, *Rethinking the museum and other meditations* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), 3.

¹⁶² Starn, “A Historian’s Brief Guide to New Museum Studies,” 91.

both assist in telling the stories the museum wishes to tell, and asserting itself as visually iconic as a focal point on the downtown skyline.

From the mid-20th century to the present, careers of the middle to upper-classes usually require more mental labour than physical, and so leisure time tends to be occupied with experiences meant to be mental diversions, rather than physical relaxation. The 20th century practice of relaxing by ‘doing nothing’ has become less common in more recent years and forms of ‘adventure tourism’ have increased, as has ‘intellectual tourism’ offered by institutions such as art galleries, history museums, and historic sites like ruins.¹⁶³ Martha Norkunas argued that in the post-industrial world, middle-class tourism “absorbed some of the social functions of religion as it became an essentially religious quest for authenticity. The tourist seeks ... to enter the intimate space of another in order to have an experience of real life.”¹⁶⁴ Demographics are at play here, as well. A study conducted by the Canadian Tourism Commission in 2007 found that women are more likely than men to seek culture tourism. This has been in part facilitated by the growing trend of women travelling either alone or with friends, rather than with a male romantic partner.¹⁶⁵ These statistics hold in museum demographic patterns, where adult women visit far more often than adult men. This can be explained in part by the fact that children make up a large percentage of overall visitors, and more often than not are accompanied by either their mothers or a school teacher, of which the majority are women.¹⁶⁶ Most museum visitors come from affluent households. Adults who visit museums, especially those who visit without children

¹⁶³ John Falk, *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2009), 41.

¹⁶⁴ Martha Norkunas, *The Politics of Public Memory. Tourism, History, and Ethnicity in Monterey, California* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 2.

¹⁶⁵ Research Resolutions & Consulting Ltd. *U.S. Heritage Tourism Enthusiasts: A Special Analysis of the Travel Activities and Motivation Survey (TAMS)* (Ottawa: The Canadian Tourism Commission, 2007), quoted in Falk, *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience*, 42.

¹⁶⁶ Statistics Canada reported in 2018 that 84% of elementary school teachers and 59% of secondary school teachers were women. “Back to school... by the numbers,” Statistics Canada, September 7, 2018, accessed August 11, 2019, https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/dai/smr08/2018/smr08_220_2018.

accompanying them, are more likely to hold a post-secondary degree. Finally, museum visitors are mostly white, although in more ethnically diverse countries like Canada, non-white visitors are lately comprising a greater proportion of visits.¹⁶⁷ Museum visiting is categorized in tourism studies as a ‘life cycle’ activity, which means that adults who visit museums are more likely to have been taken to museums as children by their parents, and in turn are more likely to repeat the activity with their own children. Leisure tourism often contains aspects of comfort and familiarity – such as revisiting a museum, or visiting a new museum that focuses on a topic the visitor is already interested in.¹⁶⁸ Museums are also among the most memorable of tourist activities. In study after study, as John Falk wrote on the subject, “beyond all reason, people seem to be able to remember their visits to museums ... days, weeks, months, and even years later, often in amazing detail.”¹⁶⁹ In his study, children as young as eight years old were found to be able to recall impressive detail about school trips to museums from years earlier. Museums are significant sources of public knowledge in the developed world, but they are not universal sources of public knowledge. Specific groups of people are highly influenced by them, while others visit museums rarely, if at all.

Museums in the modern age are expected by visitors and benefactors to evolve to correspond with ever-changing values and social norms, and to constantly rethink their policies with regard to diversity of representation. After the 1960s, many museums widened the pool from which they drew their knowledge, to correct for a history of privileging the upper classes and ignoring other groups. According to Hein, they “diluted professional scholarship and skilled professionalism with personal anecdote and informal storytelling. They replaced their

¹⁶⁷ Falk, *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience*, 28.

¹⁶⁸ Falk, *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience*, 51.

¹⁶⁹ Falk, *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience*, 133.

dependency on ‘authentic’ objects and turned instead to reconstructions based on oral histories and experiential recollection”.¹⁷⁰ In part because of a continued assumed authority, museums occupy a privileged position in civil society, and many modern museums see their role as no longer just presenting facts and information in a way that appears neutral, but using their platform to address social, cultural, and political issues.¹⁷¹ Smaller museums that focus more narrowly on a city or a community rather than a nation perform a fundamental civic service. Through objects and collections, this type of museum “preserves and ratifies the values and meanings of the community’s past and presents these to the community for its benefit.”¹⁷² Knowledge for the sake of knowledge is no longer sufficient, as museums often seek to use education for the betterment of the communities they represent, with emphasis on historically marginalized and oppressed communities such as women, racial minorities, and indigenous populations. The ‘post-museum’ (a term coined by professor of museum studies Eilean Hooper-Greenhill) seeks to share power with the communities it serves, a mandate that is most important in cases of museum collections containing artifacts that have been unethically sourced.¹⁷³

The most noticeable change in museums since the 1960s is a shift in focus from objects to experiences. While objects are still the source base, they are now often used as a vehicle for the transmission of stories and experiences. Experiential galleries, of which the *Nonsuch* Gallery is an early example, employ multiple senses and intend to envelop the visitor in a capsule of time-travel that allows visitors to step figuratively into the shoes of another person. Objects are animated within these galleries, as the space around the object is developed so that the artifacts

¹⁷⁰ Hein, *The Museum in Transition*, 61.

¹⁷¹ Jennifer Carter, Christine Castle, and Barbara Soren, “Taking stock: museum studies and museum practices in Canada,” *Museum Management and Curatorship* 26(5) (December 2011): 416.

¹⁷² Mary Tivy, “Museums, Visitors and the Reconstruction of the Past in Ontario,” *Material History Review* 37 (1993): 36.

¹⁷³ Marstine, “Introduction,” 19.

(or replicas of artifacts) elicit specific emotional responses from visitors.¹⁷⁴ Display of artifacts is now only a small part of the total visitor experience. These galleries “aspire to the vividness of experience, to immersion in an environment, to an appeal to all the senses, to action and interactivity, to excitement, and beyond that to aliveness.”¹⁷⁵ They can be extraordinarily powerful, in terms of both enjoyment and memorability of experience, and also in communicating stories and histories. A feeling of realism in a gallery is a “powerful strategy for presenting an event in as incontrovertible a manner as possible.”¹⁷⁶ If it looks real, then it is real, according to the audience. This focus on experience is not an entirely modern device, however, it has become increasingly more common for traditional museums to construct this type of gallery since the 1960s. Factors that affect the visitor experience include cultural identification, involvement and engagement, variation of stimulus, and perceived authenticity. A successful experiential gallery requires the use of immersion to create a space in which visitors feel as if they are temporarily part of the story the gallery is seeking to tell. Their active participation in the performance of the gallery is crucial to its success.¹⁷⁷ While earlier history museums could be text-heavy, the modern museum assumes that visitors will skim the didactic panels, and so an experiential gallery should allow the visitor to absorb the general topic without having to read every word.¹⁷⁸ History museums, responding to the same pressures as all other types of museums, have grown increasingly interactive. Moments in history recreated as they would be at a heritage site are becoming more common within museums, in an attempt to construct a

¹⁷⁴ Hein, *The Museum in Transition*, 65.

¹⁷⁵ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture*, 232.

¹⁷⁶ Sharon MacDonald, “A People’s Story. Heritage, identity and authenticity,” in *Touring Cultures, Transformations of Travel and Theory* ed. Chris Rojek and John Urry (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 171.

¹⁷⁷ Christina Goulding, “The museum environment and the visitor experience,” *European Journal of Marketing* 34(3) (2000): 270.

¹⁷⁸ Carliner, “Modeling Information for Three-dimensional Space,” 70-71; Marstine, “Introduction,” 19.

theatrical experience that communicates the desired narrative more tangibly and memorably than written word or inanimate objects.¹⁷⁹

While historically museums did not wish to see themselves as places of public learning,¹⁸⁰ the post-museum often prioritizes education. However, there is no single view of what that priority entails or prescribed pattern of how to achieve it, so it varies greatly between institutions.¹⁸¹ In any case, modern museums recognize that the most valuable commodity they offer is knowledge and learning.¹⁸² The objects are no longer the primary focus, they are instead primary sources that inform the larger narratives. Hooper-Greenhill argued that in order for museums to retain their relevance in society, education must become the most important thing they accomplish.¹⁸³ The use of museums by schools has been conceptualized by museum theorists as a “mobilization of culture that includes both movement inwards toward the museum by groups of teachers and pupils from schools located at varying distances from it, and movement outwards from the museum to schools located in both rural and urban communities.”¹⁸⁴ The Manitoba Museum has developed educational programming that is attended by an estimated 80,000 students annually.¹⁸⁵ The Museum’s fur trade program is its most requested by teachers – unsurprising, given the prevalence of fur trade history in school curriculums in Manitoba – and the *Nonsuch* Gallery is the highlight of this program.¹⁸⁶ *Nonsuch* Gallery programming for school groups is separated into categories by age and is tailored to fit

¹⁷⁹ Hein, *The Museum in Transition*, 31-32.

¹⁸⁰ Hooper-Greenhill, “The ‘art of memory’ and learning in the museum: The challenge of GCSE,” *International Journal of Museum Management and Curatorship* 7(2) (June 1988), 133.

¹⁸¹ Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and education: purpose, pedagogy, performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 2-3.

¹⁸² Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, 2.

¹⁸³ Hooper-Greenhill, “The ‘art of memory’ and learning in the museum,” 133.

¹⁸⁴ Hooper-Greenhill, Martin Phillips, and Anna Woodham, “Museums, schools and geographies of cultural value,” *Cultural Trends* 18(2) (June 2009): 150.

¹⁸⁵ Kavanagh, “Manitoba Museum campaign gets major gift.”

¹⁸⁶ Anya-Moodie-Foster interview.

the curriculum of each grade so that the information can be related in ways they will understand. For example, a Grade One class would not be expected to understand the complexities of fur trade economics, but they can engage in discussions about methods of travel, and they can use the *Nonsuch* Gallery to consider how the world of the 17th century looks and functions differently from their own. By Grades Ten and Eleven, they are more equipped for discussions of the social and political history of Canada, immigration, how indigenous groups have been treated, and the power of companies like the HBC and the North West Company.¹⁸⁷ These programs contribute to local identity and national heritage. They are indicative of a museum's most powerful function: the ability to not only *tell* history, but *make* history through strategic curation of which histories to prioritize and which to leave out. Museums are active in shaping knowledge, using their collections to construct visual narratives that produce views of both the past and the present. They are also active in identity building. This will be elaborated on in the following chapters, as acts of heritage building and public commemoration combine to create a space in which a gallery like that of the *Nonsuch* can be effective in the construction of local identity.

¹⁸⁷ Manitoba Museum Archives, Box: Gallery Info, Folder: School Programs.

Chapter Three – Heritage Tourism, ‘Genuine Fakes’, and Nation-Building

The HBC spent the first half of the 20th century taking steps to evolve from a fur trading company to a department store chain catering to the growing Canadian middle-class market. In 1965, the HBC changed the name of their department stores from ‘Hudson’s Bay Company’ to ‘The Bay’. This was part of a rebranding effort in preparation for the Company’s 300th anniversary and included expanding dramatically into new urban markets to compete with other retailers. The effort required modernisation, a concerted appeal to younger shoppers and appealing aesthetically and functionally to the ‘hip consumerism’ of the 1960s.¹⁸⁸ To many older Canadians, the HBC renaming their department stores was a betrayal of the Company’s history that had been woven into the history of the country with some degree of success.¹⁸⁹ The name change occurred just one year before the *Nonsuch* replica had been transformed from abstract idea to concrete plan. On the surface, this perhaps seems contradictory. While the HBC was in preparation for a large-scale, international celebration of their 17th century origins with all their ties to settler colonialism and European exceptionalism, the Company was also simultaneously attempting to distance itself from that very history by rebranding the department stores and publicising their modernity. In closer examination of the modern function of heritage, this contradiction makes more sense. This chapter will clarify the important heritage/modernity paradox, alongside the related ideas of nation-building and authenticity at heritage sites.

¹⁸⁸ James Opp, “‘Branding ‘the Bay/la Baie’: Corporate Identity, the Hudson’s Bay Company, and the Burden of History in the 1960s,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 96(2) (June 2015): 225.

¹⁸⁹ Opp, “Branding ‘the Bay’,” 224.

Heritage

The term ‘heritage’ in its contemporary sense is relatively new, widely used only since the 1960s.¹⁹⁰ In previous centuries it referred to the transfer of land and wealth, usually between parents and children, in the practice of family inheritance and estate taxation. It was almost exclusive to the ruling classes, and indicated sovereignty over land and human lives.¹⁹¹ In its more modern context, heritage describes the celebration of local histories and methods of social belonging woven together by shared historical roots.¹⁹² It venerates a society’s origins, and promotes or overlooks certain pieces of history depending on the desired narrative outcome. The practice of preserving and restoring abandoned objects and structures is also fairly new, as a response to the increase in the pace of technological advancement over the last few centuries.¹⁹³ Scholarly work on heritage tends to come not from historians, but from anthropologists and human geographers, who often look more closely at culture than historians.¹⁹⁴ It is a ‘value-adding’ industry, in that it endows value to practices and technologies that have become obsolete, and protects from disappearance things that would otherwise disappear because they have been replaced through technological advancement. Sites, buildings, objects, technologies, and ways of life that no longer sustain themselves as they formerly did are remade, becoming economically viable by becoming representations of themselves.¹⁹⁵ Heritage is not a tangible ‘thing’, but rather an action. It is “a cultural and social practice through which objects, places, or

¹⁹⁰ Robert Lumley, “The Debate on Heritage Reviewed,” in *Towards the Museum of the Future: New European Perspectives* ed. Roger Miles and Lauro Zavala (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 60.

¹⁹¹ Lowenthal, “Identity, Heritage, and History” in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* ed. John Gillis (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 43.

¹⁹² Alan Gordon, “Heritage and Authenticity: The Case of Ontario’s Sainte-Marie-among-the-Hurons,” *Canadian Historical Review* 85(3) (2004): 508; Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (London: Viking, 1997), 3-4.

¹⁹³ Starn, “Authenticity and historic preservation: towards an authentic history,” *History of the Human Sciences* 15(1) (2002): 3.

¹⁹⁴ Lumley, “The Debate on Heritage Reviewed,” 61.

¹⁹⁵ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture*, 151.

practices rooted in the past are endowed with meaning.”¹⁹⁶ It is also used extensively by governments for nation-building, as it allows for coherence in the imagination of similarity among groups of people who might have nothing in common but their citizenship. At best, heritage binds communities together via tradition, which is an important function for a species as fundamentally social as ours. It bonds us with neighbours, teaches us to be empathetic to people we will never meet, and allows us to conceptualize our place in the world by anchoring our foundation in a shared past. At worst, heritage can be oppressive and xenophobic, with its roots often in institutional patriarchy, Eurocentrism, and white supremacy. It also can obscure the inconvenient or unflattering realities of the past in favour of presenting a more easily marketable version of historical events or eras. It can focus on the ‘good’ parts of history and intentionally omit the ‘bad’, manipulating the uncritical consumer into the belief that the ‘bad’ parts either never happened at all, or that they were at least significantly exaggerated.

Constructions of heritage often depend on the glorification and sanitization of the past, and have been an important source of legitimization for political parties, legal systems, and the construction of patriotism and nationalism in both their benign and more harmful forms. Opposition to the heritage industry is largely reminiscent of opposition to the museum industry, with criticisms claiming heritage romanticizes, sterilises, and exalts the past, and chooses to simplify that which complicates the desired narrative, if not outright ignores histories that are objectionable. In a generally scathing review of the postmodern museum industry, archaeologist Kevin Walsh accuses heritage tourism of promoting or even causing “uncritical patriotism which numbs our ability to understand and communicate with other nations.”¹⁹⁷ Walsh also blames the

¹⁹⁶ Aurélie Éliisa Gfeller, “The Authenticity of Heritage: Global Norm-Making at the Crossroads of Cultures,” *American Historical Review* 122(3) (2017): 762.

¹⁹⁷ Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, 1.

heritage industry and the nationalism it promotes for “society’s unquestioning acceptance of the need to go to war” as museums and heritage sites, he argues, present history in a jingoistic framework that fosters and promotes ‘us versus them’ mentalities. Heritage in the Western world is almost entirely created within a Eurocentric context. It often prioritizes European histories and presents non-European histories within the framework of European understandings of the past. It rarely presents all available information, but curates information based on both what site or gallery designers think visitors will like and dislike, and also on how much they believe visitors will read or listen to.¹⁹⁸ On its face this is not intrinsically problematic, as no telling of history could include every available detail, but what is left out at heritage sites can be as informative as what is included, especially when uncomfortable pieces of history are ignored in order to present a ‘nicer’ version of the past. Heritage often operates with a motive that is not made clear to the audience – whether that motive is nation-building, the celebration of certain kinds of history in order to delegitimize others, or the promotion of patriotism. At times, heritage is used to enforce the status quo by spreading a comforting nostalgia that discourages change, sustains loyalty to the state or nation, and encourages or shames newcomers into assimilating.¹⁹⁹ In locations where heritage is a topic of controversy within local populations, such as the southern United States, heritage sites can justifiably be accused of promoting constructions of history that are at odds with the facts – as an example, Civil War monuments that promote the “states’ rights” argument that has been largely debunked but relentlessly persists. Canada has been guilty of this as well. Canadian heritage sites often celebrate the perseverance, ingenuity, and pioneer spirit of European settlers, while ignoring the displacement and mistreatment of indigenous populations

¹⁹⁸ Stephen Boyd, “Cultural and heritage tourism in Canada: Opportunities, principles and challenges,” *Tourism and Hospitality Research* 3(3) (2002): 211; Norkunas, *The Politics of Public Memory*, 5.

¹⁹⁹ Lowenthal, “Past Time, Present Place,” 33.

that has caused historical trauma lasting to the present. Heritage in post-colonial states, including Canada, is often reflective of a “particular ideology that legitimates the current social structure ... that those of middle- and upper middle-class, white European descent are naturally and logically in power as a result of the forward linear movement of history.”²⁰⁰ More simply, some heritage sites present social Darwinism, as though colonial expansion and settlement was a battle between two societies on equal footing, and the ‘superior’ society won. It is only recently (perhaps since the 2015 release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report) that some heritage sites in Canada have begun taking steps to rectify these injustices, the Manitoba Museum among them.²⁰¹

In response to the way historians have criticized the heritage industry, Alan Gordon has argued that historians have similarly romanticized their own discipline in an effort to set it above related activities, viewing their work as objective and noble, while they look down upon the heritage industry as a manufacturer of history that is uncritical and can be commodified.²⁰² In 1994, historian Raphael Samuel complained that “heritage-baiting has become a favourite sport of the metropolitan intelligentsia,”²⁰³ describing in detail his distaste for this elitist response to a popular industry and refuting the idea that education and entertainment can only exist in the same space if the education aspect is highly compromised. He accused historians of fetishizing archive-based research and mirroring the very practices they find unacceptable in the heritage industry by “arranging facts and constructing the contexts of their evidence,” but doing so with

²⁰⁰ Norkunas, *The Politics of Public Memory*, 8.

²⁰¹ Too numerous to list here, the steps taken in Winnipeg businesses, schools, and cultural institutions is outlined in a June 2019 progress report. Institutions of heritage were specially called to action by the TRC, and Winnipeg’s largest museums have responded by developing cultural sensitivity training, working closely with indigenous artists, scholars, and community leaders, and developing new educational programming. “Partner Goals & Progress Report, June 2019,” *Indigenous Relations*, <https://winnipeg.ca/indigenous/WIA/PartnerGoalsReport.pdf>.

²⁰² Gordon, “Heritage and Authenticity,” 509.

²⁰³ Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory* (New York: Verso, 1994), 260.

the authority granted by universities so that their work appears to be the result of a more elevated discipline.²⁰⁴ As the past cannot exist in the present, attempts to recreate it will always be flawed. While written history presents a flawed intellectual view of what happened in the past, heritage sites are often a flawed physical copy of what happened in the past, and both involve the interpretation and representation of past events for present consumption.²⁰⁵ One is not necessarily a 'better' way to do history than the other, they simply apply different methods tailored to their expected audiences. The criticisms that heritage sites manufacture history are less common now than they were decades ago, before it had become more widely accepted within postmodern academic circles that the truth of history is not absolute, and that inherent bias affects even those who strive to be as objective as possible. More current critiques often argue that commercialization spoils what is sacred about heritage, especially when it happens at historic sites like ancient ruins that were actually used by past societies, as opposed to modern reconstructions that were built to be tourist destinations.²⁰⁶

The strengths of heritage include allowing for a more personal connection to the past. While history is, ideally, the faithful retelling of things that happened, heritage allows for myths of origin to pass through time and gives groups a sense of purpose and belonging.²⁰⁷ The modern zest for heritage tourism follows, at least in part, a tradition of humans seeking connection to the past that has existed since before recorded history. Some of the earliest members of our species buried their dead in ways that suggest memory and remembrance by surviving family group members. Societies across the globe, both ancient and modern, revere or worship their ancestors.

²⁰⁴ Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, 3, 259.

²⁰⁵ Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, 112; Lionel Bobot, "Negotiating authenticity: Cathar heritage tourism," *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 7(2) (2012): 164.

²⁰⁶ Gordon, "Heritage and Authenticity," 526.

²⁰⁷ Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, 128.

Stories were passed down through generations, and painted on the walls of caves. Humans have, it would seem, an intrinsic desire to feel connected to those who have come before us.

Heritage sites, like museums, also allow for learning about the past in accessible ways. The average person would perhaps not be able to make sense of a peer-reviewed scholarly article any more than the average person could perform complicated medical procedures, but heritage sites and museums offer more accessible means of learning and education. Academic history, Samuel argues, is usually a hierarchical, ‘top-down’ construction of knowledge. Even when an attempt is made to construct history ‘from the bottom’, the people doing that work are often celebrated, established historians who are seen as paying lay people the compliment of taking their oral histories and popular histories into account.²⁰⁸ Heritage sites are certainly flawed, but they are also democratizing. In addition to history, heritage also draws upon rich traditions of mythologies and folklores, incorporating a wider range of perspectives and giving authority to different kinds of knowledge that have historically been seen as inferior.²⁰⁹ Samuel maintains that history is not the invention of the historian, but rather a social form of knowledge that was appropriated, complicated, and claimed by the professionalization of academic disciplines, and then kept away from the very people whose histories were being studied.²¹⁰ Heritage sites constitute a returning of local history to the people.

The ‘heritage boom’, as it is often called, is usually situated from the 1960s to the 1980s and describes a rapid expansion in sites purporting to be physical representations of the past.²¹¹

The popularity of the heritage industry in the middle of the 20th century was part of a larger

²⁰⁸ Samuel, *Theatres of Memory* 5.

²⁰⁹ G.J. Ashworth and P.J. Larkham, “A Heritage for Europe. The need, the task, the contribution,” in *Building A New Heritage. Tourism, Culture and Identity in the New Europe* ed. G.J. Ashworth and P.J. Larkham, 2. This is not always done with good intentions: less institutionalized types of histories such as indigenous oral traditions can be misused by those who are not interested in democratization.

²¹⁰ Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, 8.

²¹¹ Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, 94.

expansion of leisure and tourism after the Second World War. While tourism existed prior to this period, it was not always an activity the middle and lower-classes were able to participate in until the 1950s. In Canada, rapid population growth, suburban expansion, and demographic changes in the 1960s and 70s resulted in nostalgia for the imagined ‘simpler times’ of the previous decades, and heritage recreations multiplied accordingly.²¹² In Ontario, the number of small community museums doubled in just seven years, between 1965 and 1972.²¹³ Open air museums or living history museums originally rose in popularity in Europe and North America in the 1920s, and but their numbers increased dramatically after the 1960s.²¹⁴ These sites are designed to recreate a place of local historical significance. Ideally, they would be located on the physical ground of the original site, and many are, but this is not essential. Winnipeg’s Fort Gibraltar, for example, is a recreation of a 19th century North-West Company trading post and was built across the Red River from its original site. Common heritage sites include military forts, homes owned by people of local or national fame (authors, politicians, etc.), and reconstructions that look like extensive movie sets, like ‘pioneer villages’ or ‘frontier towns.’

A frequently cited example as the catalyst for the heritage boom is not a historical site at all but an amusement park. Disneyland, opened in southern California in 1955, borrowed the methodology of American heritage sites like Colonial Williamsburg and popularized the idea of an expansive, immersive setting that allowed visitors to step into another world. Disney’s Mainstreet USA, while loosely based on Walt Disney’s childhood memories of Marceline, Missouri, is not a replica of any street that ever existed but a symbolic representation of the highly idealized small-town America at the beginning of the 20th century. It combines “national

²¹² Jennifer Bonnell, “A Comforting Past: Skirting Conflict and Complexity at Montgomery’s Inn,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 42(1) (Winter 2008): 128.

²¹³ Bonnell, “A Comforting Past,” 135.

²¹⁴ Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, 96; Bonnell, “A Comforting Past,” 133.

propaganda with infantile regression”²¹⁵ and taps successfully into what Walsh calls “nostalgia arousal”: the manipulation of the visitor’s assumed longing for a simplified version of a gentler past that never really existed in the first place but has been constructed in various media including Hollywood films and classic novels. Successful heritage sites replicate this model, with many attractions constructed since striving to attain the ‘Disney effect’. ²¹⁶ They are time capsules severed from history, and deliver as their most effective attraction the ability to put oneself in a stranger’s shoes, even if that stranger lived centuries ago. They allow for visitors to indulge in their desire to escape both the present and their own lives, as if going on a brief vacation from their present circumstances, visiting not another physical location but another temporal reality.

Authenticity

Of the many different components that contribute to the success of a museum or heritage site, the perception of authenticity by the visitor is the most important. The concept of authenticity is a complicated one, and it takes on different meanings depending on the context in which it is used. Authenticity is considered one of the primary goals of a museum, but it is arguably far more important to convey at heritage sites. Heritage sites with the largest numbers of visitors are usually the ones that manage the most successfully to convey or perform authenticity.²¹⁷ As mentioned in the previous chapter, museums have been given a level of authority in postmodern societies that renders them almost indisputable places of knowledge, and

²¹⁵ Jim McGuigan, *Culture and the Public Sphere* (London: Routledge, 1996), 118.

²¹⁶ Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, 97-101. Anya Moodie-Foster, Manitoba Museum Learning and Engagement Supervisor, described the *Nonsuch* Gallery as being similar to Harry Potter World at Universal Studios Theme Park, in its immersive quality.

²¹⁷ Gordon, “Heritage and Authenticity,” 510; Deepak Chhabra, Robert Healy, Erin Sills, “Staged Authenticity and Heritage Tourism, *Annals of Tourism Research* 30(3) (2003): 703.

so it is unlikely for a visitor to question the authenticity of objects or stories they find in a museum gallery. An unspoken code of academic ethics prevents museums and those who work in them from lying about the objects in their collections, but they *could*, and would likely get away with it, as the average visitor is not going to demand proof of the claims made in a museum gallery. Heritage sites, as a newer invention, do not have this automatic air of authority. They often make use of replicas or recreations rather than artifacts, and ‘real’ historic structures are often restored and updated with newer technologies and conveniences, which can lessen their authenticity. Heritage sites also involve a greater degree of performance, and so the construction of authenticity requires more effort and is subjected to a stronger burden of proof.

A public desire for authenticity is not unique to heritage tourism. The modern demand for authentic items includes travel souvenirs, ethnic food, and original art, and it has become a device regularly used in marketing a wide range of consumer goods and experiences.²¹⁸ In the last century, technological advances and increases in globalization have eased the effective simulation of authenticity in a way that might have lessened its appeal – a person no longer needs to travel to Mexico to consume authentic Mexican cuisine, for example – however the demand for authenticity has increased, rather than declined. While visitor surveys are never infallible, they can still provide insight. For instance, a 2004 consumer research study conducted in the United Kingdom found almost 98% of respondents surveyed at two museums mentioned authenticity unprompted when asked what they liked about their visit.²¹⁹ Outside the museum, authenticity is regularly used in the description of ephemeral things like human personalities or reactions. When perceived to be genuine, rather than put on or exaggerated to conform to social

²¹⁸ Grayson and Martinec, “Consumer Perceptions of Iconicity and Indexicality,” 296; Thyne and Hede, “Approaches to managing co-production for the co-creation of value in a museum,” 1480.

²¹⁹ Grayson and Martinec, 299.

norms or for some other ulterior purpose, an emotional response is usually better received by others. Broadly speaking, that which is deemed authentic is granted more cultural and social value than things deemed inauthentic. Authenticity is considered by museums to be fundamental to their existence and a key concept at the core of their value,²²⁰ but there is no single definition or accepted framework by which authenticity should be used and explained to visitors. As an exact definition is difficult to ascertain and a fixed set of criteria for authenticity does not exist, it is sometimes most notable by its absence. It is much easier in some cases to instantly perceive when something is *inauthentic* than it is to determine exactly why it is inauthentic.²²¹

The word authenticity derives from two component parts, both originating in classical Greek: *auto*, referring to the ‘self’, and *hentes*, meaning doer or being. *Autoéntēs* was used to describe self-governance or the ability to have mastery over one’s own actions, most commonly in the context of the absolute power of an Emperor or referring to a person who committed a crime of their own volition and by their own hand. The words *autocratic* and *authority* derive from this same base, referring to that which has qualities that are widely accepted, complete, and not vulnerable to questioning or scrutiny. To be authentic in the traditional sense is to “identify with, or claim ownership of, a narrative of origins, or a sense of original and unadulterated selfhood.”²²² Authenticity in its modern form emerged in the late 18th century, however even this is not a modern concept. As early as the 9th century, religious relics in Europe generated an early form of tourism, relying on the belief that bodily remains or personal effects of a saint carried meaning and, in some cases, mystical power and supernatural abilities as a result of their

²²⁰ Thyne and Hede, “Approaches to managing co-production for the co-creation of value in a museum,” 1479.

²²¹ Gordon, “Heritage and Authenticity,” 529.

²²² Maiken Umbach and Mathew Humphrey, *Authenticity: The Cultural History of a Political Concept* (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 1.

physical connection to a holy person.²²³ When objects are authentic, in its most widely understood construction, the word is used to separate ‘real’ from ‘fake’, or artifact from replica. Authentic objects are what they purport to be. Their roots are known and can be verified, and institutions are expected to be transparent about all information related to the object because it is assumed there is no reason to conceal any of the known facts.²²⁴ This definition assumes an immovable standard by which something can be determined either authentic or inauthentic, although such a standard does not exist.²²⁵ As ‘real’ and ‘fake’ are both highly relative terms, with meanings dependent on context and perception, upon interrogation these seemingly simple concepts are much more complex.

There are several distinct types of authenticity used in the field of heritage tourism. They are usually grouped into two subcategories: *objective authenticity* (more often used in the context of a museum or art gallery to refer to whether an object is an ‘original’), and *constructive authenticity* (in which authenticity is recognized as a social construct and determined by a social process). Both can be used to describe the use of objects, but while the objective authenticity of objects is concerned with the originality of those objects, the constructive authenticity of objects is concerned with the versions of history the objects are used to perform or convey. As suggested by the name, objects that are objectively authentic possess objectively measurable qualities, such as scientifically accepted carbon dating, recorded origins, or known chains of custody. Constructive authenticity, similarly and unsurprisingly, requires construction – it requires points of view, beliefs, and socially negotiated meanings.²²⁶

²²³ Grayson and Martinec, “Consumer Perceptions of Iconicity and Indexicality,” 296.

²²⁴ Charles Lindholm, *Culture and authenticity* (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Publication, 2008), 2.

²²⁵ Umbach and Humphrey, *Authenticity*, 96.

²²⁶ Ning Wang, “Rethinking Authenticity in Tourism Experience,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 26(2) (1999): 350-352.

Indexical and *iconic authenticity*, explained briefly in Chapter One, are examples of objective authenticity. An object can be both indexical and iconic at once, and many museum objects are. As an example, consider a chair produced in London in the 19th century. It might be indexical, in that it is literally from the Victorian era, and iconic, in that it appears stylistically to be typical of the Victorian era. If it was built in Victorian London but in an architectural style borrowed from China, it would only be indexically authentic. Alternately, if it is a modern replica, it could be both indexical and iconic (built using historical techniques and stylistically typical), or only iconic (mass produced by Ikea but Victorian in appearance).²²⁷ While generally indexically authentic objects are considered more valuable, the icon is more complex than the index because it requires context and wider knowledge to be understood – it holds no physical or temporal connection to another time or space, but rather possesses similarities that require the observer to be aware of other objects and broader context. However, when that broader context is known, iconic authenticity can become the more valuable of the two, as it fosters a perceived connection with the past by strengthening prior knowledge of the past: an object that adheres to a visitor's expectations increases their feeling of connection with it.²²⁸ Multiple studies across different types of heritage sites have found that tourists choose to see authenticity in things that confirm what they already think they know.²²⁹ The *Nonsuch* replica is indexical and iconic, although many other replicas of historic ships have been constructed with modern tools and techniques, rendering them only iconically authentic.

Other types of objective authenticity include *architectural and spatial* (buildings or structures that are being actively preserved in their current form, such as ancient ruins), and

²²⁷ This example is borrowed from Grayson and Martinec, "Consumer Perceptions of Iconicity and Indexicality," 298, but explained in more detail.

²²⁸ Grayson and Martinec, "Consumer Perceptions of Iconicity and Indexicality," 302.

²²⁹ Stroma Cole, "Beyond Authenticity and Commodification," *Annals of Tourism Research* 34(4) (2007): 952.

tactile and visual ('real' objects that visitors are allowed to touch, such as a beaver pelt – at heritage sites. These objects are often not historical artifacts). Tactile authenticity is especially effective, as the sense of touch is rarely used in the process of learning after infancy, and the incorporation of objects that a visitor can touch increases both perceived authenticity and memorability of experience.²³⁰

The *Nonsuch* replica is an example of what David Brown refers to as a 'genuine fake'.²³¹ Such objects complicate the concept of objective authenticity. While the *Nonsuch* at the Manitoba Museum is not the original 17th century HBC ship, it is also not a 'fake' in that it is not *claiming* to be the original *Nonsuch*. It is a replica, but it is not a mass-produced replica of something that currently exists, like the Eiffel Tower keychains sold at souvenir carts in Paris. It is one of the finest and most indexically authentic replicas in existence and there is no other replica exactly like it, and so therefore it is literally unique and has value in the way that most fakes do not. The Manitoba Museum is not alone in using replicas, nor is it alone in the use of miniature dioramas, mannequins, models, artists' representations, videos, or simulations to convey meaning and information. This use of props and recreations helps to effectively tell stories, rather than the simpler display of objects.²³² At times the use of replicas can enhance the authenticity of experience, as touching them is less likely to be prohibited, adding tactile authenticity to the sensory experience. Museums regularly use the phrase *would have* as a method of controlling this perception of authenticity – on a mannequin, we may see a dress that was not made in the 1920s but looks like what women *would have* worn. While the Manitoba

²³⁰ Kevin Walby and Justin Piche, "Staged authenticity in penal history sites across Canada," *Tourist Studies* 15(3) (2015): 237-239.

²³¹ David Brown, "Genuine Fakes" in *The Tourist Image: Myths and Myth Making in Tourism*, ed. Tom Selwyn (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Wiley, 1996), 33-47, discussed in Wang, "Rethinking Authenticity in Tourism Experience," 357.

²³² Thyne and Hede, "Approaches to managing co-production for the co-creation of value in a museum," 1481; Cortney Pachet interview.

Museum has never claimed the *Nonsuch* replica is the original ship that crossed the Atlantic in 1668, it has gone to great lengths to present the appearance of authenticity by surrounding it in a life-sized diorama that ‘transports’ the visitor to 1668. Museums frame all objects, regardless of their level of authenticity, in a way that controls the process of perception. ‘Original’ objects are regularly restored or reconstructed in some way, and are always subject to curatorial interpretations, rendering the distinction between ‘real’ and ‘fake’ museum objects quite blurry and perhaps not a particularly useful distinction.

Museums and heritage sites have prioritized objective authenticity for as long as they have existed, but in the last few decades they are increasingly devoting attention and resources to constructive authenticity, which is at times more nuanced and open to interpretation. *Narrative authenticity* is commonly sought at outdoor heritage sites, and involves the use of primary source evidence and sometimes theatrical re-enactments to show ‘what it was really like’.²³³ This type of authenticity is rarely experienced by the visitor on their own, and usually requires guides and/or actors to present information to the audience. *Staged authenticity* is a concept introduced by sociologist Dean McCannell in a frequently cited 1973 essay. It finds authenticity for the visitor in the concept of putting themselves ‘in someone else’s shoes’, a behind-the-scenes form of tourism that allows outsiders to briefly experience a part of another’s life. McCannell uses the example of a school group touring a firehall to learn about its inner workings and the daily lives of firefighters. Performance is central to this type of authenticity, as being part of a tour group in a firehall is not the same as being a firefighter, and the tourists are not invisible observers but active participants in the performance.²³⁴ In a museum or heritage setting, displays or galleries

²³³ Walby and Piche, “Staged authenticity in penal history sites across Canada,” 241-242.

²³⁴ Dean McCannell, “Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings,” *American Journal of Sociology* 79(3) (November 1973): 596.

are designed to allow visitors to briefly ‘visit’ an alternate reality that exists in a confined space.²³⁵ Tourists increasingly demand this type of authenticity, as culture tourism is often used as a way to escape the self and become absorbed into another’s existence in both the past and the present.²³⁶

The final type of constructive authenticity, *existential* or *experiential authenticity*, functions similarly to *staged*, and it is this type of authenticity that museums and heritage sites are the most eager to achieve in recent decades. Existential authenticity is a state in which individuals are true to themselves,²³⁷ and in the context of tourism this manifests as an experience that is organic and honest, in which the visitor is not faking an emotional or visceral reaction but genuinely experiencing it. In the 21st century, instead of being the primary focus, the object displayed becomes a means to an end, creating an event that occurs within each visitor. Hilde Hein argues that “experiences are just as real as objects, but differently so, and both are legitimately exposed by museums.” Objects, she continues, can be inauthentic, but there are no inauthentic experiences, only incorrect conclusions drawn from them.²³⁸ Objects aimed at tourists do not necessarily need to be authentic to be effective. It is far more important that the collective experience feels authentic, even if that experience is facilitated through replicas, fakes, or reconstructions.²³⁹ In an experiential gallery or heritage site, the visitor is meant to be enveloped in a world that engages all the senses, that creates an intense and engrossing experience for the amount of time spent in the space, and then remains memorable after

²³⁵ Walby and Piche, “Staged authenticity in penal history sites across Canada,” 232.

²³⁶ Chhabra et al., “Staged Authenticity and Heritage Tourism,” 703.

²³⁷ Cole, “Beyond Authenticity and Commodification,” 944.

²³⁸ Hein, “The Matter of Museums,” *Journal of Museum Education* 36(2) (2011): 179, 186.

²³⁹ Codruta Sîntionean, “The Preservation of the Chŏnju Hanok Village: From Material Authenticity to the Themed Replica,” *Future Anterior* 12(1) (2015): 61; David Meltzer, “Ideology and Material Culture,” in *Modern Material Culture: The Archaeology of Us* ed. Richard Gould and Michael Schiffer (London: Academic, 1981), 119.

leaving.²⁴⁰ The performance of authenticity is key in these spaces. Visitors are not passive observers of objects behind glass but active participants in a recreation of the past.²⁴¹

In the context of heritage, authenticity plays several roles. It is sometimes used as synonymous with ‘quality’ – of both the physical objects at the site and the quality of the experience the site has to offer.²⁴² It also, as already mentioned, is far less important in objects than in the historical concepts the objects represent. Often objects that look right for the period being conveyed are good enough, because in the practice of storytelling, an object’s provenance is not as important as the object’s ability to effectively communicate the narratives of the site or exhibit.²⁴³ Even at historic sites that are not reconstructions, such as a home where a real person lived, interest in the material authenticity of the site is given less consideration, by both employees and visitors, than evaluating authenticity through the quality of immersive visitor experience.²⁴⁴

Canadian Nationalism and the Centennial Projects

While Canada claimed independence from the British Empire in 1867, cultural historian Ryan Edwardson argues the country did not achieve full independence, symbolic or otherwise, until after the Second World War. Britain had (and to some degree, still has) a parental relationship with the Dominion of Canada, not unlike a teenager leaving home for the first time to attend university, but still requiring significant financial and emotional support. After the war, Canada began more fully to sever most of its remaining ties with the ‘mother’ country and

²⁴⁰ Sîntionean, “The Preservation of the Chŏnju Hanok Village,” 62.

²⁴¹ Thyne and Hede, “Approaches to managing co-production for the co-creation of value in a museum,” 1481.

²⁴² Boyd, “Cultural and heritage tourism in Canada,” 221.

²⁴³ Hein, *The Museum in Transition*, 61.

²⁴⁴ Sîntionean, “The Preservation of the Chŏnju Hanok Village,” 71; Yu Chiang Lin and Yun Chiao Liu, “Deconstructing the internal structure of perceived authenticity for heritage tourism,” *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 26(12) (2018): 2134.

mature into a fully formed post-colonial nation. While there are other points of origin for the beginning of post-colonial Canada, such as the 1931 Statute of Westminster that established Canada's legislative independence, Edwardson's framework has been prioritised here because his is a cultural, rather than political, framework. A process of 'Canadianization' that occurred most significantly in the 1960s was not a spontaneous, organic transformation, but a purposeful and strategic attempt by federal and provincial governments to construct a sense of nationhood, using culture as the primary vehicle.²⁴⁵ A relatively small handful of people shaped this cultural evolution. The Liberal government championed 'cultural industrialism' in the 1950s and 60s, and it "radicalized the relationship between the state and culture for the sake of federalism."²⁴⁶ This was not an entirely new endeavor. Canadian nationalism from its origins to the present has consistently been built on a foundation of differentiating Canadians from Americans, in many cases including a sense of superiority to our southern neighbours. In a 1905 speech to the House of Commons, then Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier called American citizens "violent, immoral and ungodly" and insisted that Canadians were intrinsically of a higher calibre.²⁴⁷ Canada struggled, and still struggles, with the maintenance of a national identity that is not simply mimicking the culture of the United States.²⁴⁸ Cultural entities such as the Canadian Historical Association, the National Film Board, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation attempted to centralize culture and mass media in a distinctly Canadian space, so that Canada wouldn't shed the ties of dependence on one empire only to become dependent on another.²⁴⁹ By the 1940s, it

²⁴⁵ Ryan Edwardson, *Canadian Content: Culture and the Quest for Nationhood* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 5-6.

²⁴⁶ Edwardson, *Canadian Content*, 6.

²⁴⁷ Sir Wilfred Laurier, quoted in Norman Hillmer and Adam Chapnick, "An Abundance of Nationalisms," in *Canadas of the mind: the making and unmaking of Canadian nationalisms in the twentieth century* ed. Norman Hillmer and Adam Chapnick (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 4.

²⁴⁸ L.B. Kuffert, *A great duty: Canadian responses to modern life and mass culture in Canada, 1939-1967* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 179.

²⁴⁹ Edwardson, *Canadian Content*, 54, 136, 143.

was not uncommon for state involvement in arts and mass media to shape artistic expression and cultural institutions in decidedly nationalist ways.

It is important here to specify that the brand of Canadian nationalism being promoted in the 1960s and 70s was not constructed in quite the same way as other nationalist movements. While still defined as identification with one's own nation and support for its interests, it was a more progressive and far less vicious nationalism than the sort used in Hitler's Germany to poison a majority group against outsiders, and it did not adopt the white supremacist or anti-immigrant sentiment going unchallenged by the UK's Brexit movement or supporters of Donald Trump's nationalism in the United States. The new Canadian nationalism in the 1960s was instead meant to promote civil rights, progressive values, diversity, and tolerance among different ethnicities and religious groups.²⁵⁰ The level to which this ideal was achieved can be debated, but it was purer in intention, if not in execution, than other places where nationalism has purposely led to violence and isolationism. New Canadian nationalism was less a political movement than an ideological movement, happening in conjunction with the expanding middle class, changing ideas of the meaning of citizenship, and the use of culture to achieve independent nationhood.²⁵¹ The imagined community Canada aimed to create in the 1960s was an idealized utopia of multiculturalism; a civic and educated society with socially-oriented public programs, and a foreign policy focused on peacekeeping.

In addition to the country's centennial in 1967, seven of the ten provinces and one of the three territories celebrated their own centennials in the six-year period between 1967 and 1973. These celebrations resulted in centennial projects across the country, most of them focused on commemoration through the creation and spread of culture, but a specific kind of culture. They

²⁵⁰ Edwardson, *Canadian Content*, 24.

²⁵¹ Edwardson, *Canadian Content*, 137; Kuffert, *A great duty*, 19.

wanted to present on both local and national stages the kind of culture that Canada ‘should’ be celebrating, culture that highlighted Canadians’ imagined collective identity and presented positive narratives of the country’s history. Uncomfortable and unflattering histories were left out, a strategic omission that was repeated in more recent celebrations such as Canada’s 150th in 2017.²⁵² The creation of national cultural bodies such as film boards and art councils was widespread in the postwar period, and it was not uncommon for federal or provincial funds to be put towards cultural events that promoted national unity.²⁵³ Organizers within the various centennial projects “[possessed] a stake in the cultivation of a Canadian exceptionalism,” Canadian cultural historian Len Kuffert argued in an examination of the centennial celebrations and of Expo 67, the enormously successful World’s Fair held in Montréal during Canada’s 100th year. The promotion of active citizenship was among the goals of these projects, as well as the reinforcement of a shared national background that Canadians could use to construct a sense of belonging and patriotism that would foster investment in Canadian companies and tourism. The Confederation Train created for Canada’s centennial was similar to the *Nonsuch* replica in intended purpose. Functioning train cars were filled with displays that told the ‘story of Canada’ in which the viewer was a participant in a series of experiences from car to car. It made over 60 stops on a cross-country tour, and was meant to convey a slice of life from the era depicted for the purposes of heritage building.²⁵⁴ A Winnipeg example other than the *Nonsuch* Gallery is Dalnavert Museum. Opened as a museum in the 1970s, this 19th century mansion in downtown Winnipeg was home to Hugh John Macdonald, son of Canada’s first Prime Minister. Meant also

²⁵² Dakshana Bascaramurty, “‘A horrible history’: Four Indigenous views on Canada 150,” *Globe and Mail*, June 30, 2017; Deana Sumanac-Johnson, “Telling their stories or opting out: Indigenous artists on Canada 150,” *CBC News*, February 7, 2017.

²⁵³ Edwardson, *Canadian Content*, 19-20.

²⁵⁴ Kuffert, *A great duty*, 219, 227.

to convey a slice of life, or as the museum puts it, “a ‘day in the life’ feel as it transports you back in time”,²⁵⁵ this museum uses heritage for nation building as it allows visitors to experience a local connection to one of the founders of the country.

The Manitoba Centennial Corporation was interested primarily, as many centennial projects were, in modernity and ‘higher’ culture. These projects sought to promote classical music and theatre, and institutions of learning about history and science, rather than other types of mass culture like sports or Hollywood pictures. Winnipeg had been one of the country’s fastest growing cities until the eve of the First World War, but the growth of other metropolitan areas and changes in trade routes with the opening of the Panama Canal left Winnipeg behind. It was considered of the utmost importance by leaders of the national centennial projects that Canada not be portrayed as a backwater of sod huts and primitive agriculture on the world stage, and it was similarly important for Manitoba to create within its capital venues that could accommodate performing arts of a calibre on par with Toronto and Montréal. The near bankruptcy of the National Ballet in 1966 and the growth of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, now considered one of the best ballet companies in the world, brought funding to Winnipeg for other artistic and cultural endeavours,²⁵⁶ and other institutions such as the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra were able to expand upon the construction of a world-class venue for performance. The Centennial Concert Hall was designed by a Winnipeg-based architecture firm that designed many other prominent Winnipeg buildings constructed mid-century including the Winnipeg Civic Centre (City Hall and Administration Building), Shaarey Zedek Synagogue, the Winnipeg General Post Office, the Winnipeg International Airport, dozens of churches, and several

²⁵⁵ “About the Museum,” Dalnavert Museum and Visitors’ Centre, accessed August 4, 2019, <http://www.friendsofdalnavert.ca/>.

²⁵⁶ Edwardson, *Canadian Content*, 116.

buildings at the University of Manitoba including the main library, St. Paul's College, and St. Andrew's College.²⁵⁷ The firm responsible for the design of the Manitoba Museum boasts similar prominence in the province, with several hospitals and schools to their credit.²⁵⁸ Chief architect for the Centennial Centre, Peter Sampson, was interviewed for the Centre's 50th anniversary in 2018, and recalled the goals of the project as being further reaching than just concert venues and educational centres. Of the project, he said: "I'm always reminded of the importance of not just nation-building so much as the building of a cultural identity that was taking place in the 1960s ... when we were really investing in not just social infrastructure but cultural infrastructure for the country."²⁵⁹ Nation-building through culture was not simply a happenstance of these projects, it was their primary purpose. A souvenir booklet sold in Manitoba for the centennial in 1970 grandly proclaimed the Centennial Centre was to be "a symbol of Manitobans' loyalty to Canada"²⁶⁰, and would radiate influence to every corner of the province.²⁶¹

Museums and heritage sites have always negotiated and constructed meanings of national identity, and the scholarship on this topic is extensive and reaches to many different national constructions in different time periods and circumstances.²⁶² Jim McGuigan, in an exploration of culture's role in the public sphere, argued: "heritage is an international phenomenon promoted by

²⁵⁷ "Green Blankstein Russell," Winnipeg Architecture Foundation, accessed January 3, 2019, <https://www.winnipegarchitecture.ca/green-blankstein-russell>.

²⁵⁸ "Moody Moore Architects," Winnipeg Architecture Foundation, accessed January 3, 2019, <https://www.winnipegarchitecture.ca/moody-moore-architects>.

²⁵⁹ Peter Sampson, quoted in "Building a Cultural Identity," "Celebrating 50 Years," supplemental insert to the *Winnipeg Free Press*, March 29, 2018, 4.

²⁶⁰ *Centennial. Canada 1967 – Manitoba 1970: concert hall, art gallery, museum, research building, theatre centre, planetarium* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Centennial Centre Citizens' Campaign, 1966), 11.

²⁶¹ *Centennial. Canada 1967 – Manitoba 1970*, 24.

²⁶² A few examples (of many): McLean, "Museums and the construction of national identity," 244; Eric Gable, "How We Study History Museums: or Cultural Studies at Monticello," in *New Museum Theory and Practice: An Introduction* ed. Janet Marstine (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2008), 110; Knowles, "'Objects as Ambassadors,'" 242; Stone and Molyneaux, *The Presented Past*, 15.

governments concerned with national identity.”²⁶³ Cecilia Morgan, while examining English-Canadian tourists in Britain, explained that it is common knowledge among those who study culture that tourism contributes substantially to constructions of nation and empire.²⁶⁴ Academic studies often invoke Benedict Anderson’s theory of imagined communities, using the museum as an example of his argument that a sense of belonging within a nation is felt even though most citizens only interact with a tiny fraction of their nation’s population over their lifetime and so the things they have in common with millions of strangers must be imagined.²⁶⁵ Anderson theorized that modern nations have been constructed through this symbolic process, and that museums and heritage sites have played a vital role in this process, with their origins in colonial archaeology that he links to 19th century conceptualisations of nationalism.²⁶⁶ Widespread awareness of a national history is essential to nationalism, even if pieces of this history have been greatly exaggerated or even constructed contrary to historical fact.²⁶⁷ National ideologies operate on the idea that a single, distinctive nation exists, imagined to possess a set of traits that distinguishes it from other nations and is displayed and maintained in museums and heritage sites.²⁶⁸ While this is an imagination, it does have practical results: minority groups within a nation, especially recent immigrants, often adopt the dominant paradigm of national heritage, even while continuing to celebrate the distinctive virtues of their own ancestral backgrounds.

²⁶³ McGuigan, *Culture and the Public Sphere* 118.

²⁶⁴ Cecilia Morgan, “‘A Choke of Emotion, a Great Heart-Leap’: English-Canadian Tourists in Britain, 1880s-1914,” *Histoire sociale/Social History* 39(77) (2006), 13.

²⁶⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed., London: Verso, 1991, 6, discussed in McGuigan, *Culture and the Public Sphere*, 117.

²⁶⁶ Marstine, “Introduction,” 2, Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 178.

²⁶⁷ Ashworth and Larkham, “A Heritage for Europe,” 1.

²⁶⁸ Richard Handler, “On Having a Culture: Nationalism and the Preservation of Québec’s Patrimoine,” in *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture* ed. George Stocking (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 198; Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7.

National heritage reflects widely-shared values, but it also creates a value system and acts as an instruction manual for it.²⁶⁹

HBC Heritage Branding

The creation of a working *Nonsuch* replica was not the first time the HBC had incorporated the *Nonsuch* into celebrations of their history or made it part of their heritage-centred branding. The first official history of the Company was released in 1920 for the 250th anniversary, but well before that occasion and continuing after, the HBC used Canadian newspapers like the *Manitoba Free Press* to make Company history public knowledge and to weave this history into the wider history of Canada. The *Free Press* ran several articles (sometimes a full page ad) narrating the history of the HBC's inception, and the inaugural voyages of the *Nonsuch* and *Eaglet* were always included.²⁷⁰ For the 250th anniversary, along with the printed Company history aimed at adults, the HBC released a commemorative children's book that contained illustrations of the *Nonsuch*.²⁷¹ In 1926, the HBC steamship *Bayrupert* sailed the same route as the voyage of the *Nonsuch*, from Gravesend to James Bay.²⁷² A similar commemorative trip took place in 1958, this time by airplane. It was billed as the first flight of the historic fur trade route from London to Winnipeg, and took roughly 18 hours.²⁷³ The Company had erected a small marker at the mouth of the Rupert River with a British flag to mark

²⁶⁹ Lowenthal, "Identity, Heritage, and History," 46.

²⁷⁰ "The Story of Rupert House," *Manitoba Free Press*, March 9, 1907, 25 ; Ernest Thompson Seton, "Views on the Proposed Centenary Celebration," *Manitoba Free Press*, February 29, 1909, 13; "In The Company of Adventurers," *Manitoba Free Press*, July 13, 1912, 51; "The First Shipment by way of the Hudson Bay Railway consisted of Hudson's Bay 'Point' Blankets," *Manitoba Free Press*, October 12, 1929, 14; "Hudson's Bay Company Marks Anniversary by Starting New Drive," *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 1, 1934, 4.

²⁷¹ Advertisement, *Manitoba Free Press*, May 1, 1920, 11.

²⁷² "When Nonsuch Sailed," *Manitoba Free Press*, June 19, 1926, 19.

²⁷³ Barbara Kilvert, "Once Took Many Months, Old Fur Trade Route Now Covered in Hours," *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 24, 1958, 17.

the place where the *Nonsuch* anchored, and it stood until at least the 1950s.²⁷⁴ In 1968, for the 300th anniversary of the original *Nonsuch* voyage, a Canadian stamp depicting an artist's rendering of the ship was released.²⁷⁵ HBC used the *Nonsuch* for merchandise branding as well. In the fall of 1925 'Nonsuch blankets' were introduced. These white flannelette woven blankets retailed for between \$2 and \$4 depending on size, and were marketed as a more affordable alternative to the pricier wool Point Blankets.²⁷⁶ In 1930, the name Nonsuch was given to a new line of dresses sold at HBC department stores. They retailed for \$15 and ranged in style from daytime to business to formal, and came in a large range of sizes meant for both teenage and adult women.²⁷⁷

For over a century, the HBC has been heavily invested in the practice of tying their history to the history of Canada. The Company, along with two other Canadian retail giants, Eaton's and Simpson's, was quite successful in doing so in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Donica Belisle argues post-Confederation identity was forged through their advertisements.²⁷⁸ In the decades after Confederation, Canada was both a new country and a relatively fractured one, with dramatic disparities between regions in population density and degree of modernization. Early nationalists advanced their narratives by celebrating Canada's role in the unstoppable march of civilization, but this march did not affect all Canadians equally.²⁷⁹ While the larger

²⁷⁴ R.T. Rev. R.J. Renison, "A Lonely Grave," *Globe and Mail*, August 2, 1944, 6; Renison, "My Life as a Missionary," *Globe and Mail*, February 18, 1956, 7. This monument is currently not listed on Québec tourism websites, and so it likely no longer exists. There are few HBC historic sites left in Québec. While English-speaking Canada has generally embraced the HBC as being part of Canadian identity, French-speaking Canada has not. The site of the original fort, Fort Charles, is now a small mostly-indigenous community called Waskaganish.

²⁷⁵ "New 5-cent Stamp Due June 5," *Winnipeg Free Press*, April 11, 1968, 19; "Nonsuch stamp heralds ketch's trip to Winnipeg," *Winnipeg Tribune*, June 8, 1968, 10.

²⁷⁶ Advertisements, *Manitoba Free Press*, September 1, 1925, 12; September 17, 1925, 12; October 6, 1925, 12; April 18, 1927, 12.

²⁷⁷ "Introducing Nonsuch Dresses," *Manitoba Free Press*, September 12, 1930, 14.

²⁷⁸ Belisle, *Retail nation*, 51.

²⁷⁹ Paula Hastings, "Branding Canada: Consumer Culture and the Development of Popular Nationalism in the Early Twentieth Century," in *Canadas of the mind: The making and unmaking of Canadian nationalisms in the twentieth century* ed. Norman Hillmer and Adam Chapnick (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 137.

cities modernized rapidly and featured high-rise buildings downtown, sprawling suburbs, and modern conveniences like electricity, rural areas lagged significantly behind. Sky-scrapers were built in Toronto while farmers in Manitoba lived similarly to the way their pioneer ancestors had a century earlier. Remote outposts of Newfoundland, not incorporated into Canada until 1949, did not have indoor plumbing as late as the 1970s.²⁸⁰ This discrepancy in experience left early Canadians without a sense of national unity. To the present, Canada remains a nation within which such a sense of nationhood is difficult to establish and maintain, with its “ideologically, ethnically, and geographically diverse population of multiple founding peoples, ethnic enclaves, and disparate regional identities.”²⁸¹ At the beginning of the 20th century, retailers like the HBC took it upon themselves to foster that desired unity and inform Canadians, through ad campaigns, who they should aspire to be. The HBC in these decades walked a tightrope with commemorating their past on one side and looking to the future on the other. The Company’s public statements often maintained the sentiment that the country would not have existed without the fur trade (specifically without the English fur trade), while also highlighting the modern directions in which the Company was headed. A self-congratulatory message from the HBC in the *Manitoba Free Press* on 3 May 1920 boasted that while Canada would have “sooner or later been discovered and developed ... Fur was the foundation of the growth of Canada.” Other industries are identified as having followed and continued the development started by the HBC, and “in that further progress which the future holds in store, the great Company that made the beginnings will continue to share.”²⁸² The author made no attempt to mask his superior tone, nor

²⁸⁰ Alan Doyle, *Where I Belong: Small Town to Great Big Sea* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2014), 15.

²⁸¹ Edwardson, *Canadian Content*, 9.

²⁸² Sir William Schooling, “Fur – and Further”, *Manitoba Free Press*, May 3, 1920, 14. To the present, the beaver remains one of the most obvious symbols of Canada. It was part of the HBC’s coat of arms and appeared on the country’s very first postage stamp in 1851. The animal is also central to the visual branding of Roots, another retailer that, like the HBC in the 20th century, strove to imprint their brand as uniquely Canadian and part of the

did he bother to support any of his lofty claims with the presentation of facts, and the almost childlike message – ‘you would be nothing without us’ – is clearly presented to Canadians as fact. Other advertisements carefully promoted a specific form of burgeoning Canadian nationalism. They paid homage to the English language, and to capitalism, and they endorsed continued loyalty to the British Empire (seen as vital to Canadian national identity until the Second World War).²⁸³ The Company remembered its own history selectively, ignoring that which did not serve their larger goals.²⁸⁴ Inclusion of indigenous peoples traded on the caricature of the noble savage, and other groups seen as inferior, such as Chinese immigrants or settlers from ‘lesser’ European countries like Ukraine or Poland, were ignored completely. In their advertisements, the HBC presented a precise definition of what it meant to be Canadian, while at the same time establishing Canadians’ dependence on the Company to achieve this national identity. In their far-reaching network of Northern Stores and catalogues, the HBC saw themselves as a democratizing force in the development of Canada because the Company provided affordable consumer goods to the most remote areas of the country. They proudly facilitated the spread of modernity and progress to even the most primitive areas, establishing themselves as indispensable to the building of a democratic, civil, and enlightened Canada.²⁸⁵ An advertisement in 1926 boldly claimed “the New Manitoba takes another step forward” upon the opening of a new store in Winnipeg.²⁸⁶ They advertised the voyage of the *Nonsuch* and the creation of the Company as the *de facto* founding of Canada, strategically ignoring the history of New France and striving to present English settlement as the true roots of the country. To some

national identity. Colin Coates, “Beaver,” in *Symbols of Canada* ed. Michael Dawson, Catherine Gidney, and Donald Wright (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2018), 9-10.

²⁸³ Belisle, *Retail nation*, 54, 57.

²⁸⁴ Opp, “Branding ‘the Bay’,” 226.

²⁸⁵ Belisle, *Retail nation*, 62.

²⁸⁶ Advertisement, *Manitoba Free Press*, November 18, 1926, 14.

extent, they are still engaging in this practice through the *Nonsuch* Gallery. While now the legal property of the Museum, its story belongs largely to the HBC, and the Company is still defining their heritage in their own context.

Despite all their retail outlets existing on Canadian soil, the HBC struggled in the middle of the century to maintain their earlier success as an integral part of Canadian identity. By 1960, the HBC operated several medium-sized stores in smaller Western Canadian cities in addition to the six multi-storey historic buildings known as Flagship Stores. Of the six, the still-standing building at Portage Avenue and Memorial Boulevard in Winnipeg was the furthest east of the stores that would be renamed ‘The Bay’.²⁸⁷ The location of Winnipeg in almost the exact longitudinal centre of the country meant the HBC was notably absent to half of Canadian geography and well over half of Canadian citizens – Ontario alone was home to 44% of the Canadian population in the 1960s.²⁸⁸ The attempt to expand into urban centres in Eastern Canada in the 1960s and 70s was not entirely successful. Other department store chains already held the market (Eaton’s, Simpson’s, and Sears in Ontario, and Morgan’s in Québec), and although the HBC would eventually purchase both Simpson’s and Morgan’s, they did not manage to invoke heritage branding and consumer patriotism the way they had in the West. Residents of Ontario and Québec, the country’s most populated provinces, displayed little or no emotional connection to the HBC, and likely did not consider the Company important to the history of Canada. As their 300th anniversary quickly approached, this was less than ideal. The HBC executives and board of directors still viewed the Company to be an important institution in Canadian history, and intended to celebrate their tercentenary in 1970 in a manner that would reinforce this connection. The Company also took full advantage of the proximity of their tercentenary to

²⁸⁷ Opp, “Branding ‘the Bay’,” 228-229.

²⁸⁸ Newman, “Ontario in the Sixties,” *MacLean’s Magazine*, June 4, 1960, 13.

Canada's centennial, riding on the coattails of the new form of Canadian nationalism burgeoning in the 1960s.

The *Nonsuch* replica was a strategic marketing endeavor for the HBC. It was built at a time when the Company was struggling to uphold its place in Canadian identity, and was hoping to use their 300th anniversary and Canada's 100th to maintain ties to Canadian history within the space of the new Canadian nationalism. This required striking a delicate balance between glorifying the past and promising to continue modernising in the future. The HBC accomplished this by renaming their stores and marketing them as trendy places where younger consumers should want to shop, while at the same time staging a Great Lakes tour for a ship that looked right out of Disneyland's *Pirates of the Caribbean* ride, opened only a couple of years earlier in 1967. Replicas constructed authentically often occupy a liminal space somewhere between past and present: while they are representative of something from the past, the ability to recreate something using obsolete methods is a modern technical achievement.²⁸⁹ Both the HBC and the *Nonsuch* Gallery at the Manitoba Museum have engaged in acts of Canadianization in their successful attempt to situate the *Nonsuch* replica firmly into the context of Canadian history.

²⁸⁹ Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, 113.

Chapter Four – The *Nonsuch* Gallery: Commemoration and Collective Identity

The *Nonsuch* Gallery opened at the Manitoba Museum on Sunday, 7 December 1974 at 1:30 p.m. Admission to the museum was 25 cents. It was a highly anticipated event in Winnipeg, thanks mostly to frequent articles and advertisements run in the *Winnipeg Free Press* in the years leading up to the Gallery opening, reporting on the journey of the replica and the progress of the Museum construction. In 1970, the city's most widely circulated newspaper mentioned the *Nonsuch* replica nearly every other week. The *Free Press* and other local publications used key phrases that had become common in the heritage industry since the 1960s. The Gallery was called a 'time machine', an avenue to step back into the 17th century, the recreation of a 'lost age' and 'past glory', and a symbol of the 'strength and courage' of the age of European exploration.²⁹⁰ The *Winnipeg Free Press* published five full pages in the Friday edition before the Gallery's opening, beginning with a full-page colour photo of the replica on the water and "The NONSUCH" written at the bottom in a typeface that harkened back to the 17th century. The feature was similar to the one that would be published 44 years later in anticipation of the Gallery's reopening in 2018. The 1974 feature included five articles and dozens of images, including some of oil paintings of the original ship commissioned by the HBC in the 20th century, close-ups of the replica's carvings, photographs depicting the replica's construction, and photographs of her being hoisted out of the water and transported across North America by truck. In one article, the Museum's Managing Director called himself the "proudest man in Manitoba" and praised the *Nonsuch* as the finest and most historically accurate replica in existence.²⁹¹ It also

²⁹⁰ "The Nonsuch: Time machine to the past," *Winnipeg Tribune*, October 12, 1974, 17; "The Nonsuch Gallery in the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature opens tomorrow at 1:30p.m.," *Winnipeg Tribune*, December 7, 1974; "Nonsuch Makes Museum Unique – Hemphill," *Winnipeg Free Press*, December 6, 1974, 19.

²⁹¹ David Hemphill, quoted in "Nonsuch Makes Museum Unique – Hemphill," 19; "Captain Small Claims Ketch 'The Best'," *Winnipeg Free Press*, December 6, 1974, 21.

included a brief history of the original ship and the beginning of the HBC, celebrating it as “a voyage that is to set the course of Western Canada’s development,” and a description of the exhibit depicting a scene of low-tide at Deptford on the River Thames.²⁹² Without the *Nonsuch*, the articles grandly claim, Canada would not exist in its contemporary form.²⁹³ This sentiment echoed claims that had been made by the HBC for nearly a century. Steeped in Eurocentric Canadian history, the *Nonsuch* Gallery narrated stories of white exceptionalism and settler colonialism. While celebrating the achievements of the original *Nonsuch*, both the Museum and the HBC also celebrated the replica and Gallery as vital to the spread of the HBC’s nationalist message. A souvenir booklet sold in the Museum’s gift shop declared that the voyage of the original *Nonsuch* was “recorded for posterity [but] it would be generations before the magnitude of her accomplishment would be fully understood.”²⁹⁴ The HBC had constructed the replica in part as a literal and metaphorical vehicle to spread their own gospel of a romantic, adventurous past and uniquely Canadian origins at a time when that message was not spreading as effectively as it had at the beginning of the 20th century. It was an act of commemoration that, like all acts of commemoration, served a larger function than simply marking an anniversary. The Gallery at the Manitoba Museum continued the mission set by the HBC, to weave the history of the Company and the history of Canada into a single thread so that one story cannot be told without the other. These acts of commemoration combine with techniques of nation-building through heritage to create a visitor experience aimed at maintaining national cohesion and collective identity.

²⁹² “The Nonsuch,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, December 6, 1974, 18.

²⁹³ “Ship’s Voyage Paid Off After All,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, December 6, 1974, 18.

²⁹⁴ “Nonsuch. Hudson’s Bay Company,” Manitoba Museum souvenir booklet, 9. While undated, the use of now outdated language like ‘the Orient’ can be used to estimate this booklet was created in the 1970s around the time of the Gallery opening.

Memorials and Public Memory

In July 1927, the HBC took out a full page in the *Manitoba Free Press* to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Canada's Confederation. It mentioned the voyage of the original *Nonsuch*, and boasted "during the next two hundred years the steady growth of Hudson's Bay Company helped to prepare the way for the development of the great Dominion of Canada by British occupation of large and important areas, the history of the Company thus being inseparably interwoven with that of the Country."²⁹⁵ As discussed in the previous chapter, such conflation of these two stories was not uncommon. The HBC took full advantage of any opportunity to insert itself into Canadian history up to and including the creation of the *Nonsuch* replica and the four summers she spent touring and spreading that message. The Company embraced nationalism, and worked to establish their connection to a distinct Canadian identity. The explicitly colonialist language used in the 1920s would not be used in quite the same way by the 1960s when it had become less tolerable, but the messaging largely remained the same. On a broader scale, the original *Nonsuch* was an unremarkable ship and did not possess any of the markers we commonly use to define historical importance. She was not an achievement of new technology, she did not accomplish a feat of particularly impressive navigation, and she was lost to history almost immediately upon return to London in 1669. In the larger context of Canadian history, she is little more than a footnote. The voyage in 1668 did not achieve any of the 'firsts' that are so vital to national heritage – the voyage was not the first European excursion to North America, the fort built by the crew was not the first English settlement, she was not the first ship to sail in Hudson Bay, and no founding city was established where she landed. The *Nonsuch* is only important because the HBC made her important through these acts of commemoration.

²⁹⁵ "Two Hundred Years Before Confederation," *Manitoba Free Press*, July 2, 1927, 16.

The process of commemoration is strongly influenced by tourism and the heritage industry. Societies that rely on written word have developed robust ways of expressing this desire to understand life as a coherent narrative that is connected to a larger story of ‘our people’ – of a grand, intangible ‘us’ that can be felt and understood as deeply on an unconscious level as a conscious one.²⁹⁶ Traditions of memorializing national tragedies or mass sacrifices, such as Remembrance Day in Canada or Patriot Day in the United States observed in remembrance of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, serve to maintain and strengthen national identity through the preservation of national collective memory. Traditions are often invented, Eric Hobsbawm argues, at times of increased social change, when there is something to be gained in a society by a process of formalization and ritualization of certain values and norms of behavior. The pieces of history which become immortalized by the tradition of heritage are not “what has actually been preserved in popular memory, but what has been selected, written, pictured, popularized and institutionalized by those whose function it is to do so.”²⁹⁷ The 1960s were a time of intense social change in the Western world, and so through this lens it is easily understandable that the Centennial celebrations in Canada leaned so heavily on the Canada of the past. Human geographer David Lowenthal has argued that in celebrating their histories, societies are worshiping themselves. They are crafting a version of reality in which their past is unlike any others and are directly or indirectly celebrating this uniqueness as superior to other groups.²⁹⁸ These social and political activities are often extraordinarily effective, both used and abused by national leaders and others in positions of power to foster often indelible ‘us vs. them’

²⁹⁶ Ian McKay, “History and the Tourist Gaze: The Politics of Commemoration in Nova Scotia, 1935-1964,” *Acadiensis* 22(1) (Spring 1993): 104.

²⁹⁷ Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” in *The Invention of Traditions*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 13, quoted in Norkunas, *The Politics of Public Memory*, 5.

²⁹⁸ Lowenthal, “Heritage Care: From the Tower of Babel to the Ivory Tower,” *Change Over Time* 1(1) (2011): 133.

mentalities. Critiques of national identity rarely weaken it,²⁹⁹ and in fact can have the opposite effect – if celebrating national identity is ‘us vs. them’, those who would levy criticism against the construction of ‘us’ can be easily dismissed as aiding ‘them’, and their opinions disregarded. The existence of a proper opposing force, either real or imagined, can be vital in the construction of a unified nation. Until roughly the 1930s, commemoration was generally privately organized and funded. Cemeteries and patriotic monuments existed, however there was “no official network of words and things through which a consistent set of ‘memories’ of the past could be constructed, preserved and popularized.”³⁰⁰ Memorials and acts of commemoration in public spaces serve as a reminder that memory is not only an individual activity but a subject of public concern.³⁰¹ Outside of scholarly circles, history – in its function as a representation of the past existing in the present – often takes the form of commemoration, and collective memory is the framework in which this historical remembering occurs.³⁰²

In the social sciences, the word ‘identity’ is generally applied to: 1) individual people, 2) groups of people that are imagined to be somewhat separate from other groups, and 3) the relationship between the first two.³⁰³ Memory as a function of the human brain can be personal and individual, but it is also a necessary part of membership in social groups. Memory can be private and spontaneous, or highly formalized and public.³⁰⁴ While memory has been historically discounted as a valid area of scholarly study because it was not considered a trustworthy source for the verification of historical facts, it has more recently become a favourite topic for cultural

²⁹⁹ John Gillis, “Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship,” in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* ed. John Gillis (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 4.

³⁰⁰ McKay, “History and the Tourist Gaze,” 105.

³⁰¹ John Bodnar, “Public Memory in an American City: Commemoration in Cleveland,” in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* ed. John Gillis (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 74.

³⁰² Crane, “Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory,” 1372.

³⁰³ Richard Handler, “Is ‘Identity a Useful Cross-Cultural Concept?’” in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* ed. John Gillis (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 28.

³⁰⁴ James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), i, x.

historians concerned less about the specifics of the past and more with how groups of people conceptualize the past.³⁰⁵ Sociologist Michael Schudson observed that until the 1980s, memory was thought of as an entirely individual phenomenon, something that only existed in individual minds. He argued instead that memory is essentially social and can be found in tangible places such as laws, public records, holidays, and souvenirs.³⁰⁶ Memory is a structural activity rather than an entirely personal one, as social environments shape what we remember and how we remember it. It validates the living experience of a social group as it connects the past with the present for as long as something is collectively remembered by most members of that group. History, generally a more institutionalized form of remembering, tends to emerge when collective social memory begins to fade or becomes contested.³⁰⁷ This concept is not meant to suggest that each individual remembers facts, events, or emotions in exactly the same way, but rather that memory is socially constructed within the context of group identity.

Nations, like collective identities, are imagined as natural objects, ‘things’ that exist in the real world, and therefore have a distinctive combination of qualities that can be defined by a set of boundaries including geographical, cultural, and temporal. Nations have traceable historical origins, and countries in the colonized world usually have a specific date of conception.³⁰⁸ Internal diversities like gender, regional culture, ethnicity, religion, and class exist under the larger umbrella of the national identity, but the national identity is often so pronounced in the 20th and 21st centuries that other identities can be secondary to nationality. A person living in Manitoba might identify as a Conservative, or ethnically Ukrainian, or bisexual, but they are still

³⁰⁵ Kerwin Lee Klein, “On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse,” *Representations* 69 (Winter 2000): 128-130.

³⁰⁶ Michael Schudson, *Watergate in American Memory: How We Remember, Forget, and Reconstruct the Past* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 51, quoted in James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory*, 130.

³⁰⁷ Keith Michael Baker, “Memory and Practice: Politics and the Representation of the Past in Eighteenth-Century France,” *Representations* 11 (Summer 1985): 156.

³⁰⁸ Handler, “Is Identity a Useful Cross-Cultural Concept?” 29.

Canadian. Citizens are subject, whether they like it or not, to mandatory components of citizenship, such as following Canadian laws. They are free to reject the more intangible aspects of Canadian citizenship, but their nationality is not always something they are able to personally choose, and constructions of nationalism assume a positive attachment to that place. Collective memory is the most effective tool used in the creation of national or local collective identities. The notion of an identity thus depends on the idea of memory. Group identities are built through an imagined sense of sameness over time, and are sustained by the public, communal act of remembering a constructed shared past.³⁰⁹ Public memory is a system of beliefs rooted in the interpretation of one's own time and surroundings via its connection to the past and to socially understood symbols.³¹⁰

Collective memory is used to fulfill several modern functions, among them “shaping socio-cultural place-identities of particular state structures.”³¹¹ This ‘heritagization’ of public spaces – through acts of commemoration and the emphasis on historical characters and events that stand as a metaphor for that place – helps to maintain place identity.³¹² Public history provides the comfort of the past as a social anchor, so that collective amnesia doesn’t lead to social disorientation. New generations learn the norms and standards of a society through commemoration and heritage, in a process that sociologists would call ‘socialization’ and political scientists would call ‘legitimation’.³¹³ Local museums are especially useful for shaping local identities, as they often present information specific to the region. Although the Manitoba Museum and local museums in Newfoundland or Alberta are connected by the concepts of state

³⁰⁹ Gillis, “Memory and Identity,” 3; Crane, “Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory,” 1373.

³¹⁰ Bodnar, “Public Memory in an American City,” 75.

³¹¹ G.J. Ashworth, “From History to Heritage – From Heritage to Identity. In search of concepts and models,” in *Building A New Heritage. Tourism, Culture and Identity in the New Europe* ed. G.J. Ashworth and P.J. Larkham (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 13.

³¹² Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, 139.

³¹³ Ashworth, “From History to Heritage,” 14.

and nation, they would present or seem to promote different local identities. Collective memory is also vital to cognitive mapping: the process by which humans locate themselves in time and space. Places are not constructed in isolation. Their construction considers broader contexts, and takes things that exist in other times and spaces into account. Successful cognitive mapping is crucial for humans to be generally happy and fulfilled, and the area in which they live must be able to be easily understood and conceptualized. Commemoration assists in this endeavour by publicising ‘time marks.’ These are visible elements in the environment (natural and human-made) that can be used to physically perceive the passage of time, such as a building that the mind remembers has been standing for decades, or the space left by a tree that was recently cut down.³¹⁴ When the physical site of a historic event or the childhood home of a historic figure is commemorated, it assists in creating a timeline within one’s own mind for the space they occupy.

The *Nonsuch* Gallery

After opening in 1974, the Gallery had not changed in any significant way until the 2018 renovations mentioned in the opening of this thesis, but that does not mean it was entirely stagnant. After arrival in Winnipeg in November 1973, the modern additions to the replica such as the toilet and electric lighting were removed – a good example of the object’s continued evolution.³¹⁵ In the summer of 1974, Captain Small and several other crew members assisted in the refitting of the *Nonsuch* replica in the Gallery as it was under construction. Along with the immersive diorama, another of Small’s ideas was to leave quite a bit of the cosmetic damage that

³¹⁴ Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, 150-152.

³¹⁵ “Nonsuch Report,” Manitoba Museum Archives, Box: Gallery Info, Folder: HGAC Nonsuch Research Grant, July 28, 1974.

had been done during her years as a sailing vessel. Structural damage was of course addressed, but nicks and scars were left unrepaired, allowing the replica to remain a ship that had, like the original she represented, been a working ocean vessel for years before her journey to Canada.³¹⁶ Despite not being a scholar or a museum professional, Small intuitively understood two things that have been examined extensively in the field of museum studies: that museum visitors are much more likely to accept an object as authentic if it looks old and used, and that no object remains unchanged in its lifetime and therefore wear from use does not lessen its value as a museum piece. Designers adopted nearly all of Small's suggestions and allowed his vision to be instrumental in the planning of the Gallery. It continued, as Laird Rankin put it, "the ideal of authenticity that the company had stressed in the construction of the replica."³¹⁷ The result was one of the first museum galleries in Canada to exist in a three-dimensional or diorama setting, appearing much like a movie-set that visitors could walk through and be absorbed into.³¹⁸ The aim, according to museum contract supervisor Harry Gyselman, was to "[pioneer] the total-environment display, a type which involves all the senses so that the mood of period comes across as well as the facts."³¹⁹

Upon the Gallery's opening in December 1974, the surrounding diorama was not quite complete, and would continue to be tinkered with over the next several years. The buildings along the quay side of the Gallery were empty, and slowly amassed a collection of period-typical furniture to help depict a tavern, an inn above it, and a workshop. These items were built at the Museum, and so they are iconically authentic: built to resemble the type of furniture that would

³¹⁶ Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 123.

³¹⁷ Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 122.

³¹⁸ "Nonsuch Makes Museum Unique – Hemphill," 19.

³¹⁹ Bill Cleverley, "Striving for Authenticity," *Winnipeg Free Press*, April 19, 1975, 112.

likely have existed in a 17th century English town.³²⁰ These buildings are condensed in depth, but the height of the buildings and the size of the windows are of accurate historical proportions based on similar buildings from the 17th century. They are not replicas of existing structures, but were designed based on paintings of 17th century English shipyards to appear as historically accurate as possible. The replica itself is subject to constant conservation efforts. Along with the regular wear and tear of aging and the continual stream of visitors, without careful maintenance the ship would eventually be pulled apart by gravity. A ship's hull is engineered to withstand the weight and force of water on either side but is not meant to exist for long periods without this countering weight – much in the same way that modern airplanes are designed to be in constant motion and will begin to break down in a matter of days if left stagnant on a tarmac.

Conservators take regular measurements between key points to ensure the ship's frame is not widening to a point where it would become unsafe for visitors to board.

When the Gallery opened, four of the six working cannons were mounted on the deck, where they would have sat during the original voyage.³²¹ Called 'two-pounders' to refer to the weight of the cannonball, the cannons themselves weigh more than a hundred times that, and their combined weight had begun to pull the ship apart without the pressure of the ocean to stabilize it. They were removed in 1986 and relocated to the quay side of the Gallery.³²² The 'hold' – the ship's belly that can be accessed by a ladder in the middle of the deck – was open to visitors in the early years of the Gallery but is now closed because of damage and theft, open only on specific days when the Museum can staff the Gallery accordingly (often on weekends in

³²⁰ "Nonsuch Gallery – The Quay Side," Manitoba Museum Archives, Box: Gallery Info, Folder: Nonsuch History, September, 1982.

³²¹ "Re-creation of Gallery Rings True," *Winnipeg Free Press*, December 6, 1974, 18.

³²² "Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature Memorandum. To: Jack Dubois, Robert Wrigley. From: Cathy Collins. Subject: Report from Dr. Grattan regarding the Nonsuch." Manitoba Museum Archives, Box: Gallery Info, Folder: HGAC Nonsuch Research Grant, December 16, 1986.

December). In 1999, the Museum commissioned the painting of a new mural on the Gallery wall opposite the replica, to make the sense of immersion more complete. The existing mural had been of a blue sky filled with an abundance of white clouds, and was deemed in a redesign report to be in contrast to the style of the rest of the space and therefore distracting.³²³ The stark white of the clouds also caused undesirable reflection of the Gallery's lighting. The new mural was meant to enhance the Gallery experience but not to be a central focus; to behave as a real distant shore would, existing in the background but not drawing attention.³²⁴ The result was a painting of the River Thames and the 17th century London skyline, giving the Gallery the appearance of being across the river from London (even though Deptford is not). The lighting within the Gallery has been redone several times, in a continual effort to create the most dramatic and immersive experience possible. Anything visible in the Gallery that would not have existed in a 17th century port town including the steel structure of the walls and ceiling, the mechanical duct-work, and the light fixtures themselves, was understood by curators to diminish the overall effect of the space. Strategic lighting can be used to mitigate these problems, by angling spotlights to direct the eye away from anything the Museum wants to hide and drawing attention to what should be focused on instead. Before the 2018 renovations, the lighting had been most recently readdressed in 2014, that time in an effort to protect the natural-fibre sails that will continue to fade and eventually disintegrate in bright lighting.³²⁵

Unlike the more traditional galleries in the Manitoba Museum, the signage for the *Nonsuch* Gallery exists in the hallway leading up to it. Panels on the walls explain the history of

³²³ Filewych, "Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature Nonsuch Gallery Refurbishment. Design Report prepared by Gordon Filewych, Phase 1 & 2, August 31/99," 4.

³²⁴ Filewych, "Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature Nonsuch Gallery Refurbishment. Design Report prepared by Gordon Filewych, Phase 1 & 2, August 31/99," 6.

³²⁵ "Nonsuch lighting refurbishment project proposal. Lighting Committee, in collaboration with Amelia Fay," Manitoba Museum Archives, Box: Gallery Info, Folder: Nonsuch Lighting, February 14, 2014, 2.

the original *Nonsuch*, telling the story of the 1668 voyage and the granting of the royal charter and formation of the HBC. The only text appearing in the Gallery itself is on a sign just before the entrance to the ship, informing visitors of the rules for safety once they board the replica. This relative lack of text allows for more complete immersion, with fewer disruptions from the modern world. It also caused confusion among guests over the decades as to whether the ship in the Gallery was ‘real’. This would not be significantly addressed until 2018. Other technologies aiding immersion included a soundtrack playing the cries of seagulls, and lighting meant to “closely approximate daylight on a clear day at noon, in colour and intensity.”³²⁶ A space like the *Nonsuch* Gallery employs a sense of time travel and escapism. This concept has been a consistent theme in the language used to describe it, including on the Museum’s website that invites visitors to “step back in time to 17th century Deptford.”³²⁷ When a space is sufficiently immersive, the visitor is meant to feel as if the outside world no longer exists for the time they spend in it.³²⁸ This is achieved by creating an environment that addresses all five senses. Of the five, while sight is usually the strongest, the sense of smell is the most connected to memory. Artificially-created ‘heritage smells’ came into more frequent use in the 1980s, with companies creating oils to sell to museums and heritage sites that recreated the smell of historical spaces such as taverns. The human sense of smell is underdeveloped compared to other mammals, but as it is triggered by chemical reaction, it can induce memories that are often vivid, and recall

³²⁶ Untitled and undated report, Manitoba Museum Archives, Box: Gallery Info, Folder: Planning Nonsuch Gallery, 9.

³²⁷ “Nonsuch Gallery,” Manitoba Museum, accessed March 16, 2019, <https://manitobamuseum.ca/main/visit/museum-galleries/nonsuch-gallery>. This language has often been used, other examples include “The Nonsuch Gallery in the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature opens tomorrow at 1:30p.m.” *Winnipeg Free Press*, December 7, 1974, 13; and Amelia Fay, quoted in Melissa Martin, “Collecting Everyday History,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, August 19, 2017, A20.

³²⁸ Tim Edensor, “Performing tourism, staging tourism. (Re)producing tourist space and practice,” *Tourist Studies* 1(1) (2001): 67.

memories that have been long-forgotten.³²⁹ Employees at the Manitoba Museum were quick to mention the Gallery's unique smell when asked what sorts of things they believe contribute to the Gallery's popularity. The smell comes from Stockholm tar, the sticky black waterproofing material favoured in the 17th century. It would have been regularly reapplied to a working ship, but this is not necessary on a museum piece, and so conservators' continued application of the tar is out of an understanding that the smoky smell it leaves creates a strong nostalgic connection for returning visitors. At times, jars of Stockholm tar have been left open in inaccessible areas of the Gallery, so that its smell can waft through the space.³³⁰ The Museum arranged for a local tea and coffee retailer to produce the *Nonsuch Tea*, a loose-leaf tea that is meant to recreate the Gallery's smoky scent. It is available for purchase in the Museum's gift shop, and is one of the best sellers of the *Nonsuch* specific souvenirs.³³¹

The Museum, like the HBC, has made use of anniversaries for promotion and to draw in visitors. In June 1980, for the 10th anniversary of the replica's journey to North America, the Museum offered weeks of programming including lectures for adults on the historical development of sailing vessels.³³² For the Gallery's 10th anniversary in 1984, a few original crew members travelled to Winnipeg to entertain visitors with stories of their experience sailing the replica. The *Nonsuch* replica made a list published in the *Winnipeg Free Press* for Canada's 150th anniversary, of 150 of the best things and people in Manitoba.³³³ For the replica's 40th anniversary in 2008, the Museum held a more extensive reunion celebration, attended by 11 original crew members including Captain Small and his two sons, who as children had served as

³²⁹ Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, 112.

³³⁰ Rachel Erickson and Rob Gendron interview; Cortney Pachet interview; Anya Moodie-Foster interview.

³³¹ Wendy Bilous, interview with Andrea Smorang, March 7, 2019.

³³² Wendy Clark and Debbie Thompson, "Out & About," *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 20, 1980, 23.

³³³ "Prairie Power," *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 13, 2017, D9.

cabin boys. Of the reunion, Laird Rankin wrote “this has become very much more than a reunion of *Nonsuch* crew members. It has become a ‘special event’ for the Museum, and one that will leave a valuable and important legacy to the ship [and] her story.”³³⁴

Renovations and Continued Commemoration

On 8 June 2018, 350 years and five days after the original *Nonsuch* set sail, the *Nonsuch* Gallery reopened after its first major renovation. The Manitoba Museum continued the commemorative effort started by the HBC with the marketing for the Gallery reopening. Appearing primarily on city busses, these advertisements featured an artist’s rendering of the *Nonsuch* against a backdrop of an old-fashioned map and the slogan “She’s back! Unpack the Adventure.” While one curator notes that the memorable image of the *Nonsuch* “gives the Museum an iconic visual representation in media and marketing materials,”³³⁵ HBC collection curator Amelia Fay believes it doesn’t need as much marketing as it has received, as “it has become this icon, everybody knows it’s there.”³³⁶ These advertisements are also indirectly advertisements for the HBC. It is a secondary aspect of their intended function, the primary being to promote the Museum, but the replica at the time of its construction and sailing tours was a “floating billboard for the HBC,”³³⁷ and this continues in Museum advertisements.

As the ship itself cannot be moved, at first glance the renovated Gallery does not look radically different. Several less instantly obvious updates and additions have, however, altered

³³⁴ Rankin, quoted in an email from Keith Duffield to Claudette Leclerc, Manitoba Museum Archives, Box: Nonsuch specific, Folder: Nonsuch-Re-Union, May 15, 2008.

³³⁵ Cortney Pachet interview.

³³⁶ Amelia Fay, interview with Andrea Smorang, February 7, 2019.

³³⁷ Wilson, “Anchors Aweigh!”, F7. Employees at the Manitoba Museum are acutely aware of this: Rachel Erickson, Manager of Learning and Engagement, called the replica “essentially a big, fancy marketing scheme for the Hudson's Bay Company” and discussed with me ways in which the Museum strives to be transparent about this part of the story.

the story the Museum is seeking to tell in its most impressive gallery. Chief among Fay's concerns were the knowledge that the sudden leap to England was jarring when the rest of the Museum is situated in Manitoba, and the desire to decentralize Europeans from the story told in the Gallery so that the narrative is less romanticized and nationalistic and prioritizes trade partnerships rather than European exceptionalism.³³⁸ Fay had to balance modernization with nostalgia, understanding the widespread love of the Gallery and aware that altering it to the point where it was unrecognizable would not sit well with repeat visitors. Previous changes to the Gallery have resulted in unhappy customers, such as in the summer of 1989 when unusually high humidity created problems for the sound system and the seagull track went quiet, prompting a volume of visitor complaints that the Museum found surprising.³³⁹ To achieve the feat of strengthening the connection to Canada without altering the Gallery too drastically, rather than dawn on the morning of the ship's departure in 1668, Fay has located the Gallery in 1669 on the day of the voyage's return to England. Trade goods were added to the quay side (bales of furs, along with barrels of beads and other items that would have been traded with indigenous groups) so that these partnerships are highlighted. A new soundscape has been put into the tavern, where visitors can listen to voice actors portraying crew members recounting stories of their year on James Bay. At the entrance to the Gallery, a space has been incorporated where visitors can listen to Cree Elder and historian Louis Bird recount an oral history of first contact passed down through generations of his people. The story, of a ship of clouds, strange pale creatures, and the ship being pulled up onto the beach, potentially narrates the arrival of the *Nonsuch* from the perspective of the Cree living in the area. These additions are an attempt to downplay the

³³⁸ Ian Froese, "Nautical adventure: Manitoba Museum unfurls renewed Nonsuch ship", *CBC News*, June 8, 2018.

³³⁹ "Manitoba Museum of Man & Nature Memorandum. T: Sharon Reilly. From: Leigh Syms, Subject: Nonsuch Sounds," Manitoba Museum Archives, Box: Gallery Info, Folder: Refurbishment, Nonsuch Gallery photos, planning, sketch, September 12, 1989.

nationalism and Eurocentrism in the Gallery. Rather than celebrating European colonization, they celebrate the fact that the success of the *Nonsuch* voyage was dependent on the Cree being willing to trade.³⁴⁰

A major change that most visitors will never notice was in the complete replacement of the rigging. The Museum had hired historical rigging expert Courtney Anderson eight years earlier, to assess the condition of the untarred hemp ropes and the handmade flax linen sails. He recommended the ropes be replaced with a synthetic fibre called Hempex that is designed to be identical in appearance to white hemp but lasts for much longer. He also noted some alterations to the rigging when the ropes were strung before the Gallery opening, and recommended they be returned to the original, historical style. Anderson was aware of the importance of continued authenticity in the Gallery, and recommended keeping a few of the white hemp lines that were in good condition, as hemp rope no longer exists and its presence added authenticity where the addition of synthetic rope might lessen it.³⁴¹ He was brought back in 2018 to consult with the Museum on the logistics of replacing nearly three kilometres of hemp rope with Hempex.³⁴² This was necessary for safety, as Museum staff need to climb the masts for cleaning. This change can be seen as both degrading and increasing the replica's authenticity. The hemp ropes had been a point of pride of the replica, as they were hand-braided and part of the HBC's commitment to 17th century accuracy. They also, however, had hardened over the course of four decades to the point that the sails could no longer be raised and lowered. If the replica were still sailing, damaged ropes would be replaced, and authenticity, as already explained, does not necessarily

³⁴⁰ Amelia Fay interview, Anya Moodie-Foster interview.

³⁴¹ Courtney Anderson, "Nonsuch Rigging Condition Assessment," Manitoba Museum Archives, Box: Gallery Info, Folder: Nonsuch Rigging, February 8, 2010, 1-4.

³⁴² Elisha Dacey, "From Pirates of the Caribbean to the Nonsuch: Historical rigger helps with ship renovations at Manitoba Museum", *CBC News*, 10 February 2018.

end the moment something is altered. Manager of Learning and Engagement Rachel Erickson made the case that replacing the ropes increases the ship's authenticity, because it keeps her in working condition.³⁴³

The Museum is aware that authenticity at heritage sites contains an aspect of performance, and that in some cases the appearance or believability of constructed authenticity is more important than authenticity that can be measured in other, more concrete ways. The Gallery contains other inaccuracies, such as Tyndall stone on the pathways (a type of limestone that is only quarried in Manitoba), inappropriate architectural detail, and mis-scaled buildings, but as these go mostly unnoticed by visitors, they are not considered in need of correction. Gordon Filewych, in a 1999 redesign report, called the Gallery “accurate enough” for most visitors.³⁴⁴ This is a line museums and heritage sites often toe, negotiating the precarious tipping point between promoting authenticity in places where visitors will care about it, and quietly concealing that which is inauthentic. Museums and heritage sites strive for authenticity, but they also strive for the believable presentation of authenticity, and these things do not always correlate. The 2004 consumer research study mentioned in the previous chapter also found museum visitors were more likely to believe in the authenticity of an object if it looked old and used, even if the object was a modern recreation that had been intentionally distressed to achieve this appearance.³⁴⁵ Non-scholars often have trouble granting authenticity to things that look new, “because we feel that old things should look old [and so] we may forget that they originally looked new.”³⁴⁶ This is not a phenomenon unique to museums. Part of the appeal of antique furniture is that it shows

³⁴³ Rachel Erickson and Rob Gendron interview.

³⁴⁴ Filewych, “Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature Nonsuch Gallery Refurbishment. Balcony Treatment Design Proposal,” Box: Gallery Info, Folder: Refurbishment, Nonsuch Gallery photos, planning, sketch, November 4, 1999, 2.

³⁴⁵ Grayson and Martinec, “Consumer Perceptions of Iconicity and Indexicality,” 300.

³⁴⁶ Lowenthal, “Past Time, Present Place,” 26.

physical signs of being used, and it connects the new owner in some intangible way to the people who owned it in another lifetime. Experiential authenticity is given precedence at heritage sites, through the understanding that objective and material authenticity matter less to visitors than the authentic feeling of the whole experience.³⁴⁷ Inaccuracies within the *Nonsuch* Gallery have, for the most part, not affected the experiential authenticity most visitors enjoy within it.³⁴⁸

One of the recurring questions for curators on the topic of authenticity has been whether to address the location the Gallery is supposed to depict. The original designers chose Deptford, a port town with a highly-trafficked shipyard just east of London on the River Thames. As there are no surviving notes from those early meetings, it is not entirely clear how they came to that decision, as in all written records the *Nonsuch* is said to have departed from Gravesend, a port much further down the Thames and closer to the ocean.³⁴⁹ Fay theorizes this decision might have been made because there is more information available about historic Deptford than historic Gravesend, but cannot say for sure.³⁵⁰ Adrian Small, the captain of the *Nonsuch* replica whose research and suggestions were instrumental in the design of the Gallery, wrote a letter in 1973 suggesting there was confusion in the historical record as to the originating port: Gravesend, his letter claimed, possibly did not have dockside facilities in 1668 and so the *Nonsuch* and *Eaglet* might have been fitted out at Deptford, and then sailed down the Thames to make the official

³⁴⁷ Sîntionean, "The Preservation of the Chŏnju Hanok Village," 61.

³⁴⁸ Manitoba Museum Learning and Engagement Producer Robert Gendron believes the ability for visitors to interact with Museum interpreters is an important piece in the construction of experiential authenticity, in that it gives them an opportunity to understand the story of the *Nonsuch* on a broader and more memorable scale.

³⁴⁹ MacKay, *The Honourable Company*, 22; Rich, *Hudson's Bay Company*, 38; Newman, *Company of Adventurers*, 82; Schooling, *The Hudson's Bay Company*, 4; Rankin, *The Return of The Nonsuch*, 14; "Nonsuch," HBC Heritage, accessed March 5, 2019, <http://www.hbcheritage.ca/things/technology/the-nonsuch>. An undated and untitled Museum report states "the aim of the diorama is to show the ship fitting out for the voyage to Hudson's Bay in 1668 at Gravesend Deptford, England" indicating the Museum's knowledge of this discrepancy, Manitoba Museum Archives, Box: Gallery Info, Folder: Planning Nonsuch Gallery.

³⁵⁰ Amelia Fay interview.

departure from Gravesend.³⁵¹ His theory seems to stem from reviewing HBC ledgers and noticing large debts incurred by *Nonsuch* Captain Gillam and paid to a ‘Boar’s Head Tavern’, leading Small to surmise that Gillam was entertaining important figures such as Prince Rupert or other HBC investors in the days before the voyage.³⁵² It was at Small’s suggestion this tavern be incorporated into the Gallery. The exact location of this 17th century building is unknown – while there are several current and former establishments of the same name in and around London, there is no known existence of one in Deptford. It is possible a tavern called either the Boar’s Head Inn or the Blue Boar’s Head existed in Gravesend, on High Street which does run near the river, and this is likely the tavern Gillam was referring to. Few other historical references to this tavern exist, and an exact address does not appear. While the Lost Pubs Project has this pub listed on its website as closing in 1795, it is noted that its existence remains unverified.³⁵³ Regardless, the Gallery designers chose Deptford without recording their reasoning and despite the contradiction of all written records.³⁵⁴ Museum personnel since have grappled with whether to correct this mistake. In his 1999 report, Filewych acknowledges the inaccuracy, and questioned whether it distorts the authenticity of the Gallery, but ultimately believed it made sense to continue depicting Deptford since it had already been established.³⁵⁵ During the planning for the 2018 renovations, Fay also dealt with this inaccuracy she had inherited, but

³⁵¹ Adrian Small, letter to A.D. Walter, received December 4, 1973, Manitoba Museum Archives, Box: Gallery Info, Folder: Planning Nonsuch Gallery.

³⁵² Small, notes, Manitoba Museum Archives, Box: Gallery Info, Folder: Planning Nonsuch Gallery, November 17, 1975.

³⁵³ “Boars Head”, The Lost Pubs Project, accessed June 25, 2018, http://www.closedpubs.co.uk/kent/gravesend_boarshead.html.

³⁵⁴ The original Gallery designers had considered situating it in Canada, on James Bay where the *Nonsuch* landed and the crew established the first HBC post. In an interview with Rachel Erickson, she wondered what impact that decision has had on the story the Museum has been telling with the Gallery, noting that the Museum continually struggles to insert indigenous perspectives into a Eurocentric story.

³⁵⁵ Filewych, “Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature Nonsuch Gallery Refurbishment. Balcony Treatment Design Proposal,” 2.

decided, as others had before her, to stick with Deptford.³⁵⁶ Among the reasons for this decision was the paving stone at the Gallery's entrance. Months before the opening in 1974, Princess Margaret, sister of the reigning British monarch Elizabeth II, had travelled to Winnipeg and laid a paving stone from a back alley in Deptford into the cobblestone path being constructed in the Gallery, reinforcing the ties between Canadian history and the British Empire.³⁵⁷ As removing this stone was never an option, Fay worried relocating the Gallery to Gravesend might cause confusion, and decided this inaccuracy did not lessen the effect of the Gallery enough to need addressing. Authenticity of visitor experience was prioritized over adherence to the historical record.

Finally, the Gallery now includes a wall of didactic panels that tell the story of the construction of the replica. A binder with information and photographs had sat on the deck of the *Nonsuch* replica for decades, but had been rarely noticed by visitors unless it was pointed out to them by particularly keen volunteers. This information is now displayed prominently, and Fay hopes there will be less confusion around the common question 'is it a *real* ship?', and more attention paid to the fact that the replica lived an interesting life on her own terms before retiring to the Museum. These panels are the most important addition, as they allow visitors rare insight into the role of a museum in the construction of history. History that is written, exhibited, or otherwise publicly presented is often easily accepted as 'true' by the public, but the process of creating that history is usually not made obvious to the public. Audiences are not privy to the human process of selection that decides which parts of history are preserved and which are omitted. These panels in the *Nonsuch* Gallery make plain, as more museums should, the role of curators and gallery designers in the framing of museum objects, allowing visitors a peek

³⁵⁶ Amelia Fay interview.

³⁵⁷ "Nonsuch arrival in Winnipeg marked by Princess Margaret," *Winnipeg Tribune*, May 13, 1974, 8.

behind-the-scenes to disrupt the assumed neutrality and authority of the museum as an institution. Treating the story of the replica as if it is just as interesting and important as the story of the original also indirectly lessens Eurocentrism in the Gallery, because it demonstrates that the creation of Canada cannot be told in a single, uncontested historical narrative, but rather that the story of the *Nonsuch* is one that has been purposely prioritized by the HBC over other national origin stories.

While the Manitoba Museum of the 1970s was a good example of Hooper-Greenhill's 'post-museum,' the *Nonsuch* Gallery after the 2018 reopening is perhaps a good example of what has begun to take place in the *post-post-museum*. We are perhaps entering a new phase of museum history and heritage tourism, far enough along from the heritage boom that we can now look back upon those years with a critical eye. We can recognize both the mistakes made then and the ways that our societies have changed and evolved since, and begin to reorganize that heritage so that it is presented in ways that better reflect how the racial, social, and economic assumptions of the past could affect the ways history was made public. In light especially of a resurgence of white nationalist movements in North America and Europe and of authoritarianism globally, museums have more of a responsibility than ever to engage in controversial or undesirable parts of history. Shying away from these topics is a dereliction of their duty to perform the public and civic functions that are so vital to museums' modern existence. Museums and heritage sites must be places where the presentation of history is multi-faceted and nuanced, where information is democratized, and where the influence of power structures on public memory is made plain and effectively challenged.

As the English fur trade is still, unavoidably, the story being told in the *Nonsuch* Gallery, it remains a shrine to the HBC and likely always will. This is not the fault of current or future

curators, but a legacy they have inherited. The Company was selective about which pieces of their heritage to promote to the public and they chose to prioritize the *Nonsuch*, and to situate the history of its inaugural voyage as synonymous with the creation of Canada, when to be inflexibly technical, the original *Nonsuch* existed on the periphery of the history of Canada. It was built in England, loaned to an English king for an expedition led by two Frenchmen and financed by wealthy English aristocrats, captained by an American man from Boston, with a French doctor and an English crew. It landed on a territory that in 1668 did not belong to New France, the colony that would become part of post-Conquest colonial Canada. The gift shop booklet mentioned at the beginning of this chapter venerated the 17th century as an age of adventure, “a time when men were drawn to the New World in search of the elusive Northwest Passage to the Orient. The efforts of some of these explorers produced the beginnings of settlement and trade on this continent.”³⁵⁸ These statements also exist on the periphery of truth. 17th century explorers cannot accurately be credited with either the first European settlement in the Americas – to our knowledge, this distinction belongs to Norse explorers from Iceland in the 10th century – nor was it the beginning of trade on the continent. Indigenous nations utilized extensive trade networks for thousands of years before the first European foot ever stepped on New World soil. While this booklet is undated, it would not have been sold before the Gallery opening in 1974, and the remains of the Norse site in present-day Newfoundland had been found over a decade before the Museum opened, so ignorance cannot be claimed as an excuse for this incorrect information. Canada has many other points that could be considered its historical origins: Jacques Cartier’s first voyage to the Gaspé Peninsula in 1534 and the claiming of the land for Francis I, or the founding of Québec City in 1608, to say nothing of thousands of years of indigenous history that

³⁵⁸ “Nonsuch. Hudson’s Bay Company,” Manitoba Museum souvenir booklet, 1.

is disappearing at an alarming rate as languages are lost in the deaths of their remaining speakers. The HBC instead made their history the most important, and the *Nonsuch* replica was an enormous, impressive, mobile billboard communicating this narrative in the early 1970s and continuing to the present at the Manitoba Museum. The Gallery serves as a monument to the HBC and to Canada, contributing to national and collective identity by preserving and legitimizing this chosen origin story.

Epilogue

The *Nonsuch* replica has been the legal property of the Manitoba Museum since the HBC's official gift in the 1970s, but the Company has remained a central partner in this project of continued commemoration. Partial funding for the Gallery's 2018 renovations came from the HBC History Foundation.³⁵⁹ Most notably, in March 1994, the HBC used the deck of the *Nonsuch* as a stage to announce their donation of the entire HBC archival collection to Winnipeg. Textual documents were to be housed at the Manitoba Archives, and physical artifacts at the Museum. Part of the collection had already been on display in Winnipeg in the 1920s at the flagship HBC store on Portage Avenue. An undated Museum pamphlet likely from the 1990s claimed these exhibitions in 1922 and 1926 were among the first major public museums in Western Canada.³⁶⁰ Promotional pamphlets state the collection to be valued at nearly \$60 million, and included millions of documents and more than 6000 artifacts. The HBC also donated \$23 million toward supporting and maintaining this archive.³⁶¹ Artifacts include items from indigenous and Métis communities, trade goods from the HBC's many trading posts, and furnishings from the HBC head office in London, of which some are from the 17th century and would have been used by the first Company officials.

A portion of this collection is now on display in a gallery directly adjacent to the *Nonsuch* Gallery, reinforcing both the replica's connection to the HBC and the HBC's connection to Canada. In a 1994 Museum pamphlet, this collection is called "a gift to the nation" that was donated for "the benefit of all Canadians." The collection is said to celebrate the legacy of the HBC and all those associated with the Company as people possessing the "remarkable spirit of

³⁵⁹ Wilson, "Anchors Aweigh!", F4.

³⁶⁰ "Hudson's Bay Company Museum Collection. Manitoba's National Treasure," Manitoba Museum Pamphlet, undated.

³⁶¹ Don Langford, "Holding history in our hands," *Winnipeg Free Press*, March 16, 1994, B3.

human creativity, perseverance and accomplishment.”³⁶² An undated pamphlet is even more complimentary of the HBC, so much that it seems likely HBC advertisers were consulted on the wording and language used. It asserts the collection is “one of the world’s most significant archival and museum resources” and that it constitutes “in large measure, the history of Canada from the time of the early explorers through Confederation.”³⁶³ Both pamphlets are careful to emphasize that the 6000 items found their way into the Company’s holdings through donation, purchase, and trade. Given the long tradition of European theft and appropriation of indigenous artifacts, it is likely that at least a few items in this vast collection were acquired through nefarious means, despite the Company’s claims. Since 1994, this collection has served as a more obvious shrine to the HBC because unlike the *Nonsuch* Gallery, the HBC Gallery is full of text and photographs and other means that convey the importance of the Company through this impressive assortment of artifacts. If funds were unlimited, the Museum would be wise to update the HBC Gallery. More than any other in the museum, despite being one of the newer exhibits, this gallery functions like a traditional cabinet of curiosities. It is a room filled with treasures in glass cases, celebratory of the HBC in a one-sided way, and therefore steeped in European exceptionalism. For all the improvements Fay and her team made to the *Nonsuch* Gallery, that work is almost immediately undermined by the HBC Gallery, when visitors are thrust right back into a space that celebrates the accomplishments of European men and tells history only through their limited perspective. But funds, of course, are never unlimited, and this is the struggle of all museums, large and small.

³⁶² “Hudson’s Bay Company Museum Collection. A Gift to the Nation,” Manitoba Museum Pamphlet, 1994.

³⁶³ “Hudson’s Bay Company Museum Collection. Manitoba’s National Treasure,” Manitoba Museum Pamphlet, undated.

Outside of the Manitoba Museum, the HBC has almost completely abandoned the *Nonsuch* in their own marketing. Once a staple of their proudly celebrated history – and used extensively on merchandise available at their department stores such as cookie tins and commemorative plates – in 2019 the only place the *Nonsuch* appears on the store website is on a linen tea towel depicting a map of Canada that shows many important HBC ships, figures, forts, and trading posts. In recent years, the HBC’s efforts to remain a relevant part of Canadian history and nationalism have come in the form of providing the athletes’ uniforms for the Winter and Summer Olympics, along with officially licenced Olympic apparel sold in their stores. They had been involved in the Olympics decades earlier, first dressing athletes in 1936 in Point Blanket coats that became, by their own estimation, “an internationally recognized symbol of Canada,”³⁶⁴ but other retailers took over after 1968. The HBC returned to the Olympic stage in the 2000s, winning the bid to design Team Canada’s uniforms for the 2006 Games in Turin, Italy, and retained that contract for the next six Games (Beijing 2008, Vancouver 2010, London 2012, Sochi 2014, Rio de Janeiro 2016, and PyeongChang 2018).³⁶⁵ The 2010 Winter Games were the real triumph for the Company: flag-bearer Clara Hughes led Team Canada during the opening ceremonies donning a scarf with the yellow, red, green, and blue stripes of the iconic HBC Point Blankets, and the red Olympic mittens with a white Maple Leaf on each palm became such a phenomenon during the winter of 2010 that HBC retailers couldn’t reorder them fast enough to avoid empty shelves.³⁶⁶ Over three million pairs were sold, and every year since the HBC has launched a new design of red Canada mittens in a largely successful attempt to continue riding

³⁶⁴ “HBC and Sports,” HBC Heritage, accessed May 3, 2019, <http://www.hbcheritage.ca/history/social-history/hbc-and-sports>.

³⁶⁵ Jennifer Choy, “The Style Evolution of Canada’s Winter Olympic Uniforms Shows How Far We’ve Come,” *Huffpost*, February 13, 2018.

³⁶⁶ Dana Flavelle, “Red-hot Olympic mittens were a last-minute addition,” *The Star*, March 1, 2010.

that wave. The success of Canadian athletes at the 2010 Games spawned a resurgence in Canadian patriotism, and the HBC took full advantage of their part in it. In 2013, the HBC rebranded their department stores for a second time, renaming them from ‘The Bay’ to ‘Hudson’s Bay’,³⁶⁷ and in the years since have managed to make the colourful stripes of their original Point Blankets ‘cool’ again among Canadian citizens of all ages. They created the ‘HBC Stripes’ collection: an ever-expanding line of merchandise including at present over 200 items. Apparel, houseware items like dishes and pillows, luggage, and even clothing for small dogs, are among the extensive list of items onto which the HBC has put their stripes. Symbols of Canadiana like canoes, paddles, and the wilderness are common in this line. They may have moved on from the *Nonsuch*, but the HBC has continued their heritage-branding efforts, and have been far more successful in this endeavour in the last decade than they were in the previous half-century.

The Manitoba Museum continues to welcome around 80,000 students annually in school groups that, more often than not, request the fur trade programming that centres around the *Nonsuch* Gallery. It continues, as it has been since the Gallery’s opening, to be the “best known exhibit” at the Museum,³⁶⁸ and one that helps to “define Manitoba’s and Canada’s social and cultural identity.”³⁶⁹ The 2018 renovations changed the story the Gallery seeks to tell, but have not lessened its status as one of the most well-known and frequently visited tourist attractions in the province. In the 45 years since the *Nonsuch* Gallery opened, it has become embedded in the consciousness of Manitobans. This is not universal across the province, but I argue it is enough

³⁶⁷ Opp, “Branding ‘the Bay’,” 255.

³⁶⁸ Filewych, “Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature Nonsuch Gallery Refurbishment. Design Report prepared by Gordon Filewych, Phase 1 & 2, August 31/99,” 1.

³⁶⁹ Manitoba Museum Archives, Box: Gallery Info, Folder: HGAC Nonsuch Research Grant Grant proposal, undated (but likely 1999 or 2000).

of a shared pastime to have become an activity that constitutes collective local culture instead of just individual interest. The locally iconic status of the *Nonsuch* is even clearer when it becomes visible in places outside of the Museum. Chocolatier *Constance Popp* is a Winnipeg-based shop that sells Manitoba-specific creations such as chocolate replicas of the Golden Boy (a gold-plated statue holding a sheaf of wheat, perched atop the Manitoba Legislative Building) and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. The shop sells bars with the *Nonsuch* on them, and the owner indicated her Manitoba-specific creations are popular with local customers and tourists.³⁷⁰ The *Nonsuch Brewing Company*, a local brewery and taproom located just behind the Manitoba Museum in Winnipeg's Exchange District, chose their name in part because they knew it was recognizable to Manitobans and a source of local pride.³⁷¹ Although none of the company's four founders are from Winnipeg, all are Manitoban, and the *Nonsuch* Gallery was still a cherished memory for them from childhood fieldtrips to the capital city. The brewery has recently joined with the Museum to offer adult programming in the *Nonsuch* Gallery, hosting a discussion of what the Gallery means to Manitobans followed by a short walk to their taproom for a tasting of their locally-brewed Belgian-style beers. In a review of the 2018 renovations published in the local academic history journal *Manitoba History*, Tom Kynman wrote, "*Nonsuch* has been the iconic centerpiece of the Museum since it was opened in 1974" and that it remains "one of the most impressive galleries you might encounter in any museum."³⁷² Collective memory and identity is built by shared experience, as many have argued and as I have articulated in this thesis. The *Nonsuch* Gallery contributes to Winnipeg and Manitoba a shared experience that not only builds local identity, but also disseminates national history that contributes to broader

³⁷⁰ Constance Menzies, interview with Andrea Smorang, April 4, 2019.

³⁷¹ Ben Myers, interview with Andrea Smorang, February 20, 2019.

³⁷² Tom Kynman, "Exhibit Review: Renewed Nonsuch Gallery, Manitoba Museum," *Manitoba History* 88 (2018): 32.

identities such as those of a province or a nation. When explaining to Winnipeg residents he was working on the *Nonsuch* renovations, rigger Courtney Anderson reported consistent reactions: “they’re like ‘Oh man, I went to that when I was a little kid.’ Everyone. Everyone.”³⁷³ It is, of course, not literally everyone. But just as national identity requires an intangible, imagined cohesion of collective sameness and shared experience among people who will never meet, the *Nonsuch* Gallery in Winnipeg occupies a space in Manitoba that is imagined to be cohesive and collective, and is therefore integral to local identity.

³⁷³ Courtney Anderson, quoted in Elisha Dacey, “From Pirates of the Caribbean to the Nonsuch: Historical rigger helps with ship renovations at Manitoba Museum,” *CBC News*, February 10, 2018.

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Appendix: Sample Interview Consent Form

Research Project Working Title: *The Nonsuch Gallery: Constructing a Cultural Icon*

Principal Investigator: Andrea Smorang smoranga@myumanitoba.ca

Research Supervisor: Len Kuffert Len.kuffert@umanitoba.ca

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Name of Participant: (please print) _____

1. This research is part of an MA thesis project that seeks to understand the role the *Nonsuch* replica and gallery have played in the cultural history of Winnipeg. It will detail the history of the replica and gallery, and will address topics such as authenticity, tourism, and group identity. The thesis seeks to argue that this gallery has become a cultural icon in Winnipeg, and that it occupies a unique space in the city's collective identity as one of the most popular attractions for over four decades.
2. As a participant, you are consenting to one oral interview of approximately 30 minutes to one hour, with Andrea Smorang (hereafter referred to as the 'researcher'). If additional time is requested by the researcher, it is the participant's right to decline.
3. With the participant's permission, interviews may be recorded and stored on a personal computer as audio files for the use of the researcher.

I give permission for the researcher to record my interview

Yes ____ No ____

4. The participant will not benefit from participation beyond a chance to discuss a topic that is of interest to them.
5. There are no anticipated risks to the participant. If the participant is concerned about any aspect of the study, they should discuss this with the researcher prior to the interview. Potential social ramifications can be mitigated by requesting to remain anonymous.
6. The full name and job description of the participant may be included in the finished thesis. Interviews may also be quoted directly. No other personal information will be collected.

I give permission for my full name and job description to be published

Yes ____ No ____

If the participant wishes to remain anonymous, their full name and job description will be kept on the personal computer of the researcher but will not be published.

7. Monetary compensation will not be provided to any participants.
8. Following the interview, the participant may withdraw their participation by contacting the researcher by email and indicating their desire to withdraw. Once the participant has withdrawn, the transcript of their interview will be immediately destroyed and information from it will not appear in the final thesis. However, this will only be possible up until the final thesis has been submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (approximately November, 2019).
9. If the interview has been recorded, participants will be provided upon request of a transcript no later than two weeks following the interview. If permission to record the interview was not given, participants will be given a copy of the researcher's notes from the interview (also upon request) within the same time frame.

I would like a copy of my interview transcript / the researcher's notes

Yes _____ No _____

Please provide an email address where this information can be sent

10. The results of the interview may appear (at times via direct quotations) in the final thesis unless confidentiality has been requested. There are no other researchers with whom this information will be shared. At present, the researcher does not plan to submit the thesis for publication or use the research results in any further studies. With your permission, interview transcripts will be kept indefinitely on the researcher's personal computer to potentially be used in future projects.

I give permission for the researcher to keep the transcript of my interview indefinitely

Yes _____ No _____

I give permission for the researcher to use the transcript of my interview in future projects

Yes _____ No _____

If either "no" box has been checked, the transcripts will be destroyed after the submission of the final thesis – no later than September 2020.

11. If the participant wishes to receive a summary of their interview, one will be provided no later than two weeks following the interview.
- 12.

I wish to receive a summary of my interview

Yes _____ No _____

Please provide an email address where this information can be sent

13. Confidential data will be destroyed (deleted permanently from the researcher's personal computer) no later than September 2020.
14. In the event that the Manitoba Museum wishes to keep interview transcripts in their archives at 190 Rupert Avenue (Winnipeg, MB), these transcripts may be kept indefinitely and viewed by other researchers and/or museum personnel. Please indicate below whether you consent to this

- _____ I give permission for the Manitoba Museum to keep my transcript indefinitely with my full name attached to it
- _____ I give permission for the Manitoba Museum to keep my transcript indefinitely with my name redacted
- _____ I do not give permission for the Manitoba Museum to keep my transcript

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project, you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's Signature _____ Date _____