BY THE SIDE OF “THE ROARING LION”:
YOUSUF KARSH’S PORTRAIT OF WINSTON CHURCHILL AND
BRITISH/CANADIAN WARTIME RELATIONS

by

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ABSTRACT

Canadian photographer Yousuf Karsh’s 1941 portrait of British Prime Minister Winston Churchill was published in newspapers, magazines and books throughout the Second World War; commonly referred to as “The Roaring Lion”, it served as a symbol of the strength of the Allied forces. To this day the image is reproduced in monographs, exhibition catalogues and biographies celebrating the lives of Winston Churchill and Yousuf Karsh. In this paper I move beyond the emphasis on the sitter and the photographer in order to argue that this photographic portrait served as the visual rhetoric of British/Canadian wartime relations. My assertion, that in its reception this portrait both reflected and shaped Canada’s wartime role in the British Commonwealth, stems from consideration of an often overlooked detail in the photograph – a speech to the Canadian Parliament in Churchill’s coat pocket.

My study of the Churchill portrait is framed by Roland Barthes’s reflections on the photographic pose and Max Kozloff’s arguments concerning the theatricality of formal portraiture. I begin by tracing how the story of “The Roaring Lion” has evolved since its inception, establishing that previous studies have only touched upon the significance of this portrait from the perspective of a Canadian wartime audience. I suggest that this photograph of Churchill served a purpose in appealing to both political and public desires, fulfilling the need for an image of a strong leader at this particular point in the Allied and specifically Canadian war effort. Further exploration of the broader historical context demonstrates how the nature of Canada’s wartime role may be characterized as a struggle to exercise newfound sovereignty while remaining loyally at the side of the British.
Finally, I examine why Karsh’s traditional style of formal portraiture appealed to the Canadian government as a form of unobtrusive war propaganda. I compare several of Karsh’s portrait studies of Canadian Prime Minister W.L. Mackenzie King to that of the Churchill portrait, in order to further support my assertion that this image of the British leader contributed to the rhetoric surrounding Canada’s wartime role – by the side of “The Roaring Lion”.
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DEDICATION

To my parents Len and Paula Lesser – you made it all possible.
INTRODUCTION: IN THE POCKET OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

“It is no accident that the photographer becomes a photographer any more than the lion tamer becomes a lion tamer.”¹

“Well, you certainly can make a roaring lion stand still to be photographed.”² These oft-quoted words were spoken on December 30, 1941, by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in response to the actions of Canadian photographer Yousuf Karsh. Just moments earlier, Karsh had removed a cigar from Churchill’s mouth in his determination to compose a portrait without the familiar theatrical prop. The result was a photograph known as “The Roaring Lion” (Figure 1), with the Prime Minister staring “defiantly and ferociously at the camera, barely restraining himself” in an image described as “the symbol of the British Empire’s resistance against Nazi Germany.”³

Featured on a wartime broadsheet alongside excerpts from Churchill’s speeches, later reproduced on letterheads, postage stamps, and book covers, splashed across the front pages of newspapers around the world upon Churchill’s death – this was a photograph inexorably tied to the legacy of the British Prime Minister. The image has also been taken up in recent monographs, exhibition catalogues and biographies, as the pivotal achievement of Karsh’s career. What is often overlooked, however, is the extent to which this photographic portrait

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contributed to the visual construction of British/Canadian “pocket colonialism.””⁴ I use the term pocket colonialism to refer to a self-governing, semi-autonomous, wartime Canada, relegated to the “back pocket” of the British Empire: out of sight, easily forgotten, but close at hand when the need arose. This term is particularly appropriate with regards to a small detail in Karsh’s portrait of Churchill – several crumpled sheets of paper which protruded from the Prime Minister’s coat pocket. James Borcoman, in a 1989 exhibition catalogue, went so far as to shroud it in mystery by stating, “What did this great man so hastily jam into his pocket as to crinkle the edges of the paper? We shall never know but forever remain intrigued.”⁵ To describe the nature of this paper as a mystery was, however, highly misguided: the photograph’s caption in a 1942 issue of LIFE magazine specifically described how Churchill had just given a speech to the Canadian Parliament, and “the text is seen in his pocket.”⁶

Despite its newfound lack of mystery, this detail nonetheless remains intriguing, serving as a source of further inquiry into the significance of the photograph. How had “The Roaring Lion”, with its inadvertent inclusion of the speech in the coat pocket of the British Prime Minister, served as the visual rhetoric of Canada’s wartime struggle for recognition? In other words, how might this image have both reflected and influenced Canada’s role within an evolving British Commonwealth? From this seemingly insignificant detail – a visual reminder of the historical context – emerges a new means of understanding “The Roaring Lion”, recognition of the role served by Yousuf Karsh’s photographic portrait of Winston Churchill at this particular moment of Canadian history.

⁴ The term “pocket colonialism” was suggested by John O’Brien, University of British Columbia.
THE PHOTOGRAPHIC POSE AND THE PORTRAIT STORY

My understanding of the photographic portrait in general and “The Roaring Lion” in particular have been founded upon Roland Barthes’ reflections on photography in *Camera Lucida*. Most influential are Barthes’ thoughts concerning the photographic pose:

> Once I feel myself observed by the lens, everything changes; I constitute myself in the process of ‘posing,’ I instantaneously make another body for myself, I transform myself in advance into an image […] I lend myself to the social game, I pose, I know I am posing, I want you to know that I am posing […] In front of the lens, I am at the same time: the one I think I am, the one I want others to think I am, the one the photographer thinks I am, and the one he makes use of to exhibit his art.7

Barthes’ thoughts on the nature of the photographic pose seem only to pertain to images in which the sitter is aware of the camera, to the exclusion of the more instantaneous photograph which catches the sitter unawares or by surprise. This act of posing appears irrelevant in the case of Karsh’s photograph of Churchill, as the Prime Minister was caught off-guard by the photographer in a moment of anger and was not posing for the camera. There is, however, another means of viewing the Churchill portrait with regards to the act of posing. Churchill may not have been posing for the camera, yet he was nonetheless consciously assuming a pose in that moment – his expression of such profound anger and defiance was intended to disarm, frighten, or in the very least humble, this man who had dared cross him. It is true that Churchill was not consciously posing for the camera, but it could be said that Churchill was assuming another image for himself, a pose intended not for the camera but for the man who had defied him.

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Ultimately, it was Churchill’s pose for the man who had removed his cigar, conveying the briefest moment of outright anger and belligerence, which was forever arrested in “The Roaring Lion” photograph. It is here that one of Barthes’ other passages concerning the pose is of particular significance:

The physical duration of this pose is of little consequence…there has still been a pose, for the pose is not, here, the attitude of the target or even a technique of the Operator, but the term of an ‘intention’ of reading: looking at a photograph, I inevitably include in my scrutiny the thought of that instant, however brief, in which a real thing happened to be motionless in front of the eye. I project the present photography’s immobility upon the past shot, and it is this arrest which constitutes the pose.8

The instantaneous pose is about neither the attitude of the sitter nor the intention of the photographer but rather the reception of the viewer. It is this viewer who reads from the photograph that moment when the sitter was momentarily motionless, and thus it is the viewer who constructs the pose. Michael Fried, in his essay on Barthes, describes the pose in such instantaneous photographs as “an artifact of the encounter of the product of the photographic event and the viewer.”9 Taking this into consideration, I will approach Karsh’s photographic portrait of Churchill as “The Roaring Lion” by devoting attention to the viewer’s reception of his pose, rather than emphasizing to any great extent the intentions of either the sitter or the photographer – for it is the viewer’s reading and projections upon Churchill’s pose that are of particular consequence.

8 Ibid., 78.
In his 2007 publication *The Theatre of the Face: Portrait Photography Since 1900*, Max Kozloff provides a further means of understanding the photographic pose and the significance of formal portraiture. He refers to the portrait photograph in theatrical terms, as a dramaturgy in which “sitters interviewed for temporary parts in their own lives”; thus, formal portraiture “as a showcase of expedient response or positions taken” ought to be regarded as equally revealing as candid or off-guard portraiture. Kozloff argues that it would be questionable to approach the photographic portrait with the intention of drawing out the personality of the sitter “by seeing through them”; rather, the motivation ought to be the elucidation of the picture, treating the portrait as “the outcomes of occasions that had very specific cultural, entrepreneurial, political, institutional or artistic usages.” He also warns that if a study is limited to the necessary investigation of the portrait’s uses (the technical aspect) or modes and genres (the historical), the end result lacks “warmth and sensuality.” For this, Kozloff suggests, the enquiry ought to venture into the realm of portrait stories:

> Just as it is difficult to navigate without a map, so it is hard to interpret a portrait situation without a script. One has to fathom the effect of nerves and egos on each other, through pictorial crosscurrents. However obscured their dialogue, an impression of it is central to our portrait experience.

My exploration of “The Roaring Lion” photograph is guided by Kozloff’s advice, blending “the findings of history, a discussion of uses, and the reconstruction of story” with criticism in order to enliven the portrait.

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11 Ibid., 10.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid., 11.
14 Ibid.
THE STORY OF “THE ROARING LION”

The story of “The Roaring Lion” has evolved since its inception: from the tale circulated by the artist himself as he established his career; to the later, and much expanded, version of a Canadian photography curator; to the inclusion of the relevant historical context in a recent posthumous biography. The circumstances of the photographic session with Churchill were first established by Yousuf Karsh’s wife, Solange, who had taken detailed notes of the sitting – something she had done at all of her husband’s sessions with renowned individuals. She then distributed a text entitled “Now It Can Be Told About Churchill’s Portrait” to Karsh’s agents as the accompaniment to copies of the Churchill photograph.15 This text – used by newspapers throughout Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom for their telling of the tale – was the basis for the passage accompanying the Churchill portrait in the first published collection of Karsh’s portraits, *Faces of Destiny* (1946), and was further elaborated in Karsh’s 1962 autobiography, *In Search of Greatness*.

In *Faces of Destiny* Karsh described how the photographic study of Britain’s wartime leader was made in the Speaker’s Chambers of the Canadian House of Commons following his speech. Canadian Prime Minister W.L. Mackenzie King had obtained permission for Karsh to make the portrait – chiefly because it was to become part of Canada’s National Archives – but could only reserve a few moments for the sitting; moreover, this had been arranged without Churchill’s prior knowledge.16 As such, Karsh made all of the preparations the evening

beforehand, using the Steward of the House of Commons as a stand-in and pre-arranging the ideal position, pose, and lighting for his subject.\textsuperscript{17} It was at this time that Karsh decided he would photograph Churchill without his usual prop, the cigar, because he deemed it inappropriate for the solemnity and formality of the occasion.\textsuperscript{18}

Churchill was unimpressed with the photographer’s ambush upon his entrance to the Speaker’s Chamber; grudgingly, he granted Karsh the opportunity to take just one shot. What happened next has been endlessly repeated – much to Karsh’s delight and due in part to his careful self-promotion – and has garnered the status of lore in the lives of Karsh and Churchill alike:

He stuck a freshly lighted cigar in the corner of his mouth and waited. I was expecting just that and had prepared for it. ‘Sir,’ I said, ‘here is an ash tray.’ He dismissed it with a disapproving frown, but there was not time for more persuasion, gentle or otherwise. I took the cigar from him and clicked the shutter as soon as I could reach the camera…I expected a justifiable outburst, but instead the great man genially shook my hand. ‘Well, you can certainly make a roaring lion stand still to be photographed.’\textsuperscript{19}

Just prior to speaking such memorable words, Churchill had recovered from his surprise at the photographer’s actions and told Karsh that he could take a second picture (Figure 2); as Karsh described in his autobiography, this time the Prime Minister “smiled benignly, and stood, gay and smiling.”\textsuperscript{20} In this second photograph, Churchill had regained his composure and consciously assumed a friendlier expression; in Barthes’ terms, in the second photograph Churchill had constituted himself in the process of posing and transformed in advance into the image he wished to project.

\textsuperscript{18} Yousuf Karsh, \textit{Portraits of Greatness} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959), 44.
\textsuperscript{19} Karsh, \textit{Faces of Destiny}, 40.
\textsuperscript{20} Karsh, \textit{In Search of Greatness}, 67.
Karsh could not possibly have foreseen Churchill’s response to having his cigar removed from between his teeth, resulting in that now iconic “Churchillian scowl,” an expression of belligerence and anger. It was not simply a matter of instinct, as he would later write in *Portraits of Greatness* (1959), which had him remove the cigar, but rather a desire to follow through with the previously planned details of the portrait. He did, however, have the foresight to make the most of that fleeting moment and release the shutter, resulting in a portrait that he would later describe as “the image of England in those years, defiant and unconquerable.”

From the moment of the photograph’s inception to his autobiography twenty years later, Karsh had ensured that his telling of the story, in which he assumed a lead role, would forever be intertwined with the image of “The Roaring Lion”.

In 1989, James Borcoman, then Curator of Photographs at the National Gallery of Canada, organized an exhibition entitled “Karsh: The Art of the Portrait.” In the exhibition catalogue he re-told the story of “The Roaring Lion” in a manner near hyperbolic in its effort to endow the photographer with the status of artistic genius. Borcoman attributed the success of the portrait to skill, luck, and insight. Though it was luck that Churchill had continued to puff on his cigar, and then conveyed such an expression at its removal, it was Karsh’s insight that had him so determined to remove the cigar and make the exposure at that very moment in what Borcoman rather excessively declares “the act of genius.”

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21 *Karsh, Portraits of Greatness*, 44.
22 *Borcoman*, 74.
In an effort to establish Karsh’s photographic skill, Borcoman associated the Churchill portrait with a long tradition of Western portrait painting, as epitomized in his description of the lighting, arranged “to place the emphasis upon Churchill’s head, turning it into a metaphor for power, intellectual force, heroic strength and canny wisdom...to reinforce the symbol of glowing power.”23 In *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, Joanna Woodall explains how during the Dutch Republic of the seventeenth century there was a growing demand to represent elites that were outside of the hereditary noble order; the emphasis in a portrait was placed on “the head and the hands of the non-aristocratic body” to stress the origin of thought, spirit and personality, rather than on the “trunk and genital area which conventionally characterized nobility of blood.”24

Moreover, Karsh’s role as photographer did not end with the release of the shutter, as it was also the selection and skilled use of printing materials that contributed to the force of the image. Borcoman described how the portrait was printed on a matte silver photographic paper called Opal V (which ceased to be manufactured in the 1960s), with a sandpapery surface often referred to as having a suede finish. This surface provided an extensive range of tones, which Karsh used to great effect in the Churchill portrait: from the deep, warm blacks receding into the background, “suggesting a mysterious presence,” to the glint of the metal watch-chain and the “glow of the luminous and softly modulated white shirt and handkerchief.”25 In his telling of the story Borcoman made it clear that Karsh’s skill as a photographer was to be seen as equal to that of the more traditional artist. Additionally, in his version there is a particular curatorial message

23 Ibid.
25 Borcoman, 74.
concerning the print itself – a vintage photographic print of the Churchill portrait on Opal V paper was to be valued as a unique (and unreproducible) art object.26

It was not until several years after the 2002 death of Yousuf Karsh that another version of “The Roaring Lion” story was published in Maria Tippett’s biography, Portrait of Light and Shadow: The Life of Yousuf Karsh. Tippett provided a broader historical context, including the details of Winston Churchill’s speech to the Canadian House of Commons, and his intention of persuading Canada to increase their already impressive supply of troops and resources to the Allied war effort. Now that the United States was in the war, Churchill had argued, Canada “occupied ‘a unique position in the British Empire because of its unbreakable ties with Britain and its ever-growing friendship and intimate associations with the United States.’”27 Tippett also described the technical details of the photographic session: that Karsh had used an 8-by-10-inch Agfa view camera with a 14-inch Ektar lens; and that his extensive lighting was made up of six floodlights in the place of the old north window, two spotlights to provided accents, and a background light.28 From the archived notes of that night, dictated by Yousuf to Solange, come the words that Karsh had used to convince the Prime Minister to permit the brief sitting: “Sir,

26 Vintage is a market term in use since the 1970s to denote a photographic print made by or under the supervision of the photographer, within five years of the negative’s creation. A vintage print is considered more valuable than later or posthumous prints, in part because older papers provided a greater (or different) tonal range than modern materials.
28 Tippett, 139.
these photographs may be the ones which will serve as a constant source of hope and inspiration which you have created in the heart of the civilized world.”

What had previously been excluded from the story was that Karsh had proceeded to take several other candid photographs of the Canadian Prime Minister with his British counterpart. It was Mackenzie King who had arranged for Karsh’s photographic encounter with the British Prime Minister, as he was “as eager to be photographed with his British counterpart as Karsh himself was to photograph Churchill.” One of these unposed images (Figure 3), published January 10, 1942, on an inside page of Canada’s weekly general-interest magazine Saturday Night, depicted a laughing Mackenzie King glancing over at Churchill, who in turn looked into the camera with a slight smile. The photograph was deemed unsuitable by Mackenzie King, as he felt that their jovial expressions were incongruous with the serious nature of their meeting; he had not been posing for this photograph, and thus had not been granted the opportunity to constitute himself into the image he wished to convey. King’s concern regarding the public reception of such unposed images assured that these other photographs from that most famous sitting would be relegated to the archives. In the end, there had been no formal sitting of the two men and, as “The Roaring Lion” photograph garnered immediate and widespread success, Mackenzie King’s role was all but forgotten.

Tippett also described how “The Roaring Lion” photograph was by no means an untouched exposure; the making of a formal portrait, even a photographic portrait, required the

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29 Ibid., 141.
30 Ibid., 135.
31 Ibid., 150.
same adjustments that might be made by any painter. Karsh had to make Churchill look less tired and more robust (Figure 4): he cropped the negative, eliminating a blemish on the negative in the upper left corner, bringing Churchill to the forefront to give him a more commanding presence, and emphasizing the pyramidal composition. He darkened the shadows and added highlights, drawing attention to the face and giving more strength to the feminine-looking hands. He brought the details into focus, giving sharper definition to the shirt buttons, the ring, watch chain, handkerchief, and the speech in Churchill’s coat pocket. The end result was a photograph of a confident and indomitable world leader, conveying nothing of the recent news that the British troops in Singapore would likely fall to the Japanese, or the dangerous ocean voyage home to Britain. As Tippett adroitly states:

> Just like the Old Masters who made kings and queens appear more beautiful or more powerful than they were, Karsh had used artful manipulation to transform an unpromising negative of a tired, overweight, sick and slightly annoyed man into a photograph of a heroic figure who had just told the world, ‘If anybody likes to play rough, we can play rough too.’

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32 Tippett, 146.
33 Ibid., 148.
34 Ibid
“The Roaring Lion” has been taken up as the story of a turning point in the career of a portrait photographer; it has been used to demonstrate the value of the photographic medium; and it has also been examined within the broader historical context. What has not been fully considered, however, is the extent to which this portrait served as the visual rhetoric of British/Canadian wartime relations. Why was the image of the glowering Churchill preferable to that second photograph of a smiling Churchill at this point in the war? That is, why did the image of “The Roaring Lion” appeal to the public at this time? Moreover, how did the photograph pertain to the particular nature of Canadian relations with the British Empire?

In 1955, when photohistorian Helmut Gernsheim compiled a photographic biography of Winston Churchill, he wrote of Karsh’s portrait that, “[it] will, I am convinced, outlive all other representations of the great man in any medium, for the simple reason that it is more characteristic of him than any other portrait I know.”35 However, as we know, Karsh had also taken a second photograph of Churchill just moments after capturing that more renowned image. It was a near duplicate of the first image, but by this time the Prime Minister had regained his composure and was seen smiling for the camera. In fact, the smiling portrait had initially been Karsh’s favourite, as he believed that this smile of confidence was preferable to that “very dour and solemn” first portrait – and he had a valid reason for such belief.36 “The Roaring Lion” has been compared to the 1932 portrait of Churchill by Edward Steichen, an artist whose work Karsh

36 Tippett, 148.
had long admired and would continue to emulate throughout his career. The Steichen portrait presented a similar pose and expression, with Churchill glowering unrelentingly into the lens, his face hardened in an expression of profound determination, his jutting chin conveying his stubborn and tenacious nature. In December of 1940, Cecil Beaton had also depicted Churchill’s belligerence on film, having pushed open the door to the Cabinet Room where Churchill was seated at his desk, conveying the Prime Minister’s upset at having been so rudely intruded upon. Yet the Beaton and Steichen portraits were mostly overlooked; newspaper and magazine editors of the time “wanted Churchill to give their readers a reassuring smile… Sternness and defiance were expressions for Hitler, Mussolini, and their generals, not for the British Prime Minister.”

Why, then, was the portrait of such sternness and defiance considered more appropriate, preferable even, by the time Karsh’s photograph of Churchill was published January 10, 1942, in Canada’s Saturday Night magazine? A large-format version was featured in the February 2 issue of LIFE magazine in the United States, and on February 28 in Britain’s Illustrated London News. The media’s change of attitude was likely in response to the December 7, 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor, and American President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s declaration of war. The short article in LIFE magazine described the accompanying photograph of Churchill as “one of the

37 Borcoman, 75. A recent exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada entitled “Yousuf Karsh and Edward Steichen: The Art of the Celebrity Portrait” (April 18-September 20, 2009) also parallels the work of the two photographers. 38 Edward Steichen’s photograph of Winston Churchill, published in the April 1932 issue of Vanity Fair, cannot be reproduced here due to copyright. However, the image can be seen online at the Condé Nast Store, http://blog.condenaststore.com/2009/09/24/steichen/cn00029049/ 39 Cecil Beaton’s 1940 photograph of Winston Churchill cannot be reproduced here due to copyright. However, the image can be seen online at the National Portrait Gallery, London, http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait.php?firstRun=true&sText=churchill+beaton&search=sp&rNo=1 40 Tippett, 136.
most remarkable portraits ever taken of this humane and violent man” who, despite being “up to
his neck in trouble” around the globe, was supported by “admirers and well-wishers” in the
United States.41 As this article suggested, there was now an even greater need for the British, the
United States and Canada to present a strong visual image of a united, confident and aggressive
political leadership.

Perhaps it was a December 31, 1941 article in The Hamilton Spectator which best
conveyed the desire for a visual equivalent to the strength of Winston Churchill’s speeches:

His voice gains strength as he warms to his topic, his round, almost cherubic face, which
in repose, with its tortoise shell rim glasses perched on the end of his nose, is suggestive
of Mr. Pickwick, hardens into the John Bull contours his followers associate with
him…One must gaze upon the owner of the voice to get the proper estimate of
Churchill’s true stature. The face and the hands have their story to tell, and they tell it
well.42

Karsh’s photograph of Winston Churchill as “The Roaring Lion” was an image which conveyed
such expression, such stature, like none other. However, let us not forget the actual
circumstances of the portrait sitting, and the fact that Churchill’s expression was rather
unintentional, at least with regards to serving a particular political purpose; it was ultimately in
the photograph’s reception – not by the sitter, nor entirely by the photographer – that the
meaning of Churchill’s pose had been determined. 43 This photograph of a man reprimanding a
photographer had become the emblem of a British resolve to defeat the enemy.

41 “Winston Churchill Faces Disasters of War,” 27.
2005), 219.
43 Despite my assertion that the significance of the pose is determined by the photograph’s reception and the
context of its circulation, rather than the result of the sitter’s or photographer’s intentions, it is undeniable that
There was a further need for a lasting visual image of a strong Allied leader. Mackenzie King had recorded in his diary his impressions of the deteriorating physical states of both Churchill and Roosevelt at this point in the war:

The President looked to me pretty tired… Churchill is beginning to look rather flabby and tired. I could not help thinking of what a terrible thing it is that the fate of the world should rest so largely in the hands of two men to either of whom anything might happen at any moment.44

Roosevelt had been ailing for some time, and Churchill – unbeknownst to himself let alone the public – had suffered from an attack of angina (coronary insufficiency) after his December 26, 1941 address to Congress in Washington. Churchill’s doctor, Sir Charles Wilson (Lord Moran), made the decision not to tell Churchill the true state of his health because “at a moment when America [had] just come into the war… there [was] no one but Winston to take her by the hand.”45 Tippett describes a photograph of the two leaders which appeared in Saturday Night on January 3, 1942, a week prior to the publication of the Churchill portrait, as an image in which the two leaders “look more like two elderly friends on a day’s outing from a nursing home than men who could face down both Nazi Germany and imperial Japan.”46 A description of “The photographer serves a significant role in playing to the public perception of his sitter. Kozloff explains this best in his description of Edward Steichen’s 1903 photograph of financier J.P. Morgan (the photograph is under copyright, and can be viewed on the Chrysler Museum of Art’s website at http://www.chrysler.org/education/unit4/steichen.htm). The circumstances of Steichen’s sitting with Morgan are remarkably comparable to that of Karsh with Churchill:

Steichen spent only three minutes taking two photographs of J.P. Morgan, once of which became – deservedly – an icon. In this instance, the financier’s annoyance at being directed was perceived by Steichen as emblematic of his sitter’s personality, not just as a natural human reflex […] If Morgan had suddenly taken on a guise that resembled himself, it was because Steichen had retro-fitted the man’s stance with his legendary repute. Using a kit of shrewd, showy devices, the photographer confirmed, rather than extended, the public perception of his subjects. (Kozloff, 67).

44 Dilks, 187.
45 Sir Charles Wilson as quoted in Dilks, 184.
46 Tippett, 137. This photograph cannot be reproduced here due to copyright restrictions.
Roaring Lion” in *The Kingston Whig-Standard* indicates that Karsh’s photograph conveyed nothing of such physically weakened leadership, and provided instead the image that was needed at this especially low point for the British with the fall of Singapore. In light of Churchill’s ailing health, there is in fact a great deal of irony in the article’s assertion:

> It will be this portrait by Karsh that will go down through the centuries to give future generations their most accurate idea of the physical appearance of Winston Churchill at the moment when three-quarters of the people of the world had their hopes largely based upon him.47

Karsh’s records, held at the Library and Archives of Canada, demonstrate the extent to which “The Roaring Lion” photograph was sought throughout the Allied countries for both private and professional display during the war. Within weeks of the photograph’s publication in newspapers and magazines, hundreds of letters were received by the Karsh Studio – requests from the general public for their own photographic print of Winston Churchill. The letters increased in volume when the portrait was used on the cover of the 1942 publication of Churchill’s speeches, *The Unrelenting Struggle*. Men, women, and the occasional child – primarily from Canada, the United States and Great Britain – sent letters requesting a print: some wished to hang the photograph of the British leader on their living room mantle or in their children’s bedrooms; others wanted to send a photograph to a soldier fighting overseas, or to

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47 Library and Archives of Canada, Yousuf Karsh Fonds (Box 348 File 4), scrapbook clipping from the *Calgary Herald*, February 11, 1942 featuring excerpts from the *Kingston Whig-Standard*. The article in the *Kingston Whig-Standard*, as re-published in the *Calgary Herald* February 11, 1942, went on to emphasize the historical and archival significance of the photograph:

> Karsh’s negative of Churchill is possibly the most valuable photographic negative ever made. We wonder whether it would be possible for the Dominion Archives or the National Gallery to provide the photographer special facilities for its preservation and safe-keeping... also suggest to Mr. Karsh himself that a limited number of prints, done by one of the more time-defying processes, such as carbon, might be made for ‘dispersed’ deposit with such institutions as the National Gallery of Canada, and the Canadian Archives, the Library of Congress in Washington, and the Royal Photographic Society in London?
present as a gift; doctors, lawyers, businessmen, and government officials wanted the photograph for their offices or store windows. Many of the letters explained why the individual or business desired a print of “The Roaring Lion”, and though there was considerable variation in the details, there was one particularly prevalent reason – this was a photograph which had inspired hope and faith in the triumph of the Allies.

There is little doubt that this particular Churchill portrait served the needs of the Allied war effort, but how had the photograph contributed specifically to British/Canadian wartime relations? Moments before the photograph was taken, Churchill gave his “Preparation – Liberation – Assault” speech to the members of Parliament and senators in the Canadian House of Commons, in which he declared Canada in a unique position due to their “unbreakable ties” with Britain and proximity to the United States. With this statement, Canadians were not-so-subtly reminded of their moral obligation to the British Commonwealth. Churchill had gone on to emphasize that Canada’s wartime role was to be that of a strategically-located middleman, “a potent magnet, drawing together those in the new world and in the old whose fortunes are now united...”

When “The Roaring Lion” was published in Saturday Night, it was as the visual corollary to this rhetoric, an accompaniment to excerpts from this speech in which Churchill relegated

48 The Karsh studio would respond in kind with a standard letter explaining that they would be happy to offer an original photographic print, for private use, at a set rate (as suggested by the Saturday Night editor and Karsh family friend, B.K. Sandwell): $3 for an 8-by-10, $5 for an 11-by-14, $10 for a 14-by-17, and $15 for a 16-by-20; all prints were mounted for framing, and orders could not be filled in Karsh’s absence or without his supervision, as all prints had to be personally approved by the photographer.
49 Winston Churchill, “Preparation – Liberation – Assault [December 30, 1941].”
50 Ibid.
Canada to the role of middleman. *LIFE* magazine described how the photograph was taken just after Churchill had spoken to the House of Commons in Ottawa. However, by the time the photograph appeared in the *Illustrated London News*, it was alongside the story of how Karsh had removed the Prime Minister’s cigar; in this context Canada was portrayed as the amusingly cheeky child. Though the photographer was thereafter intertwined with the legend of Churchill, the significance and purpose of this wartime visit to Canada was forgotten – all that remained was the byline “Karsh, Ottawa.” Forgotten perhaps, but not gone. There was a further, physical reminder of Canada within the photograph itself. Recall those slightly-rumpled sheaths of paper protruding from the left pocket of Churchill’s coat (Figure 5), highlighted in the same creamy-white as his pristine cuffs, collar and handkerchief. In this photograph of the British Prime Minister, there in his back pocket as it were, was the reminder of Canada’s “unique position in the British Empire.”

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51 Tippett, 139.
BRITISH/CANADIAN WARTIME RELATIONS

Further historical context of British/Canadian relations is necessary in order to fully understand the references in Churchill’s speech, my use of the term “pocket colonialism” to describe Canada’s wartime relations with Britain, and ultimately the significance of “The Roaring Lion” photograph. What evidence is there that, despite the Dominions’ sovereignty, the British Empire had rhetorically ensured that Canada would respond to the call of duty when needed?

Britain declared war on Germany September 3, 1939 in response to the German attack on Poland; a full week later on September 10, 1939, George VI, as King of Canada, approved the Canadian declaration of war on Germany. The fact that Canada remained formally neutral for seven days – as compared to the First World War and the immediate command to the Dominion to fight on behalf of the British Empire – represented a significant new phase of sovereignty in Canadian history. The Liberal government of W.L. Mackenzie King “entered the war cautiously, wanting to fight on the basis of limited liability” and established a position of “participation sans conscription.” Ultimately, however, the overriding issue influencing the Canadian war effort continued to be that of negotiating British/Canadian relations.

In the fall of 1929, Canada’s Minister of Justice, Ernest Lapointe, and liberal nationalist Dr. O.D. Skelton had attended the Conference on the Operation of Dominion Legislation in

London. At this time, there were still a number of British laws that applied to Canada, and Britain maintained the power to override Canadian (and all Dominion) legislation; by the end of the conference, a recommendation was made to grant former colonies full legal freedom except in areas where they chose to remain subordinate. The Statute of Westminster was granted royal assent December 11, 1931, and ensured that “decisions about Canada's future would now be Canada's alone.”

However, despite formal legislation providing Canada with greater independence, the official rhetoric of the time reminded Canada of her commitment to the Commonwealth. Just a few months after the Statute of Westminster was enacted, Churchill rhetorically undermined the sovereignty of the Dominions, while simultaneously singling out Canada, in his response to the notion of free trade during the Depression era:

The time has come to put a girdle around the Empire estate… The Mother Country has revived! She is gathering her children around her and, hand in hand with Canada, will lead the Empire and the world out of the gloom of panic and depression...

As interpreted by the March 5, 1932 Ottawa Evening Journal, Churchill was calling out to Canada “to lead not only our own Empire but if necessary the whole world out of the depression.” Regardless of what may have been seen as a certain degree of privilege, it is nonetheless significant that Canada was still a child expected to respond to the commands of the Mother Country.

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54 Ibid.
55 A speech by Winston Churchill published in the Globe and Mail (March 4 1932), as quoted in Dilks, 124.
56 Dilks, 126.
When the Second World War broke out in 1939, Canada was a country torn between newfound independence and the legacy of colonial responsibility. On September 10, 1939, in the speech serving as Canada’s official declaration of war, Mackenzie King first used the phrase “Canada at Britain’s Side.”57 Two years later, on September 4, 1941, Mackenzie King repeated his slogan at the Lord Mayor’s Luncheon in Honour of the Prime Minister of Canada. This time, the phrase came with a careful caveat, perfectly encompassing the nature of British/Canadian wartime relations, and specifically Canada’s struggle to be recognized as Britain’s loyal yet wholly independent partner:

In this world struggle to thwart aggression and to end oppression, Canada is at Britain’s side. The United States is lending powerful support. Side by side, we of the new world stand in your defence, which we believe to be our own defence…Today I stand at [Winston Churchill’s] side… to represent, before the world, the proud position of Canada at the side of Britain. Canada is proud of her position in the sisterhood of the British Commonwealth. But that position and association, had other reasons been lacking, would not have sufficed to bring Canada into a European war. Ours was not an automatic response to some mechanical organization of Empire. Canada’s entry into the war was the deliberate decision of free people, by their own representatives in a free parliament… Canada is a nation of the new world. As a nation of the new world, we placed ourselves freely at Britain’s side because Britain’s cause was the cause of freedom.58

Mackenzie King’s emphasis on Canada’s independent decision to join the war was in response to the opinion of contemporary intellectuals who vehemently opposed the war effort. In a memorandum concerning the Canadian war policy, O.D. Skelton had declared the first casualty of the war “Canada’s claim to independent control of her destinies” and described Canada as

57 These words had marked the Prime Minister’s speeches throughout the early years of the war, and his compilation of wartime addresses (published in September 1941) was aptly entitled “Canada at Britain’s Side.”
following “blindly and dumbly” as Britain led the “stampede over the edge.”

Stephen Leacock, in a June 1939 issue of the Atlantic Monthly, succinctly summarized Canada’s sense of moral obligation to the Mother Country:

If you were to ask any Canadian, ‘Do you have to go to war if England does,’ he’d answer at once, ‘Oh, no.’ If you then said, ‘Would you go to war if England does’ he’d answer ‘Oh, yes.’ And if you asked ‘Why?’ he would say, reflectively, ‘Well, you see, we’d have to.’

In his December 30 speech to the Canadian Parliament, Churchill had re-asserted his opinion that Canada’s primary role was as a middleman between Britain and the United States. This role, despite offering a semblance of power for the country, was also an instantiation of being kept close at hand by the British Empire to be used when advantageous and discarded when a nuisance. Early in the war, Mackenzie King actively established and reinforced Canada’s role as a middleman between Britain and the United States. Within a few weeks of taking office in May of 1940, Prime Minister Churchill was faced with the realization that France might not be strong enough to hold Germany in the west and was nearing surrender. Mackenzie King sent to Churchill a letter outlining Roosevelt’s suggestion that if Britain were conquered on the Isles, but the Royal Navy remained intact, the British could carry on the war from Canada and other parts of the Commonwealth. Churchill responded, asserting that although no practical help had as of yet been offered by the United States, Canada had a significant role to play in convincing their American neighbour to contribute to the war effort: “Any pressure you can apply in this direction

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61 Dilks, 138.
would be invaluable.” It is clear from the suggestions of both Roosevelt and Churchill that Canada was seen as a British satellite on the North American continent, and that the country’s wartime role was to be that of a middleman.

At the peak of the Battle of Britain – a time when the aid of the United States was needed as much as ever – Canada’s obligation to the Commonwealth and her geographic proximity to the United States was a topic of particular interest. In an August 3, 1940 article for *Saturday Night*, G. Stanley Russell suggested that Canada bring the British Empire and the United States closer together, taking advantage of the potentiality offered by “her close relationships with both her motherland and her neighbour” in an effort to “produce a new and better entente between the two.” Similarly, Lionel Gelber wrote that Canada’s greatest wartime capacity lay in acting as both Britain’s “principal ally” and a “partner” of the United States. Gelber further argued that although “geography now renders the Dominion a go-between” in diplomacy and in facilitating a United States war effort, the focus should not be on the attitudes of Britain and the United States towards Canada (and vice versa); rather, what Canada really ought to do is “lift her head, throw out her chest and exhibit more downright self-confidence.”

The nature of British/Canadian wartime relations was particularly evident regarding the August 1941 meeting between Churchill and Roosevelt at Placentia Bay off Newfoundland. Churchill and Roosevelt met to discuss their visions for a post-war world, resulting in a declaration known as the Atlantic Charter. Though the meeting took place so close to Canada,

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62 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
Churchill had ensured that the Canadian Prime Minister did not participate – if only one Dominion were represented, there would no doubt be protests from the others.\(^66\) Mackenzie King had already denounced such meetings, as he did not believe the Allied leaders should leave their countries at this point in the war, and privately declared it in his diary as “the apotheosis of the craze for publicity” and a “matter of vanity.”\(^67\) He did not, however, take kindly to the fact that the Dominions were not consulted about the draft Charter prior to its press release, and felt that “here again Canada was being ignored.”\(^68\)

In his report to the Dominions Office in London, the British High Commissioner of Canada Malcolm Macdonald was diplomatic in his explanation that, despite Mackenzie King’s “warm approval of the meeting,” the failure to consult the Dominions might prove “hurtful to the susceptibilities of the Canadian political public, who have been taught to take pride in the fact that Canada is a valuable as well as a vitally concerned third party in the United Kingdom – United States of America discussions.”\(^69\) Again, it was only privately that Mackenzie King expressed the true extent of his feelings, writing in his diary that, “It was the way in which the British lost their friends, wanting them in foul weather and ignoring them in fair. So long as they got their own way that was all they wanted.”\(^70\)

In August of 1941, Churchill had been adamant that he did not want Canada to interfere in his meeting with Roosevelt, having written to his acting Deputy Prime Minister C.R. Attlee

\(^{66}\) Dilks, 156.

\(^{67}\) William Lyon Mackenzie King’s diary, August 6 1941, as quoted in Dilks, 155.

\(^{68}\) Dilks 165.

\(^{69}\) Malcolm Macdonald in an August 14 1941 report to the Dominions Office, as quoted in Dilks, 165.

\(^{70}\) William Lyon Mackenzie King’s diary, August 12 1941, as quoted in Dilks, 165.
that “it would be a pity if anything happened to lead Mr. Mackenzie King to join us in Newfoundland.”\textsuperscript{71} Yet less than a month after the meeting at Placentia Bay, on the occasion of the Lord Mayor’s Luncheon in Honour of the Prime Minister of Canada, Churchill was quick to declare Canada “the linchpin of the English-speaking world” as a result of her intimacy with the United States and her “unswerving fidelity” to the British Commonwealth.\textsuperscript{72} He was re-asserting Canada’s wartime role as a middleman after having pushed the country to the side when the third party proved inconvenient. What better visual of this role than Karsh’s portrait of the British Prime Minister, in which the only reminder of Canada is that speech stuffed hastily into his coat pocket? Churchill had done his part to bolster the Canadian war effort, the moment of need had passed, and the thought was promptly forgotten – that is, until the next time storm clouds gathered to signal rainy days.

\textsuperscript{71} Winston Churchill, in a letter to C.R. Attlee, August 7 1941, as quoted in Dilks, 156.
FORMAL PORTRAITURE AS WARTIME RHETORIC

The significance of the Churchill portrait, with regards to British/Canadian wartime relations, can be further considered in the context of other visual media which circulated contemporaneously. Advertisements and recruitment posters, for instance, rather overtly conveyed the sentiment of Canada at Britain’s side. A full-page Automotive Industries of Canada advertisement, which appeared in the previous issue of Saturday Night, proclaimed “Canada’s Industries In Action at Britain’s Side.” Near the bottom of the ad, a small seal encouraged the reader to “Buy Canadian: Power for Freedom” and a text box requested that “When buying a passenger car or truck please be sure to specify any of the following which are made in Canada…..” Canada’s loyalty to Britain remained foremost; sovereignty and independent economic success, secondary.

Not long after “The Roaring Lion” photograph appeared in the media, a 1942 Canadian recruitment poster entitled “Lick Them Over There,” designed by Albert Chartier, was circulated: beneath the slogan “Lick Them Over There! Come on Canada,” a Canadian soldier was depicted straddling the Atlantic Ocean between Canada and Britain, pointing to the British flag at the war front. Another 1942 poster (Figure 6), a colour lithograph offset designed by Charles R. Wilcox, was far less overt in conveying a similar message: a cartoon of the British Lion sporting a crown, with a defiant expression noticeably reminiscent of Churchill in “The Roaring Lion” photograph, charged forward with a sword in hand, unfathomed by the bandage

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on his tail. The lion figure loomed over that of the comically buck-toothed Canadian Beaver, also armed with a sword, and a brow furrowed in determination beneath an oversized and lopsided helmet. In comparison to other wartime posters, the imagery of “To Victory” was relatively subtle, light-hearted even, in its effort to encourage Canadians to fight with the British.

Ultimately, however, it was the relatively covert nature of formal portraiture which Mackenzie King found preferable to the totalitarian implications of such overt forms of government or privately funded war propaganda. In the 2009 publication Yousuf Karsh: Regarding Heroes, David Travis describes how the straight and traditional style of Karsh’s respectful portraits – his psychological approach concentrating primarily on what could be expressed by the face, figure and hands – offered a particularly suitable means of expressing “the sense of purpose and resolve of those actively opposing the forces of fascism.” A more innovative photographic style, one based on an avant-garde aesthetic, was considered by many outside of the art world to be unsuited to the gravity of the war. The popular success of “The Roaring Lion” photograph had demonstrated that portraits of war leaders could “inspire Canadians to keep their support efforts alive” and thus contributed to wartime morale.

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75 The distinction between “covert” and “overt” propaganda is made by philosopher Jacques Ellul:
[Covert propaganda] tends to hide its aims, identity, significance, and source. The people are not aware that someone is trying to influence them, and do not feel that they are being pushed in a certain direction... [with overt propaganda] one admits that propaganda is being made; its source is known; its aims and intentions are identified. The public knows that an attempt is being made to influence it. Jacques Ellul, “The Characteristics of Propaganda,” in Readings in Propaganda and Persuasion: New and Classic Essays, eds. Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell (California: Sage Publications Inc., 2006), 10.
77 Ibid.
78 Ibid.
Travis fails, however, to address the issue of formal portraiture’s appeal for war propaganda. For this, I turn to Max Kozloff’s reflections on the propagandistic role of formal portraiture during the Second World War. He uses terms defined by philosopher Jacques Ellul in order to argue that the traditional nature of such portraits can be understood as a form of integration propaganda; of a less defiant though more pervasive nature than the alternative agitation propaganda, integration propaganda “works to stabilize, if not to homogenize beliefs through appeals to continuity and tradition.”

Of further relevance is Kozloff’s example of Alfred Eisenstaedt’s 1933 photographic portrait of Dr. Joseph Goebbels, Minister of Culture under Hitler’s Nazi regime – the context of which deserves attention here for its surprising parallel to that of the later Churchill portrait by Karsh. The image, which garnered particular fame, depicted a man with a most sinister scowl seated amongst his standing henchman, seemingly resentful of the Associated Press photographer’s intrusion; yet, a few seconds earlier, Eisenstaedt had taken a different portrait of Goebbels, one which depicted the subject smiling sweetly to someone at the photographer’s side. The humanity seen in this image of a smiling Goebbels was not in accordance with a growing public fear of Nazi power, and offered little propaganda value for Allied interests. Here, as with “The Roaring Lion” portrait, the photographer’s choice of timing offered two

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79 Kozloff, 102.
80 Ibid. These photographs cannot be reproduced here due to copyright restriction, however they can be viewed at Time & Life Pictures online. The image of a scowling Goebbels is available at: http://www.timelifepictures.com/source/search/details_pop.aspx?iid=50690561&cdi=0. The image of a smiling Goebbels is available at: http://www.timelifepictures.com/source/search/details_pop.aspx?iid=50714012&cdi=0.
81 Kozloff, 102.
distinct personalities from the same subject – it was only in publication and the projected desires of the public that one pose was deemed more revealing or natural than the other.

The publication of Karsh’s positive, often flattering, and highly traditional portraits were unlikely to cause any disharmony amongst the Allies.\(^8^2\) The Canadian government considered Karsh’s formal portraiture appropriate for the purposes of Canada’s wartime rhetoric, which I would attribute to its covertly persuasive nature as a form of integration propaganda. Mackenzie King wholeheartedly supported the suggestion of B.K. Sandwell, editor of *Saturday Night*, that Karsh be sent to England to photograph the leading figures in the war: “The publication of Karsh’s portraits in the national and international press would show the rest of the world, and Britain in particular, that Canada was doing more than her fair share of the fighting.”\(^8^3\) His travels to England – at a time when permission to leave the country was only given to those Canadians whose work was of an official nature – were arranged by Mackenzie King, the War Information Board (W.I.B.), and the Department of External Affairs.\(^8^4\) Once in London, the Canadian Prime Minister’s London-based personal assistant Leonard Brockington and the Canadian high commissioner Vincent Massey assisted Karsh in photographing as many people as possible during his visit.\(^8^5\) The government had paid for Karsh’s travel expenses on the condition that he provide the Canadian public archives with copies of his photographs.\(^8^6\) Ultimately, Karsh’s photographic endeavour was supported because it was believed that his

\(^{8^2}\) Tippett, 157.
\(^{8^3}\) Ibid., 156
\(^{8^4}\) Ibid., 155 & 157.
\(^{8^5}\) Ibid., 160.
\(^{8^6}\) Ibid., 157-158.
portraits could make Canada’s wartime leaders appear more familiar and sympathetic to the public.

Karsh arrived in Britain in 1943 armed with a letter from the Canadian Prime Minister which stated that the photographer was on a private mission and any assistance towards him would be considered in the service of the nation.\textsuperscript{87} He also carried with him several letters of introduction. The W.I.B.’s Assisting General Manager, A.D. Dunton, wrote to the agency’s Canada House branch that they were to offer Karsh their full support of the project and to assist in providing personalities to be photographed.\textsuperscript{88} Dunton further asserted that Karsh’s work from England would be widely published in leading Canadian and American periodicals, thus any arrangements for the publication of Karsh’s work in British periodicals while still in England would be seen as:

An opportunity to get before the British public not only some of the Canadian personalities whom he will photograph, but also the fact that Canada has, at least in the photographic field, an artist of the very highest world rank.\textsuperscript{89}

As Dunton had suggested, Karsh’s photographs from London were widely published and exhibited during the war – “the public wanted to see what their wartime leaders looked like.”\textsuperscript{90} It was assured from the outset that the portraits would appear in \textit{Saturday Night}, as the Canadian publication had commissioned the trip and advanced Karsh $1,000 for the rights to publish any black-and-white photographs that he took while in England; the rival magazine \textit{Maclean’s}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[87] Karsh, \textit{In Search of Greatness}, 75.
\item[89] \textit{Ibid.}
\item[90] Tippett, 157.
\end{footnotes}
bought the rights to any of Karsh’s colour photographs. On January 29, 1944, a portrait of King George VI graced the cover of *Saturday Night*, and for the following 12 months several other portraits from Karsh’s “Mission to Britain” were published on the cover or in the “Names in the News” column. Additionally, in February of 1944, seventy-five of Karsh’s portraits from Britain were on display at the Chateau Laurier; the exhibition then moved to the *Simpson’s* department store in Toronto, and later to Montreal and Winnipeg.

*LIFE* magazine featured the portraits in a February 4, 1944 article, “Leaders of Britain,” devoted to Karsh’s photographs of the men “who in this hour of war truly stand for England.” In Britain, *The Illustrated London News* published Karsh’s black-and-white portraits, from January 8 through May 20, 1944, under the heading, “The Men Who Shape Our Destinies.” Published in Canada, the United States and England, these portraits of Britain’s wartime leaders were attributed to Karsh of Ottawa in a short introductory paragraph, a small byline, or simply a photographic credit on a separate page – here again it was the British who were at the forefront as the Canadian stood by their side.

Finally, the portraits from Karsh’s trip to London were compiled in a 1946 publication entitled *Faces of Destiny: Portraits by Karsh*. The book was promoted as an historical record – the original title, simply *Portraits by Karsh*, was dismissed after concern was expressed that “the book will be relegated to the photography shelves and will not receive its due publicity as an

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91 Ibid.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid., 172.
95 Tippett, 173.
historical volume.”96 *Faces of Destiny* was described in one American review as “a picture record of the Allied leaders in the recent conflict. They are all there, looking their best.”97 The publication also featured several portraits taken prior to the London trip – including of course “The Roaring Lion”. As in the portrait’s publication in *LIFE* magazine, here the Canadian circumstances of the sitting were still an aspect of the story, the photograph accompanied by a text from Karsh which began: “This study of Britain’s great wartime leader was made in the Speaker’s Chambers of the Canadian House of Commons immediately following one of his memorable speeches.”98 In his foreword to the book Karsh acknowledged the role of the Canadian Prime Minister in making the arrangements necessary for the photographing of Churchill.

It is in the context of *Faces of Destiny* that the Churchill portrait can also be understood as serving Canada’s need for a visual of a strong wartime leader. Here, a photograph of the Canadian Prime Minister is seen in direct contrast with that of the British leader. The portrait of Mackenzie King included in *Faces of Destiny* was taken March 6, 1944, as Canadian troops continued their bloody battle in Italy. This portrait of the Canadian Prime Minister by no means conveyed the strong and determined leader so greatly desired at this time; rather, it was the image of the British leader as “The Roaring Lion” which fulfilled this need. In fact, Karsh described the portrait, in the accompanying text, as one of his many “failures” in trying to attain

96 Library and Archives of Canada, Yousuf Karsh Fonds (Box 14 File 32), “Ziff –Davis Publishing Company (1/5) 1945.”
a successful photograph of Canada’s Prime Minister which “revealed his human qualities.”\textsuperscript{99} Standing with shoulders slumped slightly forward, hands shoved into pockets, wisps of hair springing out of place, emphasizing the thinning hair combed over a receding hairline – this portrait of a modest, seemingly defeated man was the image of Canada’s wartime leader.\textsuperscript{100} Karsh may have acknowledged his own failure, but ultimately attributed it to Mackenzie King’s own stubborn refusal to be “dramatized to the slightest degree”: “If I suggest that he try a certain pose, he will invariably say, ‘No, Karsh, you know I would never do that. Just take me as I am. Make a plain portrait of me.’”\textsuperscript{101} And a plain portrait was the result.

Karsh, dubbed Mackenzie King’s “court photographer,” had been attempting for some time to attain a suitable portrait of the Canadian Prime Minister. After the success of the Churchill portrait, Mackenzie King arranged a private sitting with Karsh in an effort to attain his own similarly iconic photograph. One of the resulting portraits (Figure 7), printed in \textit{Saturday Night} over a year later, depicted the Canadian Prime Minister in a pose not unlike that of Churchill – at least in its formality, dramatic lighting, and close cropping – but it lacked the glaring defiance, the aggression, the monumentality.\textsuperscript{102} As with “The Roaring Lion”, in this portrait the Canadian Prime Minister was also photographed from the left, with the right side of his face somewhat obscured by shadow, wearing a three piece suit with a white handkerchief poking out of the left pocket, sporting a polka-dotted tie (where Churchill had a polka-dotted bowtie), and with a small watch-chain hanging across his midsection. Mackenzie King’s stance

\textsuperscript{99} Ibid., 88. 
\textsuperscript{100} A cropped version of this photograph is featured on the new Canadian fifty dollar bill, which can be viewed online at: http://www.shutterstock.com/pic-10862671/stock-photo-william-lyon-mackenzie-king-as-depicted-on-canadian-fifty-dollar-bill.html
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid. 
\textsuperscript{102} Yousuf Karsh, “Mackenzie King [photograph]” \textit{Saturday Night} 59 (October 2 1943): front page.
was, however, far more rigid and posed than that of Churchill – his left arm simply hung at his side, and his right hand clenched and pulled aside the bottom of his lapel. The ethereal glow emanating from behind him, though a valiant effort towards dramatization, served rather to emphasize the artificiality of the scene in its reminder of the theatrical studio lighting. Most significantly, though Mackenzie King’s expression was rather severe and his brow furrowed, he gazed past the viewer into the distance, and thus the image lacked the powerfully unrelenting eye contact of the Churchill portrait.

Perhaps Mackenzie King only appeared to be adopting the guise of “The Roaring Lion” in the context of his other recently published portraits. In August of 1940, at a time when Canadian forces were embroiled in battle overseas, when it was all the more important that the Prime Minister be “presented to the Canadian people and to the other Allied heads of government as a strong, statesmanlike leader,” Karsh had produced portraits depicting Mackenzie King and his dog enjoying a relaxing weekend in the countryside.\textsuperscript{103} The Kingsmere photographs, commissioned by Toronto’s \textit{Star Weekly} and published October 19, 1940, offered the Canadian public a “less pompous [and] more humane” side of their Prime Minister than they were accustomed to seeing in the press.\textsuperscript{104}

In one such photograph (Figure 8), King wore a full three-piece suit and tie, the coat casually unbuttoned, standing with his cane and hat in his right hand, and a book tucked under his left arm. Looking out at the ground before him, it was as if he had paused momentarily while walking out to his favourite reading spot. The other portrait, with the heading “A Man and a

\textsuperscript{103} Tippett, 131.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 132.
Dog,“ featured the Prime Minister wearing a different three-piece tweed suit with matching cap, casually sitting in a garden with his arm around his longtime canine companion Pat. Mackenzie King looked out into the distance, but this time there was a slight smile on his face, and his expression and stance gave the impression of genuine relaxation and contentment. Additionally, a small detail in the background deserves further attention: a sculpture of a stately lion, though facing away from the camera, was noticeably tall and proud in comparison to the stooped and aging Pat in the foreground. The subject of this photograph was the Canadian Prime Minister, and yet the symbol of the Empire loomed in the background.

The portrait was accompanied by a caption describing how, despite “carrying the burden of a great Dominion at war,” Mackenzie King was celebrating the 21st anniversary of his Liberal party leadership and enjoying the confidence “not only of his own people but of the statesmen of Britain and America.” The Kingsmere photographs take on particular meaning in the context of the two-page layout on the preceding pages – photographs of Winston Churchill’s active duties at the war front. The Star Weekly published press photographs of the British Prime Minister under the headings “Winnie Sees for Himself” and “Churchill at the Front”: on his journey to survey the damage at London’s dockside areas, donning a tin helmet as he observed an air battle from the cliffs of Dover, inspecting the shelters at Ramsgate despite the ongoing air raid warnings, and examining maps of the front line. Thus, while the Canadian Prime Minister was seen enjoying a moment of respite at his country home, his British counterpart was depicted actively engaged in the war.

105 Library and Archives of Canada, Yousuf Karsh Fonds (Box 348 File 2), scrapbook clipping from The Star Weekly, (October 19 1940): 39.
106 These photographs, and their layout in The Star Weekly, cannot be reproduced here due to copyright restrictions.
The photograph of Mackenzie King and Pat appeared several months later alongside a November 30, 1940 article in *Saturday Night* entitled “Canada’s Place in an English-Speaking Union.” The article did not specifically reference the photograph – with its caption “Prime Minister King and his 17-year-old Irish terrier friend ‘Pat’” and the byline Karsh, Ottawa. Yet the photograph of the Canadian Prime Minister with his companion was the visual accompaniment to the author’s argument that Canadians must “rediscover their democratic faith and vision” by supporting the movement for an English-speaking Federation which “reconciles all her interests and loyalties at once.”

Perhaps the significance was in the details, as Mackenzie King was photographed sporting his favourite coat made from the black-and-white Scottish tweed of the pastures he had once admired; his pride in this coat was so great that he had described its origins to the Queen Mother upon her royal visit in 1939, in an effort to share his admiration of her own Scottish hills. Additionally, in the forefront of this portrait was his Irish terrier, a breed that had served as messenger and sentinel during World War One. In this context the image of Canada’s wartime leader could, in fact, be seen as the figure of a Canadian in the garb of Scotland and accompanied by a symbol of Ireland – thus united with the English-speaking countries. This was an image with connotations of Canada as the long-standing and loyal companion that, although recently unleashed from colonial duties, had remained faithfully by the side of Britain.

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CONCLUSION: BY THE SIDE OF “THE ROARING LION”

It had been Mackenzie King’s intention, in arranging Karsh’s photographic session with Winston Churchill, to attain a portrait of himself with the British Prime Minister. Yet it was not this portrait of the two leaders which came to represent the Allied cause. Nor had any other photographic portrait of Mackenzie King served to promote Canada’s war effort. Rather, it was a portrait so quickly distanced from its connection to Canada which epitomized British/Canadian wartime relations. The Churchill portrait served as the visual rhetoric of Canada’s wartime role, pulled out of the back pocket to stand quietly and obediently by the side of “The Roaring Lion”.

Though the story of the “The Roaring Lion” has taken many turns in the over fifty years since its inception, what had not been fully considered was the extent to which this portrait pertained to British/Canadian wartime relations. The Second World War marked a particularly significant phase of Canada’s role in the Commonwealth, as Prime Minister Mackenzie King struggled to assert the country’s newfound independence while still emphasizing Canada’s unique position in the British Empire. An oft-overlooked detail of the “The Roaring Lion” photograph was that speech to the Canadian Parliament in Winston Churchill’s pocket, a speech in which the British leader had once again pulled the reins in tighter on the Commonwealth, reminding Canadians of their ties to Britain and their role as a strategically-located middleman with the United States. Moreover, Karsh’s portrait of Winston Churchill stands as a symbol of Canadian international relations on the brink of a transition. After the Second World War, when the United States had taken the place of Britain as a world power, Canada quietly slipped out of the pocket of “The Roaring Lion” and into the bed of the elephant.
FIGURES

Figure 1  *Winston Churchill [“The Roaring Lion”].* December 30, 1941. Yousuf Karsh
Yousuf Karsh Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, e010751669

Figure 2  *Winston Churchill [“Smiling”].* December 30, 1941. Yousuf Karsh
Yousuf Karsh Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, MIKAN no. 3840485
Figure 3  
*Winston Churchill [with Mackenzie King].* December 30, 1941. Yousuf Karsh
Yousuf Karsh Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, e010767554

Figure 4  
Left: *Winston Churchill [“The Roaring Lion” untouched negative].* December 30, 1941
Yousuf Karsh. Yousuf Karsh Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, MIKAN no. 3224823
Right: *Winston Churchill [“The Roaring Lion”].* December 30, 1941.
Yousuf Karsh. Yousuf Karsh Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, e010751669
Figure 5  
*Winston Churchill [*“The Roaring Lion” cropped*]. December 30, 1941. Yousuf Karsh  
Yousuf Karsh Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, e010751669  

Figure 6  
*“To Victory”*. 1942. Charles R. Wilcox  
Library and Archives Canada, MIKAN no. 283435
Figure 7  *Prime Minister [Mackenzie King] at Studio.* August 6, 1943. Yousuf Karsh  
Yousuf Karsh Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, PA206618

Figure 8  *Mackenzie King [At Kingsmere with Pat].* August 21, 1940. Yousuf Karsh  
Yousuf Karsh Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, PA 124453
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