IDENTITY, INTERCULTURALISM, AND THE “IMAGINARY INDIAN”: FRANCOPHONE QUÉBÉCOIS(ES) UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS’ UNDERSTANDING OF INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCES IN HISTORY AND THE PRESENT

by

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Abstract

The relationship between eurodescendant Québécois(es) and Indigenous Peoples is weighted in the layered history of colonization. In an effort to pursue and trouble conversations in the field of education that seek to unsettle the settler mindset, this study attempts to explore the ways in which Francophone Québécois(es) undergraduate students in two different fields of study (history and teacher education) narrate their understandings of the intersections between Québec nationalism, the politics of Indigeneity, and wider questions of belonging in the context of Canada. Drawing on the works of Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) and Plains Cree and Saulteaux scholar, Margaret Kovach (2009), the study also attempts to incorporate decolonizing principles into critical qualitative methods to explore and think through some of the ethical challenges that are elicited by research undertaken with members of a “dominant” population. Through an analysis of transcripts and visual materials, I argue that these Francophone Québécois students have internalized, and are regulated by, the discourses of the ‘two solitudes’ and ‘interculturalism’. I also argue that participants partly embody the practice of what Hutton refers to as the repetition (as cited in Gardner, 2010) of colonial narratives, which denies Indigenous Peoples’ place as the First peoples of Canada, as well as their land claims and demands for sovereignty. Data analysis also points to the ways in which colonial narratives are interrupted, as students display various levels of criticality about their place in Canadian and Québec history and attempt to navigate the matter of theirs and other peoples’ changing identities in the context of a globalizing world. However, such disruptions remain only partial, as students’ accounts of their encounters with Indigeneity appear to have been limited to brushes with an “imaginary Indian” (Francis, 1992), distant in space or vanished in time. It is difficult to say whether the case of Québec is unique. In keeping with scholarship by Québécois Jocelyn Létourneau, and Daniel Salée, this research suggests that the province’s narrative of historical marginalization may be undermining the potential for Québécois to develop an ethical politics of alliance building with Indigenous Peoples in the face of Canadian politics.
Preface

All of the research conducted in the context of this thesis was deemed of minimal risk and approved by the UBC Behavioural Research Board of Ethics who then delivered the Ethics Certificate # H12-02091.
Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... ii
Preface ............................................................................................................................................... iii
Table of Contents ............................................................................................................................. iv
List of Tables ....................................................................................................................................... vi
List of Figures ...................................................................................................................................... vii
Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................................... viii
Dedication .......................................................................................................................................... ix

Chapter 1 ............................................................................................................................................ 1

Introduction ....................................................................................................................................... 1
  1.1 Troubling the Idea of a “Pure” Identity: Situating Myself ............................................................. 4
  1.2 A Critique in Solidarity .................................................................................................................. 8
  1.3 Historically Situating the Québécois ............................................................................................. 11

Chapter 2 ............................................................................................................................................ 14

Methodological Inquiry ..................................................................................................................... 14
  2.1 On Practicing Method: Decolonization and Ethnographic Practice ............................................. 15
  2.2 On Reflexivity, Positionality, and Accountability ........................................................................ 20
  2.3 Using Multi-level Methodological Approaches ........................................................................... 23
  2.4 Detailed Methods .......................................................................................................................... 24
    2.4.1 The pilot project ......................................................................................................................... 24
    2.4.2 Research participants ............................................................................................................... 26
    2.4.3 Historical contextualism ........................................................................................................... 27
    2.4.4 Narratives and oral histories .................................................................................................... 28
    2.4.5 Storied accounts of the nation through visual methodology .................................................... 31
  2.5 Ethical Concerns .......................................................................................................................... 34

Chapter 3 ............................................................................................................................................ 35

Review of the Literature .................................................................................................................... 35
  3.1 Contextualizing Relationships in Québec: Power Imbalance, Competing Land Claims and Memories of the Nation ........................................................................................................ 35
  3.2 Attempting to Read Theory from the Literature: Ensuring a Coherent Dominant Identity in Québec and in Canada ............................................................................................................. 42
  3.2 Scholarship in Education on the Incorporation of Indigenous Perspectives .................................. 44

Chapter 4 ............................................................................................................................................ 48

Colonial Repetitions, Mediations of Selfhood and the Interruptive Dimensions of Rethinking Québécois(es) .......................................................................................................................... 48
  4.1 Opposing French and English: (Im)Permeable Boundaries ........................................................... 49
  4.2 Interculturalism: Navigating the Borders Between a Majority and Minorities ............................ 58
  4.3 Québécois as Hosts: Erasing Indigenous Existence and Ongoing Struggles on Land ............. 67
  4.4 Thinking Through Québécois’ Ethnocentric Relationship With Land ....................................... 70
  4.5 Conclusion .................................................................................................................................... 73
List of Tables

Table 1. Aboriginal population in some major Canadian cities ........................................ 98
List of Figures

Figure 1. No littering ............................................................................................................. 1

Figure 2. Un policier est tué dans le siège des barricades des Mohawks d’Oka .............. 39

Figure 3. La souveraineté est “un mur de Berlin”, dit un chef autochtone ..................... 40

Figure 4. Peter photographs a bicycle land and a bench in a park ..................................... 71

Figure 5. Caroline photographs an old feudal domain in Terrebonne, Québec ................. 75

Figure 6. Alain photographs a wooded area in Outremont, Québec ................................. 83

Figure 7. Katia photographs the fur hood on a winter coat ................................................ 85

Figure 8. Caroline’s timeline .............................................................................................. 88

Figure 9. Alain’s timeline ..................................................................................................... 90

Figure 10. Marie’s timeline ................................................................................................ 90

Figure 11. Camille’s timeline .............................................................................................. 91

Figure 12. Peter photographs a feather earring ................................................................. 93

Figure 13. Valérie photographs a glass-encased kayak ....................................................... 93

Figure 14. Eugène’s timeline .............................................................................................. 95

Figure 15. Chantal photographs a beaded necklace ............................................................ 103

Figure 16. Marie photographs a billboard outside the Berri-Uqâm métro station ............. 104

Figure 17. Francis photographs promotional billboards near Kahnawà:ke ....................... 104
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Dedication

To the women in my life, the friends who followed me through this journey, made it a little smoother, and so much more interesting... Ainsley, Mala, Jeannie, Christina, Jessica, Caroline, Kirstie, and Natalie
Chapter 1

Introduction

*No one lives in the world in general.* (Geertz, 1996, p. 261)

Figure 1. No littering. I took this picture in a Montréal alleyway and shows debris strewn below a work of graffiti in spite of the “No littering” sign apposed above.

It was spring 2012. I had been walking along the streets of Montréal’s now rather stylish Plateau\(^1\) area, where hip professionals abound. I was looking for signs of young people trying to narrate something different about the city; they would most likely have something to say that would challenge what I already knew of Montréal. I came across graffiti, normally a telling symbol of youth’s presence in an urban landscape. I noticed garbage, a lot of garbage, that is, what might be seen as traces of a capitalist Empire keen to produce disposable commodities (see

\(^1\) The Plateau is a centrally located neighborhood framed roughly by Sherbrooke Street in its southern most extremity, De Lorimier in the east, Laurier in the north and St-Laurent in the west.)
During my walk, I found several stories were being conveyed about Montréal: a global city with a reputation for its edginess may not have wanted all of them. However, a resonating silence radiated from my walk. These so-called “cultural groups”\(^2\) and their interests were represented to some degree, however, not a trace reflected an Indigenous\(^3\) narrative or counter-narrative, a story about being Indigenous or living life as an Indigenous person in the parts of Montréal, situated on traditional Haudenosaunee territory, I chose to wander in. I looked for what I might identify as “First Nations” in its aesthetic. Still nothing—no signs with Indigenous words on them, no visible acknowledgement of land, not even a potentially problematic commemorative statue.

Spending a day taking photos of Montréal’s Le Plateau—the neighborhood I currently call “home”—made me keenly aware of what appeared to me as the invisible presence of Indigenous Peoples in this city.

As I reflect on that day now, I am reminded of the fall of 2011 when I was sitting with peers from my graduate student residence, Green College. I eavesdropped as a resident’s mother gasped when a Russian colleague said he was studying history at UBC. “Why would one study history in Canada, the French woman inquired. There is so little history here.” I felt infuriated; perhaps we did not have many centuries worth of buildings, but a lot had happened here in 400

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\(^2\) This is the term used in Québec to refer to immigrant groups, or people who are not of French or British descent. As Gérard Bouchard (2012) explains, it is problematic, because it implies that the “dominant” population, French or English speaking white people, are devoid of culture.

\(^3\) A note on terminology: Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) discusses the problems that arise when using a collectivizing term such as “Indigenous”. Indeed, the populations to whom this word refers (First Nations, Inuit and Métis in Canada alone) have vastly different experiences. Nonetheless, it remains a helpful term to refer collectively to “peoples and nations whose own histories were interrupted and radically reformulated by European imperialism.” (p. 19) In this thesis, if and when possible, I refer to Indigenous peoples’ specific nation. In particular, the term “Aboriginal” is only used in citing sources in which this word is used. Drawing on Daniel Francis (1992), I use the term “Indian” later in this thesis, not to refer to people, but rather to speak to the stereotype that relegates Indigenous people to the past. As Francis explains, the fact that we lack a vocabulary with which to speak about these issues clearly is part of the colonial legacy.
years, I thought. An entire twenty-four hours unfolded before I realized how my response to her eurocentrism was equally eurocentric. Indeed, by focusing on a four hundred year history, I had been guilty of erasing the history that predates European contact. My journey through graduate school has been punctuated with countless moments like this one, during which I continue to recognize how connected my own colonial subjectivity is with my environments and carried forward through my thinking and actions.

Looking back to the education I received in Québec’s French school system, I find the same resounding silence in relation to Indigenous knowledges and narratives of the past and present. In this thesis, I attempt to examine and analyze what I can learn about these silence from speaking to a group that I belong to, French speaking Québécois of French descent. In an effort to better grasp how we think about and narrate the intersections between Indigenous Peoples’ identities, and the idea of the Québécois identity, I have undertaken a comparative study of senior level Francophone undergraduate students in history and teacher education. In brief, the exploratory questions I sought to ask were:

1. How do these students understand and represent themselves as Québécois, as well as their knowledge about and their relationships with so-called immigrants and Indigenous people?

2. How are the stories that students shared related to wider issues of belonging, legitimacy,

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4 During this research, I have learned much about my own use of the term Québécois. Throughout this work, I refer to various “kinds” of Québécois. I refer interchangeably to French Canadian or francophone eurodescendant Québécois to refer to individuals who are descendants of French colonizers, settled in Québec, and who continue to speak French today. I use the term Québécois by itself to refer to people who live in Québec, regardless of lineage, but who are not Indigenous. Though I do not intend to exclude Indigenous people from the Québécois identity should they wish to claim it as their own, I do want to make the distinction between people who live in Québec who are Indigenous and those who are not. Of course, none of these terms can fully convey the diversity that these identities encompass. While I do not wish to assume that any of these groups are homogenous within, the terms are useful for talking about groups that are, in some ways, different from one another.
Choosing to write this in English rather than French has been somewhat of a heartbreaking
decision. While I acknowledge the limitations that this imposes in terms of readership, as well as
the hierarchical socio-linguistic relationship that it reinscribes, writing in English has
nevertheless allowed me to obtain the precious guidance and support of faculty members and
peers at UBC who would otherwise have been unable to read my work, which has been
invaluably enriched as a result of their input. That said, I fully intend to pursue this conversation
in Québec in the official language of the province as I move forward into the future, whether it
be an academic one or not.

1.1 Troubling the Idea of a “Pure” Identity: Situating Myself

Before moving forward I will try to situate myself in relation to the work of this thesis and
Indigenous Peoples in Canada, while acknowledging that such a brief summary could never fully
encompass anyone’s fluid and multiple identities. I am Alana Lise Boileau. I begin by
acknowledging myself as a guest on traditional and unceded xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) territory
upon which UBC sits. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to live, study and play on this
land, grateful towards the hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓ speaking xʷməθkʷəy̓əm people who have generously
welcomed me here since the late summer of 2011. My instinct as I have tried to write this has
been to look for a single thread to weave together the various tales that have shaped the
happenings in my life to sew these into a coherent and complete narrative. Of course, no life is
without conflicts or diversions. Positioning myself as a researcher is a complex iterative process.
I have therefore called upon the histories that appear useful to draw on here and now.

5 The finer details of the research questions can be found in chapter 2.
In recent years, I have been made aware of the deeply normalizing Eurocentric traditions within which I have grown up. Indeed, my life’s experience has comfortably been couched within ‘the norm’. As an able-bodied, white, middle-class, heterosexual cis-gendered woman in a long-term monogamous relationship, I represent part of the ‘dominant’ and privileged majority of Québec and this country as a whole. The place I call home, on which I am a settler, is on traditional Haudenosaunee territory, more specifically in Montréal. This of course positions me as a benefactor of the colonizing project. Given that my mother, an American immigrant to Canada, always spoke English to my sister and I, we speak both French and English fluently. However, my social existence was largely embedded in French culture until I entered university. Having grown up in the province of Québec, it feels natural to introduce myself as a francophone, I identify strongly with this identity. However, recently I have begun to think through how unnatural French is in relation to the land I live on and the history it bears. Recognizing that French did not come from Haudenosaunee territory has led to the first feelings of conflict I have experienced about the imposition of French through Bill 101. After all, most those who firmly believe in this legislation’s merits do not speak the threatened languages of those who have been in Québec since before my French ancestors came to conquer and settle. Coming to terms with and fully embracing this deeply manifested imperial contradiction has been painful, eye opening, and humbling.

Until the fall of 2011, I also considered it natural to identify as a “pure laine” Québécoise. Without ever giving this expression much thought, I felt it applied to me. Austin (2010) fiercely

6 The Québec Government imposed Bill 101, the Charter of the French Language, in 1977—it has since been amended a number of times. Bill 101 is the central legislative piece of Québec’s language policy. Through this legislation the National Assembly resolved to “make of French the language of Government and the Law, as well as the normal and everyday language of work, instruction, communication, commerce and business”. (Office québécois de la langue française, 1977) More importantly for my purposes, Bill 101 stipulates that unless a child has a parent who has received instruction in English in Canada, they go to school in French.
critiques this terminology:

… the racially charged language of ‘pure laine’ (literally ‘pure wool’) and ‘Québécois de souche’ (literally of, or related to, the bark and roots of a tree). Both terms are shamelessly employed by French Quebecers to describe themselves. The staid eugenicist undertones of this terminology is obvious, evoking notions of racial purity that should send a tingle down any spine. Use of both terms also patently ignores the reality that French Quebecers are the products of centuries of cohabitation and mixing with Indigenous peoples, along with Brits, Scots, Irish and Blacks—a potpourri of groups that are part of New France/Québec’s cultural history and identity (p. 25).

Reading Austin’s article in the context of a graduate seminar unlocked a world of experiences that I really had never considered. Though I have an immigrant parent, I never felt like I did not belong to the category of “de souche” Québécoise, and have been able and allowed to feel “pure laine” without challenge because of my whiteness. In fact, I have identified strongly with narratives relating to Québec’s past and present struggle for recognition and specific rights within Canada. In my senior high school years, I became aware of sociolinguistic injustices and was enthralled with French Canadians’ history. Ironically but perhaps not surprisingly, I simultaneously ignored (and was oblivious to) the past and present struggles of the various racial minorities within the province, much less those of Indigenous Peoples.

Thanks to relationships with mostly Indigenous professors and peers, I have come to learn to trouble the very concept of identity as a pure, fixed structure and a colonial category. Part of this work is to therefore familiarize myself with my family’s histories, which I have partly taken for granted. This has involved seeking to uncover stories that merely represent a trace of the past and could have been almost forgotten. The process is a slow one that I have only timidly entered
into. On my father’s side, our name, Boileau, points to obvious French descent, but family stories point to Irish, and possibly Huron ancestors as well. On my mother’s side, the most prominent tale is of my Hungarian great-grandmother Isabella’s journey to America on a boat when she was only 16 years old. My Aunt Marcie has avidly looked into the family’s history and tells us about ancestors who lived in the Alsace region both when it belonged to France and Germany, but I do not know exactly which side of her family this refers to. Recently, I was made equally aware that on my mother’s side, three of four great-grandparents were Jewish. Inevitably it seems, I feel detached from these histories; these are not narratives that my family or I identify with strongly. I wish to develop a connection with my ancestors, but I expect this will take some digging, and a lot of time. The thought of calling our messy set of histories ‘pure’ now appears absurd. This is reinforced by the fact that ‘family’ can and does refer to people with whom one is not biologically related. My love for and connection to my friends and in-laws are a case in point.

The particular journey I undertook when I entered graduate school began, not surprisingly, outside of Québec. In 2009, as an undergraduate student in Anthropology at McGill University, I completed an internship in Elangata Wuas, Kenya. I taught science to 7th and 8th grade Maasai students, and helped with research for the organization, Africa SOMA. During those three months, I came to the somewhat curious (to me) conclusion that I henceforth knew more (which was not very much) about the Indigenous Maasai, than I did about any Indigenous nation in Canada or even Québec. Mine is a familiar tale. Privileged Western undergraduate students often are afforded the possibility of going abroad to “learn about themselves” through their interaction with “Others” (Kiely, 2004). I am grateful for my experience in Elangata Wuas and especially thankful for the human beings that made that summer so meaningful. I am equally aware though that this was a politically charged experience, rife with colonial undertones. The discomfort I
felt, but struggled to identify, lead me to apply to UBC’s Department of Educational Studies with the hopes of combining my anthropological studies with education to conduct ethnographic research within an Indigenous community in Québec (as though this were somehow more justifiable than ethnographic research abroad). However, something inside me remained uneasy. I felt I could not engage with Indigenous people through an ethnographic lens without reproducing colonial relations. As Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) explains “research has been an encounter between the West and the Other. Much more is known about one side of those encounters than is known about the other side.” (p. 8) With the written and in-person direction of my advisors, and mostly Indigenous scholars, I was therefore guided towards research that did not involve looking through a magnifying glass, but rather implied holding up a mirror (Marker, 2003). The research that I undertook as a result would seek to interrogate self-identified Francophones in Québec about their relationships with and/or (lack of) knowledge about Indigenous Peoples, as well as how these are repeated or interrupted through formal schooling.

1.2 A Critique in Solidarity

The challenge that I find myself faced with when writing about these issues is of identifying and naming the potentially problematic racist attitudes and practices that self-identified “de souche” Québécois enact, without engaging in the kind of derisive discourse of moral superiority that occasionally emerges out of English Canada, in the comment section of the Globe and Mail for instance, in which Québec is deemed a “worse” racist space. In Québec, this is commonly known as “Québec bashing”. I am especially concerned about this given that I am writing in English. Castro-Réa (2005) unpacks the perception according to which Québécois are often seen as more racist towards Indigenous Peoples than other Canadians. He explains how
the fact that the core of Québec neo-nationalism continues to be defined in terms of a French Canadian ethnic identity has been used to make a bogeyman out of Québec nationalism. Indeed, we must be careful to acknowledge and understand the inherited nature of struggles around identity and its inevitable borders. The reality remains, while in Québec and in the rest of Canada, people claim to value Indigenous cultures, non-Indigenous people in the entire country express little interest in settling land claims or making the improvement of living conditions for Indigenous Peoples a governmental priority. Indeed, alliances are uneven across the Canadian nation. Setting up a hierarchy of racism is not helpful. As a result of my family life and education, I love Québec and Québécois(es) very dearly. However, most of what I have learned in recent years about this challenging set of conflicts was not taught to me in elementary, high school, or even university at the undergraduate level. My desire and aim in this thesis is therefore to inquire into the nature and evolution of the ways that attitudes have been and continue to be shaped in the Québécois context—in the hopes of speaking directly to non-Indigenous Québécois. This work begets the fear that critiquing one’s own politics as a member of a (relatively) subordinate group exposes weak links in a united front. Marie McAndrew (2010) explains,

Au Canada et au Québec, la communauté francophone peut être considérée simultanément comme une minorité ou une majorité politique et démographique, selon le cadre de référence choisi. Mais même au Québec, il n'y a pas consensus quant à son statut de majorité linguistique ou économique. Malgré d'important progrès, plusieurs observateurs considèrent qu'elle est plutôt en processus de majorisation. [...] la minorité démographique anglophone [...] exerce encore un certain pouvoir d'attraction sur les groupes immigrants et jouit d'un léger avantage économique. [...] nous
considerons donc que les francophones constituent la majorité fragile au Québec, bien que ce degré de fragilité varie selon que l'on aborde ses rapports avec les groupes anglophone, immigrant ou autochtone. (p. 14)\(^7\)

One of the things that undoubtedly inhibits settler Québécois from discussing contemporary Indigenous realities, for example, is our reluctance as a marginalized group to admit to inner disagreements,\(^8\) or to our contribution to the marginalization of others.\(^9\) As a Québécoise myself, I stand in solidarity with Francophones in our linguistic and economic struggles, but it is my belief that highlighting the marginalization that takes place within and becoming engaged in the dismantling of the hierarchies that lead to such subordination does not undermine Québec’s solidarity as a “fragile majority” (McAndrew, 2010, 2013). Rather it provides all those who live in Québec with the opportunity to pave a way forward for a possible decolonization in Canada and elsewhere as we seek to show the world that we are willing to witness the past for the sake of a better future.

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\(^7\) In Canada and Quebec, the francophone community can be simultaneously a minority or a majority, politically and geographically, depending upon the chosen frame of reference. But even in Quebec, no consensus exists as to its majority status linguistically and economically. Despite important progress, many observers would argue that the francophone community is still *in the process of becoming a majority*. […] the English demographic minority […] still exercises a certain power of attraction over immigrant groups and enjoys a small economic advantage. […] we treat francophones as constituting a fragile majority in Quebec, although the degree of fragility varies according to how one looks at their relations with anglophones, immigrants, and the indigenous peoples. (McAndrew, 2013, p. 7-8)

\(^8\) This is concern in not unique to Québécois. Fellows and Razack (1998) give an exhaustive list of authors who have covered the matter of hierarchies among women: “There is substantial literature mapping white women’s participation in the subordination of women of color, a position of dominance they occupy while remaining subordinate to the men of their class and race. […] Feminists have shown how heterosexual women gain privilege by engaging in practices that subordinate lesbians. […] non disabled women are engaged in discrimination of women with disabilities […] Aboriginal women also have traced the role of non-Aboriginal women in the genocide and continuing colonization of Aboriginal peoples.” (p. 337) In spite of the significant critique by the authors that Fellows and Razack point readers to, the matter of maintaining feminism is not in question. Indeed, the call is for all women to engage in reflexive solidarity.

\(^9\) This might be explained by the now well-established framework described by Fellows and Razack (1998). These authors present the concept of “competing marginalities”, which centers around the deeply felt belief that by virtue of our own marginality being the worst, each of us is innocent and therefore not implicated in the subordination of others. This leads to “the race to innocence”. This tendency is based on a view of one’s place on the margin as unconnected to others, and important to secure so as not to be erased.
1.3 Historically Situating the Québécois

Returning to my initial description of the photographs I was taking in Montréal, and with the purpose of beginning my exploration of the questions I have raised about the Plateau, the conspicuous invisibility of Indigenous Peoples that I was detecting led me to reflect upon larger histories in Québec and how these might connect with what I was (not) seeing. These lacunas pointed to the potential argument that the invisibility of Inuit, Métis, and First Nations Peoples in the Plateau is at the center of French Canadian Québécois’ ongoing understanding of themselves (ourselves)\(^{10}\) as a homogeneous group having experienced a common history of subjugation, such as is portrayed in the popular folk song, En Berne, by Les Cowboys Fringants, an excerpt of which is reproduced here:

```
On a été pendant des années
Un petit peuple de yes-man
Qui marchait les fesses serrées
Quand arrivait le foreman
Aujourd'hui ça' un peu changé
Les gars sont tous syndiqués
Ça jase trois-quatre autour d'une pelle
En r'gardant le plus jeune faire du zèle

Mais faudrait pas s'réjouir trop vite
On est encore des porteurs d'eau
À la solde des gens de l'élite
Et des pleins d'marde en tuxedo
Quand l'boss d'une grosse corporation
Ferme son usine en Gaspésie
'Te d'mandera pas ton opinion
Y' va t'slaquer sans t'dire merci! (Pauzé, 2002)\(^{11}\)
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\(^{10}\) Throughout this work, I refer to French Canadian Québécois as “they (we)”. I use the term “they” as a way of distinguishing between French Canadian Québécois, and the reader who may not identify as such. I follow up with the term “we” in parentheses to avoid distancing myself from the group that I am, at times, critical of. Indeed, I acknowledge that I am an active participant within this group.

\(^{11}\) For years we were a population of yes-men who clenched our buns when the foreman arrived. Today things have changed a bit, the guys are all unionized, they chat around the shovel in groups of three or four, looking on as the young kid works zealously. But we shouldn’t rejoice too quickly, we are still water boys at the mercy of a tuxedo wearing elite full of shit. When the boss from a major corporation shuts down his factory in Gaspésie, he won’t ask for your opinion, he’ll fire you without even saying thanks.
This history, which in many ways has taken on mythical proportions (Létourneau, 2000), operates, at least in part, to erase the traces of the colonization of Indigenous Peoples for which we, along with other settlers, are responsible for.

The following thesis seeks to dissect the process through which such an erasure functions, and argues that French Canadian Québécois’ desire, both to recognize members of minority populations and to be recognized as a minority themselves, co-exist on shaky and unacknowledged ground. In the second chapter, drawing on the works of Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) and Plains Cree and Saulteaux scholar Margaret Kovach (2009), I attempt to discuss the incorporation of decolonizing principles to critical ethnographic methods in the context of a study with members of the majority population. I then move on to give a detailed account of the methodologies I employed in my research project. The next chapter seeks to contextualize this study historically, and tries to give a brief overview of the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and various Québécois in what is mostly recent history. Chapter four explores how participants in the study embody, at least in part, the practice of repetition (Hutton as cited in Gardner, 2010). Indeed, I will show that in some ways, participants have internalized what I will argue are the discourses two solitudes and interculturalism, which both ignore Indigenous Peoples’ historical struggles and land claims. In chapter five, I explore participants’ assertions, as well as the visual material that they created in the context of the study, particularly around their encounters with Indigenous Peoples. I attempt to argue that most of what participants have encountered in the past, and continue to encounter in their current environments, serves to reproduce the “imaginary Indian” (Francis, 1992) trope, or a figure vanished in time, or distant in space. I also seek to interrogate how it is that in this Québécois context, such a narrative has barely been disrupted. The final chapter attempts to summarize the
study’s key findings and overall argument, as well as to present the work’s contributions and limitations. I end with scholarly, political, and philosophical recommendations for further work along the lines of what I have done here.
Chapter 2
Methodological Inquiry

In the previous chapter, I set the context, introduced the questions that I seek to further explore, and shared the journey I took to arrive to them. My research in general is directed toward revealing the embodiment of colonial history and power in the narratives of students in higher education in the unusual Québec context. This very complexity renders my project relevant; it elicits questions that need to be answered by many Canadians. For this project I am focusing on the Québécois: however Québécois questions around colonial histories, and the construction of knowledge about Indigenous issues connect to other colonial histories and international questions. In order to conduct my research in ways that maintain the integrity of my concerns about colonial legacies and social inequity in general, I have tried to learn from Indigenous methodologies. Thus, in recognition that critical ethnography emerges from Western academia, which carries colonial impositions, I have sought to undertake my research process while engaging a form of praxis that embodies—at least in part—a decolonizing approach. This requires that I study the methods of those who have theorized around decolonization, and to be as innovative as possible within the specificity of my own research context.

I wish to respond to Arapaho scholar, Michael Marker’s (2003) call to ethnographers that they use a mirror rather than a magnifying glass. As Marker explains, it is “useless to support subaltern groups without concomitantly exposing and destabilizing the hegemonic forces that continue to oppress them, just as it is useless to listen to the Native voice without paying attention to the countervailing voices of power and privilege.” (p. 370) While I have spent time listening to and reading the words of Indigenous scholars from across North America, my study has led me to simultaneously pay attention to, and try to understand, the voices of power and
privilege in Québec. Moving in this direction produces a specific set of ethical and methodological issues and questions that I will grapple with here by framing my discussion around the theoretical and epistemological assumptions that underlie my method (Kovach, 2009).

2.1 On Practicing Method: Decolonization and Ethnographic Practice

Waking up to a new fully decolonized day would be wonderful if unlikely. The process is more fluid and modestly incremental with 'strategic concessions’ all over the place, but we are making headway. (Kovach, 2009, p. 129)

Decolonization and reflexivity are epistemological assumptions that interlock in many ways. For my inquiry, the former serves as an overarching framework, and the latter as one of the strategies employed towards a decolonizing agenda. In the following, I will attempt to outline what I mean by “decolonization” relying mainly on the works of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), and Margaret Kovach (2009). I will then address the challenges that have arisen for me as I try to apply a decolonizing lens to research undertaken with participants stemming from the majority population of a minority site in relation to the Canadian nation-state.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) explains, “decolonization is a process which engages with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels. For researchers, one of those levels is concerned with having a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations and values which inform research practices.” (p. 20) She goes on to write that,

Most of the ‘traditional’ disciplines are grounded in cultural worldviews which are either antagonistic to other belief systems or have no methodology for dealing with other knowledge systems. Underpinning all of what is taught at universities is the belief in the concept of science as the all-embracing method for gaining an
understanding of the world. (p. 65)

Rather than rejecting everything Western, Smith (1999) notes that decolonization consists in centering Indigenous Peoples’ concerns and worldviews and becoming familiar with theory and research from these perspectives for their purposes of critique and alliance engagement. In her book, *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations and Contexts*, Kovach (2009) interviews Maori scholar Graham Hingangaroa Smith. Like Tuhiwai Smith, both Kovach and Hingangaroa Smith agree that decolonization involves interrogating the hegemony or monopoly of concepts of knowledge defined by Western universities. As I mentioned previously, I too have sought to employ, in part, an approach to research that incorporates decolonizing strategies. I also attempt to draw upon other critical qualitative methods to address power differences on the one hand, and to engage in good and ethical research on the other. Hingangaroa Smith reported when interviewed by Kovach, a “decolonizing approach, built upon critical theory, is *particularly effective* in analysing power differences between groups” (p. 80, italics added).

According to Prosser (2007) power is expressed through domination, silence, objectification, and normalization. What this meant to me was that, as a researcher, I wished to strive continuously to identify and decenter both research participants’ and my own assumptions. My aim was to work together with participants to consider alternative or counter narratives and perspectives (particularly Indigenous ones) in relation to our past and present whilst remaining aware of the limitations to achieving a perfect balance of political ideals through research.

To begin to take on such a project, Linda Smith (1999) recommends that we spend time asking pre-research questions. “Whose research is it? Who owns it? Whose interests does it serve? Who will benefit from it? Who has designed its questions and framed its scope? Who will carry it out? Who will write it up? How will its results be disseminated?” (p. 10) Though these
questions were devised within the context of research with Indigenous Peoples, they are an integral part of good research practices, which promote respectful and ethical engagement with research participants, regardless of their identities. As such, they should not solely be the preoccupation of Indigenous researchers. The key is to pose these questions in ways that change the course of how participants and myself think critically, and act upon these issues in the future. Furthermore, the meaning that underpins these concerns fluctuates according to circumstance. This I realized as I attempted to pose the above questions in the context of my work with participants who did not appear overtly vulnerable in the form that Indigenous groups have reported feeling in the wider Canadian nation-state (Saganash, 2005). Indeed, eurodescendant francophone Québécois socially, culturally and economically correspond to the majority population within the context of the province of Québec. With French Canadian Québécois’ political rights and representative parliamentary institutions (Lamoureux as cited in Maillé, 2007), this is arguably also the case within the wider Canadian context. Therefore, in the face of participants who articulate problematic colonial narratives, asking who this study is being carried out for, how reciprocity can be enacted, and how participants will benefit from the research does not present straightforward answers. In the context of research with Indigenous Peoples, Kovach (2009) recommends that decolonizing research implies taking on projects that benefit Indigenous communities in line with the concerns they themselves hold as valuable and important. We must ask ourselves as non-Indigenous researchers holding up mirrors, but seeking to maintain good and ethical relationships with participants nonetheless, what this means for us. In recognizing that I do not seek to speak for any Indigenous people, I wonder which communities I am

\[12\] Of course, participants’ national and linguistic identity do not preclude them from having experienced marginalization for any other number of reasons, such as their physical ability, gender or sexual orientation for instance. Participants will be introduced with more detail in section 2.4.2 of this thesis.
accountable to as I seek to appropriately apply Indigenous research principles to research with non-Indigenous participants? Importantly, I am concerned about not representing participants in ways that they see themselves. I equally wish to ensure that by pointing out their problematic understandings, I am not distancing myself or readers from them, but rather exposing and acknowledging the systems that structure everyone’s (lack of) knowledge around our histories.

Perhaps the road toward fruitful inquiry into such tricky questions lies in the respectful and reciprocal relationships that participants and researchers develop between and amongst each other (Johnson, 2008). Drawing on Liamputtong, Kovach (2009) explains that in order to build reciprocity, connection and confidence, researchers share their experiences with participants. Mainly, within the short time frame of my study, I strove to build relationships with the students that I worked with through the small gesture of providing food when we met, by following up after our exchanges, and by maintaining communication throughout the research process up to the final steps of writing. Throughout the course of my research, I wanted to avoid typifying the individuals with whom I worked (Clifford, 1988) on the one hand, and setting out with a presupposed set of social identities (Tolson, as cited in Nayak, 2003) on the other. Though my original intention was for participants and myself to co-construct knowledge that our various perspectives would allow us to generate, as I carried out my study it became apparent that this was perhaps an unrealistic and unattainable goal to begin with. I have done my best to remain perceptive, to follow the directions that participants took me in, and to deploy decolonizing approaches, but on occasion, and in spite of Kovach’s (2009) suggestion that researchers refrain from interrupting participants, I found myself reeling conversation back towards my own line of questioning, or directing conversation explicitly. That said, my sense was that they did not feel disrespected, pushed or pulled, and at every stage, transcripts were shared with participants so
that they could approve them. Interestingly, some participants specifically thanked me for the
way I went about working with them:

… je serais rendu au stade de dire merci. J’ai beaucoup apprécié l’expérience, pis j’en parlais un peu avec Chantal
hier, pis c’est ça qu’on disait. On trouvait que t’avais une bonne méthodologie, pis que, soit dans tes questions ou
comment t’abordes le sujet, tu transposes bien nos idées tsé. T’es… tu cherches pas une réponse à quoi que ce soit.
(Peter\textsuperscript{13} (TE), p. 15)

[… I have gotten to the part where I say thank you. I really appreciated my experience, and I was talking about it
with Chantal yesterday, and that’s what we were saying. We feel like you had really good methodology, and that
through your questions and the way you have broached the topic, you’re good at transposing our ideas, you know?
You’re… You don’t look for a [specific] answer to anything.]

Though our time together was limited, participants like Peter express that they have developed a
sense of trust in me. Furthermore, the students that I worked with had never spoken about much
of the material we discussed so explicitly, and in some cases, it had never crossed their mind.

Parce que j’mé dis toujours, “C’est vraiment des choses auxquelles je pense jamais. C’est quoi les traces autochtones
dans mon quotidien?” J’y pense pas faque… Non, c’est intéressant. (Katia (TE), p. 5)

[Because I still ask myself, ‘These are really things I never think about. What are the Indigenous traces in my every
day life?’ I don’t think about it so… No, it’s interesting. (Katia, p. 5)]

Somehow, I want to assert that participants did assume some trust and that we developed a
kind of rapport that allowed us to explore some difficult questions and issues. As Glesne (2006)
has argued, “Whether or not researcher and participants become friends, the researcher
acknowledges and is aware that a relationship exists and works to honor that relationship” (p.
11). Along similar lines, given the visceral nature of my inquiry, I intended to pay particular
attention to emotions and discomfort, both the participants’ and my own, throughout my
research. Paraphrasing Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody in McLeod and Thomson (2009),
choosing to become aware of and incorporate feeling into one’s research requires that we be
willing to expect discomfort and sometimes very difficult emotions. This revealed itself to be far

\textsuperscript{13} Throughout the study, participants are identified according to their chosen pseudonym.
more difficult than I had anticipated.  

2.2 On Reflexivity, Positionality, and Accountability

... what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people’s constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to... (Geertz, 1973, p. 9)

In some ways, theorists of decolonization are aligned with critical anthropologists such as the eurodescendant American scholar Clifford Geertz cited above, who are concerned with recognition and reflexivity in the context of research. Methodologies in general are both historically and geographically situated. In turn, the experience and interpretative activities of the researcher are shot through with the researcher and participants’ subjective life experiences, their own situatedness, and contextual overtones of space and place (McLeod and Thomson, 2009; Clifford, 1988). In this sense, ethnography is a constructive negotiation in which a number of politically significant subjects take part. Researchers who ultimately have final control over the research design, data collection and interpretation, are positioned within a web of relations that bring together people, time and place. Acknowledging how social, cultural, disciplinary, historical, political positioning shape both the questions and narratives that define our methods (McLeod and Thomson, 2009) requires that we reveal our motivations, purpose, and cultural groundings. As such, researchers may be able to begin to situate themselves in relation to the questions they seek to answer and really pay attention to culture in a grounded way (Kovach, 2009). This is what I have attempted to do in the first pages of this thesis. Such a commitment to

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14 Discomfort did indeed arise. In an instance during which Eugène, a participant in the history group, spoke of his fear of people of color, I named the tension that this caused in the room, and tried to deconstruct it with participants. However, in other moments, such as when a participant in education, Alain, claimed that a friend’s uncle’s “Indian hunting permit” was technically still valid, I was at a loss for how to deal with the discomfort this caused and intuitively tried to move out of it. In both these cases, I was concerned with participants’ well-being and strove not to “judge” them. Such moments continue to remind me that my learning is ongoing, and that as a white non-Indigenous person, I have the privilege of choosing to move away from these instances, particularly as the researcher leading conversations.
reflexivity involves becoming seriously engaged (Burawoy, 1998) and to strive to mitigate the power relations omnipresent in research. “If we write without thinking critically about our writing, it can be dangerous” (Smith, 1999, p. 36). Extending this assertion to all steps of research, Rose (2001) explains, “the careful and consistent awareness of what the researcher is doing, why, and with what possible consequences in terms of the power relations between researcher and researched” (p. 253) is a prerequisite for ethical work. It is our responsibility as researchers to reveal the constructedness of our texts—the underlying epistemological assumptions that cause us to narrate our questions, to look for answers and to present our findings all in a certain way.

This commitment to being constantly aware of one’s positionality presents challenges. During a graduate level seminar, a non-Indigenous student and I were required to facilitate discussion around separate articles by Mi’kmaw scholar, Marie Battiste and Teme-Augama Anishinaabe professor, Dale Turner. As we conversed, a fellow student shared her discomfort, by expressing that her position as a non-Indigenous Canadian did not allow her to make any claims at all. The silence that this student was enacting is what geographer, Anoop Nayak (2003) cautions against. Not being able to take a stand on matters which reside beyond our direct personal experience might have us “tip-toeing across the thin white picket fence in times of great uncertainty and inequality when a confident stride and firm foothold in one camp or another is patently required.” (p. 32). An exaggerated focus on one’s own situation produces the risk of settling for knowing solely about ourselves as a result of—or for fear of—coming to conclusions that we can’t really be sure of anything (McLeod and Thomson, 2009). In my experience, acknowledging situatedness has initially incited a form of paralysis. From this real and legitimate state though, we must be able to move on. Being conscientious of one’s positionality cannot be
used as an excuse not to say or do anything; yet at the same time we must understand the social position we hold in the wider context of inequality. 15 “Looking at the researcher self is not simply a form of reflexive lip service, nor is it autobiographical indulgence; it is evidence—the manifestation of the space between what is familiar and what we are seeking to know.” (Les Back as cited in McLeod and Thomson, 2009, p. 159). Nevertheless, Gillian Rose (2001) reminds us, stating positionality problematically assumes that one has a stable identity that can be reflected upon, that is not in flux. While it is useful and necessary to acknowledge some of the more permanent elements of my identity such as my whiteness, my gender, my socio-economic position—though of course, these are not frozen for everyone—my friend and colleague William Balfe (2012) has pointed out that we should also seek to avoid totalizing our identities through labels in ways that a decolonizing method strives to avoid and would seek to critique.

While I have tried to acknowledge my positionality, discuss my motivations and histories in my writing, I was faced with what were unanticipated challenges that kept me from being as open about myself with participants. Though I took part in discussion and shared my own thoughts, I felt concerned at times that sharing too much might overly influence the quality of students’ participation. Specifically, I was concerned that pointing out that I found some of their claims to be problematic might cause them to feel uncomfortable or judged. What’s more, as undergraduate university students, they had their own expectations around who a researcher is, and what she can do. Mainly, I felt as though participants expected me to be somewhat of an

15 For instance, my experience in the past two years, as I have attended a number of classes and conferences with Indigenous professors, speakers, and peers, is that in these spaces, I should mostly be listening. As Paulette Regan (2010) explains, “my own deepest learning has always come when I was in unfamiliar territory culturally, intellectually, and emotionally. It seems to me that this space of not knowing has power that may hold a key to decolonization for settlers.” (p. 18) As settlers, we must come to terms with the fact that there are indeed sets of knowledge and experiences that we cannot fully understand, and moments in which we should not speak.
objective observer. Perhaps I should have spent more time talking about what our roles were as collaborators.

The matter of accountability and positionality is further complicated when taking into account the Indigenous Peoples whose land my study took place on. I felt worried about presenting my project to the Mohawk, who currently live nearest to, and in many cases in, Montreal. Why would they be interested in research that seeks to understand the perceptions that members of the “dominant” populations might have of them? To quote the settler identified Director of Research for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Paulette Regan (2010), Indigenous people “should not be asked to carry the additional burden of [our] decolonizing struggle.” (p. 31) While I have given much thought to my right to participate in conversations around Indigenous Peoples and issues, I now turn to the matter of my responsibility given that I already am engaged in these discussions. Until now, I have mainly tried to be accountable towards my Indigenous peers and mentors at UBC, but of course, ultimately, they cannot stand in for, or represent the Haudenosaunee peoples.¹⁶

### 2.3 Using Multi-level Methodological Approaches

Layers of colonial history weigh down upon the research that I have undertaken. This implies that the use of multiple methodologies might be better suited to capture the complexity of the situation into which I wished to inquire. As a way of bridging the aims of decolonizing methods with the three-month time frame that was available to me for research as a graduate

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¹⁶ In my thesis’ conclusion, I come back to this as a limitation of my study. Furthermore, in an attempt to avoid cloistering myself in the academy’s ivory tower, I simultaneously volunteered with the organization Exeko while engaged in my fieldwork. Exeko collaborates with the Montreal Native Friendship Center to donate books, reading glasses and drawing materials to mainly Indigenous homeless people in the city. I hope to convey that this was not a tokenizing exercise, but rather a way for me to engage with some of the issues that I have come to understand are the result of ongoing colonization, and hopefully begin to spend time with Indigenous people outside of the university.
student,\textsuperscript{17} I used a multi-level methodology: I combined a historical sensibility with focus groups, interviews and image making activities, which I had hoped would call upon participants’ capacity for capturing meaning in more creatively based ways. Seeking several means of uncovering/discovering meaning and information acknowledges the countless ways participants might wish to express themselves on the one hand, and results in diversely shaped data on the other, which in turn presents the possibility of an enriched end work. When I set out into “the field”, the combination of methods (historical contextualism, narrativization, and visual creation), interpretative meaning making and thematic analysis (Kovach, 2009) ultimately presented a way forward that I hoped would help me to grasp both participants’ conscious and unconscious understandings of theirs and others’ identities in Québec.

2.4 Detailed Methods

The following section seeks to explain both the rationale behind each of the methods employed, as well as the detailed way in which I used them with participants.

2.4.1 The pilot project.

At the outset, I aimed to “practice” the methodologies I intended to employ before I engaged in the formal and official part of this study. To assess the project’s methodologies and their effectiveness for the study itself, I therefore conducted a small pilot with a group made up of a total of six of my French Canadian Québécois friends\textsuperscript{18} (five white women, and one white man—these were the friends who responded to the recruitment e-mail I had sent out). This pilot study helped me to see which methods and questions were most effective, how I could ask the

\textsuperscript{17} Indeed, I must acknowledge the limitations of work that is undertaken during the course of just three months.

\textsuperscript{18} These were personal relations of mine, which have developed in a variety of instances: during high school, while working together in a summer camp, while completing an internship abroad, and through work in an adult French language learning center.
latter differently, assess the moments when things seemed unworkable and when silences emerged, in order to help me to reshape questions. I urged my pilot respondents to be in a critical frame of mind so that they would both answer my questions and help me to reflect on their usability (Glesne, 2006). For instance, as a result of the pilot, I changed the planned course of the group interviews, and changed the amount of time allocated to each of the steps involved in the timeline creation activity that will be described further.

I conducted all the interviews and subsequent transcriptions myself, and made detailed ethnographic notes throughout the study. Taken together, these approaches were used to enrich the overall ‘thickness’ of my descriptions of what I had witnessed in the role of ‘researcher’. These provided the opportunity for later self-reflection on future practice.

Up to this point, I have provided some account of the overall assumptions of the methodological landscape of this work. What follows is a detailed account of the questions and methods in a more operational form. They were threefold:

1. How do Université de Montréal undergraduate students studying in two different fields (history or teacher education) narrate their understandings of the intersections between Québec nationalism, the politics of Indigeneity, and wider questions of belonging and legitimacy? These two groups are senior level undergraduate history students and teacher education students.

2. Comparatively, how do these two groups understand and represent their knowledge about Indigenous peoples and associated issues in Québec and the Canadian context?

3. What role might politics and narratives in Québec play in participants’ knowledge and understanding of inclusion and belonging, with particular reference to discussions of
26

Indigeneity?\textsuperscript{19}

\subsection*{2.4.2 Research participants.}

Participants (who will be referred to according to their chosen pseudonym) were recruited at the Université de Montréal. All of them had to identify as both “Québécois(e)” and Francophone. This choice was based on the fact that I wanted to hear the voices and narratives of those who identify with the province’s “dominant” population, as well as the fact that this group (young people engaged with learning and teaching history) has not been well tapped in existing qualitative research. The first group consisted of 6 volunteers who were well acquainted with each other: Francis, Alain, Peter, Chantal, Caroline, and Katia. They were final year B.Ed students registered in the Fall 2012 section of the same course\footnote{In order to maintain participants’ anonymity, I cannot name this course.} in teacher education. The second group consisted of five volunteers who did not know each other well: Victor, Eugène, Valérie, Camille, and Marie. They were final year B.A. students registered in the Fall 2012 section of the same course\footnote{Ibid.} in history. As I had expected, all but one of the participants were of predominantly white (European or French Canadian) ancestry. The other participant was mixed; her mother was a white French Canadian Québécoise, and her father was from Haiti. The selection of individuals from these specific groups, history and teacher education students, is based on the fact that both clusters represent people who in some way are responsible for educating “citizens” about history. One might assume that these two groups should be particularly well informed about the history of Québec and Canada. Their understandings of the past and present helped to inform my research with regards to narratives that educational institutions hold and transmit about Québec.

\textsuperscript{19} I hoped to debrief with participants about the kinds of questions and activities that were employed that may have played some part in helping them to develop new knowledge or new narratives about Québec nation.

\textsuperscript{20} In order to maintain participants’ anonymity, I cannot name this course.
and its histories. While this is a small research sample, these two groups might provide preliminary insight into public knowledge about Québec and its link to Indigenous knowledges and associated issues. As I have already done above, participants’ quotes in this thesis will be presented in a smaller font size, first in French (the language in which participants and I spoke at the time of the interviews), then as translated by myself into English. I identify the interlocutor of the cited excerpt in parentheses after the French version of the quotation according to their chosen pseudonym, followed by the letters TE or H, according to whether the participant was a student in teacher education or history.

At the time of recruitment, to better explain the research to participants and in order for them to understand why this research was being undertaken, I distributed a one-page summary of the implications of the study (see Appendix 1).

2.4.3 Historical contextualism.

*To hold alternative histories is to hold alternative knowledges.* (Smith, 1999, p. 34)

What practices might researchers employ to better frame and perhaps access alternative knowledges and histories of a nation or space with Indigenous Peoples in mind? The cultural studies expert, Raymond Williams (1977) argues that contextualizing individual histories requires understanding how human beings’ feelings are structured by wider history, politics, ideology and nation. In the case of Québec, histories are strongly influenced by the viscerally felt ideas about nation and belonging. James Clifford (1988) argues against the reductionist use of dichotomies and essentialized conceptions that ultimately lead to the portrayal of abstract

\[22\]

I am very grateful to my dear friend Catherine Allard who assisted me in translating written materials that would be distributed to participants from English to French. In this thesis, I have only presented the English versions of these documents. However, the French versions can be made available upon request to this research project’s supervisor, Dr. Jo-Anne Dillabough.
ahistorical beings. Therefore, the approach I wish to employ attempts to provide a brief historical context as one attempt to avoid the collection of simplistic historical narratives (Brown as cited in McLeod and Thomson, 2009). Trying to disrupt totalizing and hegemonic understandings of history as a long coherent tale of development may bring about awareness and insight into Québec’s stories of now and then, as they have been experienced from a variety of perspectives. As I strive to situate myself personally, I want also to explore and discuss the larger histories that position both the participants and my own knowledge of, and attitudes towards, Indigenous Peoples in Québec. To do this, I conducted basic archival research at the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec in person, focusing on documents (periodicals, photographs, audio-visual material) from the period of the 1960s Quiet Revolution onward. To remain focused on examples relevant to my inquiry, and in recognition of the fact that this was not an attempt at a comprehensive history, I randomly chose a year from every decade (except in the case of the year 1990, which I chose deliberately because of the historic events at Oka) and sought out titles from major periodicals, which were related to Indigenous Peoples and that caught my attention. I hoped that what I would find might supplement the historical research (cited in chapter 3) that I was already familiar with.

2.4.4 Narratives and oral histories.

The discourses that individuals employ exhibit traces of the historical era of their origin as well as the contemporary conditions of their performance and their social location. (McLeod and Thomson, 2009, p. 124)

In keeping with the themes of historical contextualism, this study incorporates comparative oral histories. Drawing from critical history and memory studies (Gardner, 2010; Simon and Eppert, 1997), I sought to become familiar with and perhaps disrupt our knowledge and
understandings—mine and participants’—of the past and present on both the personal and national levels. What and why we remember and forget are significant indicators of the role of history in our lives (Trouillot, 1995). In addition, how participants remember, conceptualize and narrate personal and national histories, in relation to their own place in Québec is arguably a telling reality of what we come to know and not know (McLeod and Thomson, 2009). This methodological standpoint is in alignment with the decolonizing and reflexive lenses I wish to employ in that it aims at providing detailed and layered context. One hope was that focusing on individual biographies would bridge important questions about what participants understand in relation to what they may or may not know about Indigeneity or Indigenous issues in Québec. Furthermore, an incorporation of an explicitly biographical focus assisted me in documenting if and how participants experienced change during the research process. Oral history values and encourages narration of the self, while simultaneously de-familiarizing the present, thus offering a perspective to critique cultural “common sense”. Procuring such valuable data through the collection of participants’ narratives was contingent on the structure of these conversations. As Kovach (2009) expresses, “highly structured interviews are not congruent with accessing knowledges, that imbue both the fluidity and regulations of the storyteller’s role” (p. 123).

Specifically, this research involved two distinct narrative encounters (one focus group and individual interviews) punctuated by the use of visual research methods. Participants’ presence was solicited on three separate occasions between October and December 2012. My first encounter with them consisted of a two-hour focus group discussion (these were held separately, with students from teacher education and history) held in a Université de Montréal classroom. To foster a comfortable and naturally developing conversation among participants, I presented them with themes rather than predetermined structured questions. This happened once conversation
was underway, but initially, direct questions were necessary in order for a flow to be established.

The themes included:

- **The Québec nation and being Québécois(es)**
  - National characteristics
  - Commonalities between/among Québécois(es)
  - Memories of feeling Québécois(e)

- **Citizenship in Québec**
  - Relationships among citizens\(^{23}\)
  - Citizens’ ability to identify as Québécois(es)

- **Indigenous Peoples in Québec**
  - Memories of learning about Indigenous Peoples in school
  - Knowledge of contemporary realities of Indigenous Peoples
  - Elements that shape Québécois’ (lack of) knowledge
  - Relationship between Indigenous Peoples and Québécois(es)

More direct questions included:

- What kind of education did you receive?
- What is your first memory of identifying as Québécois(e)?
- Can you describe your interaction with “immigrants”?
- Are there many “immigrants” in your circle of friends?
- What do you recall learning in school about Indigenous Peoples?
- What do you know about Indigenous Peoples’ current realities?

After the two visual activities had been completed (these will be discussed further), the last phase of the research project involved individual recorded interviews with each of the participants. These were held at the time and place that were most convenient for them. During

\(^{23}\) Problematically, I myself used the term “immigrant” to refer generally to people of color. Therefore, little can be inferred from participants’ use of this terminology. In retrospect, I acknowledge that this both denies the migration of French (and other European) settlers, and fails to distinguish between recent immigrants and people of color who may be of 2nd, 3rd or further generation in Québec. While this term was functional for distinguishing between French Canadian Québécois, Indigenous Peoples, and people of color (for which there did not appear to be a term that participants were “comfortable” with), it has limitations.
these (approximately one-hour long) discussions, I asked students to reflect on their experience during the previous visual exercise and together, we discussed the images they had produced. In order to prepare for these meetings, I reviewed the transcripts from the focus-group and highlighted things that each participant had said that I wanted them to expand on. These exchanges were also open-ended. Some questions recurred in every interview, but mostly, participants and I discussed thematic issues, which included:

- Knowledge of Indigenous matters in Québec
- Personal attitudes towards Indigenous Peoples
- Belonging, inclusion and exclusion in Québec
- Impact that this study has had on participant’s perceptions of these issues
- Intentions for praxis in the future

2.4.5 Storied accounts of the nation through visual methodology.

James Clifford (1988) argues that ethnography and the practice of translating experience into text is indeed enmeshed in writing. Moving away from privileging the “word” in the written and spoken form (Prosser, 2007) offers exciting possibilities. As Rose (2001) states, the making and use of images and photographs can be a generative methodology for seeking alternative knowledge. Sarah Pink (2001) advocates for the use of various mediums to convey what each reveals best. For the purposes of my own research, incorporating the visual felt like it would fall under the purview of a decolonizing approach whereby participants become producers and interpreters of meanings; integrating image making into my methodology would allow for research with and by collaborators (Prosser, 2007), rather than solely about them. I hoped this would somewhat mitigate the power I held as a researcher. I drew upon the use of photographs as elicitation devices because it has been argued that such an approach provides an alternative medium for exploring participants’ responses to difficult and sometimes politically challenging
questions. For instance, it encourages interviewees to talk about things that are taken for granted, or that may otherwise not be available until represented visually (Prosser, 2007; Rose, 2001). Again, this visual exercise had the potential to begin to challenge the privilege that arises out of participants’ position as members of the “dominant” population by making it visible.

Between the focus group and individual interview activities, students participated in the second phase of the research. This activity was held during participants’ class time, and their non-participating peers were able to take part as well.24 During the forty-five minutes of this encounter, I provided everyone in the class with materials (paper, scissors, glue, etc.) and asked them to create two distinct timelines. All instructions for this activity were given verbally.

1. In the first timeline I requested that participants represent the history of their encounters with Indigenous people or Indigeneity. I explained to students that these encounters might include anything from having an Indigenous friend when one was young, to watching Disney’s Pocahontas, to visiting an exhibit on First Nations at a museum, or using the expression (that some might fight derogatory) “Eskimo kiss” as a child. I asked them to reflect seriously on each of the occasions in which Indigenous people might have “made an appearance” in their lives.

2. If students had time to create a second timeline, I invited them to create one that would represent everything that they knew about the histories of Indigenous peoples in Québec and Canada.

Participants were reminded that this activity was not a test of either artistic ability or knowledge of official history. During the second half of this encounter, I asked students to informally

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24 This had been previously negotiated with the course instructors who deemed the exercise valuable for all students, as well as in line with the objectives of the course. I hope that in some way, this might have been a way for me to “give back” to the instructors who so generously handed over class time.
present their timelines to the group by discussing the stories that these visual representations depicted, along with the thoughts and feelings that might have arisen during the activity. I recorded this group conversation through note taking. I then provided participants with written instructions (via e-mail) for the photography activity they would have to undertake before our third and final encounter (see Appendix 2).

For the second visual activity, I asked participants to take three photographs to document the presence of Indigenous Peoples or Indigeneity in Montréal in the past or in the present. Here, I wanted students to try and decipher these “traces” in their every day life. I instructed them not to take photographs of people. Kusenbach (2003) explores the wealth of knowledge that can be gained through unveiling and encouraging participants’ perception, insight and interpretations of physical space, which can be generated through photographing one’s environment. Creative activities made room for thoughts and feelings to occur naturally (rather than trying to induce them myself), and therefore seemed a fruitful way of going forward with this particular project. As it turns out, participants were indeed struck by how difficult they found the photography exercise.

Ben au début j’ai trouvé ça peut-être un peu difficile. J’étais comme, « Ah mon Dieu, qu’est-ce que j’vais prendre en photo euh… » […] Je sais pas si c’est que je les vois pas, ou je les connais pas, mais j’arrivais pas à penser à autre choses que dans le fond un peu des clichés. (Caroline (TE), p. 2)

[Well at first, maybe I found it a little difficult. I was like, ‘Oh my God, what am I going to photograph, uh…’ […] I don’t know if it’s that I don’t see them, or don’t know about them, but I couldn’t think of anything other than clichés really. (Caroline (TE), p. 2)]

By looking anew at their environment, participants were able to directly witness precisely how we fail to recognize (the invisibility of) Indigenous people and their contributions in our surroundings.
2.5 Ethical Concerns

To participate in this project, participants were required to sign a consent form (see Appendix 3) in which they were guaranteed both complete anonymity and the possibility of opting out of their participation in the study at any time without justification and with no consequence whatsoever. Notably, in signing this form, participants agreed to being recorded for the purposes of transcription and the completion of the thesis. While no participant objected to being tape recorded, some participants used the opportunity to review transcripts to request that sections be altered, and/or to clarify their assertions via e-mail. I obtained ethical approval for every part of this study, including the involvement of participants’ non-participating peers during the timeline exercise.
Chapter 3

Review of the Literature

3.1 Contextualizing Relationships in Québec: Power Imbalance, Competing Land Claims and Memories of the Nation

In this chapter, I wish to bring together bodies of literature to form a narrative understanding of both the key absences around Indigenous issues/knowledge and the habitual silencing of this knowledge, through colonial practices in the context of Québec. I draw upon both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars for this work, and seek, as far as possible, to read beyond the reach of Québec and Canada to acknowledge the associated research underway in these respects in other parts of the world. I begin by attempting to reconstruct a brief, if incomplete, chronology of Indigenous and Québécois histories as a way to introduce a (mostly contemporary) history and a context that explores earlier relations so that the past can speak, at least in part, to the present. Mainly, the patterns that arise in the history described below contribute to a Québécois narrative of the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and Québécois.

A number of historians have looked to the relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in what is now called Québec. Works by anthropologist Denys Delâge (1991, 1992) serve as a good summary. Delâge stresses that documents dating back to early colonization provide ample evidence for the multiple ways in which colonizers and Indigenous Peoples came to interact: the fur trade, inter-marriage, and military alliances to name a few. Delâge (1991) does not romanticize. Rapport was not without conflict, tension or prejudice, though he claims that both groups were interested in one another, and indeed relied upon each

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25 For a list of some of the scholars who have undertaken to “expose the injustices and retell the stories of early contact”, see Godlewska, Moore and Bednasek (2010, p. 420).
26 If Delâge draws on oral histories by Indigenous Peoples, this is not stated in the work that I am familiar with.
other. In spite of cultural and material “loans” though, colonizers’ social structures (language, religion, architecture, etc.) remained profoundly European; relationships were in most cases built upon French self-interests. In spite of close military alliances, and collaborative explorations led by Indigenous Peoples and the French during the early 18th century, following British conquest, an abrupt division took place and the French disassociated themselves from Indigenous Peoples for fear of being associated with the racist perception of Indigenous people as “Savages” (Delâge, 1991, p. 25). Today, this creates a unique situation in Québec whereby the province’s “territorial boundaries contain both distinctly Anglophone and Francophone Aboriginal peoples” (Barsh, 1997, p. 9). From 1850 onward, successive (highly gender discriminatory) legislation was passed that impressed a status upon Indigenous women and men, which left them without civil rights and relegated to reserves (Lawrence, 2004). At the same time, in what was an obvious effort to assert Christian superiority, French Canadians began to claim that their past interactions with Indigenous Peoples had been part of “civilizing” or “evangelizing” missions (Delâge, 1991). In the latter half of the 19th century and all through the 20th century, the Canadian government and the Church collaborated in instituting and administering the Indian residential school system. Atikamekw historian, the late Gilles Ottawa (2010) explained, with the aim of assimilating Indigenous youth into white culture, young Indigenous children were separated from their families, forbidden to speak their language and made to learn a new one, as well as forcefully converted to Christianity. In total, one hundred and thirty residential schools were set up in Canada between 1874 and 1996, six of which were in Québec (operational between 1934 and 1990) (Ottawa, 2010). The legacies of this culturally, mentally and physically violent history live on through the intergenerational violence experienced by many Indigenous

27 Here, Delâge (1991) mentions in passing (conveniently) a thousand or so Indigenous people who were reduced to slavery as domestics within the homes of the elite.
communities or individuals (Ottawa, 2010; Regan, 2010; Saganash, 2005; Valaskakis, 2005; Wolochiatuk, 2012).

For French Canadians in Québec, the 1960s were the theatre for la Révolution tranquille (the Quiet Revolution) that ultimately led to the redefinition of their identity from an ethnic group to a Québécois nation (Delâge, 1991). This complex period involved “[a mobilization of] the population around inspiring aspirations and stakes: participation, planning, socio-economic development, modernization, democracy, the right to well-being, and the promotion of a strong, francophone Quebec, open to the world.” (Létourneau, 1989, p. 105) After two centuries of cultural and economic oppression (capital from Toronto and the U.S. had made English the language of management and finances, thereby relegating the French language to a lower class status), Québécois were ultimately transformed. As a result of the Révolution tranquille, historians in Québec began to concentrate their efforts towards understanding the history of a privileged few Québécois (epitomized in the figure of the cultivator), consigning those who would have had long established relationships with Indigenous Peoples (traders) in the shadows (Delâge, 1991). Of note, Rutherford and Miller (2006) explore the Indians of Canada Pavilion at Expo 67 (held in Montréal), which was “unique in its assertion of Native/Newcomer relations”; it “aw[oke] non-Native Canadians to both the plight of Aboriginal peoples and their increasing unwillingness to suffer in silence.” (p. 48) Unfortunately though, the pavilion had a “short-lived

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28 The Révolution tranquille also signified the end of a cultural and political unity among French Canadians across the country. The redefinition from French Canadian to Québécois indeed became synonymous with the exclusion of French speakers outside of Québec from this particular political project. Still today, little solidarity exists between French Canadian Québécois, and French Canadians outside of La Belle Province (Laniel & Létourneau, 2010).

29 I acknowledge the fact that the word “oppressed” has been used in detrimentally universalizing ways (Razack, 1998). There are varying degrees of oppression. Positing Québec as “oppressed” by English Canada may not do justice to groups that have endured a fate much worse than white Francophone Québécois have. However, drawing on Albert Memmi’s (1972) essay on French Canadians, I argue that in spite of having been privileged in relation to some groups, French Canadian Québécois have historically been the objects of domination by English forces, and as such have experienced some negative consequences of oppression.
Soon after the Révolution tranquille, Premier Robert Bourassa undertook a nation building hydroelectric development project that infringed upon Eeyou Itschee (the James Bay), without consulting the Cree nation whose land the damming encroached on. With the signing of the James Bay Northern Québec Accord (which also involved the Inuit of northern Québec) in 1975, the Cree were forced to either participate and reap some economic benefits for their growing population, or not participate and gain nothing at all (Desbiens, 2004a). At a conference held at McGill University in February 2011, Harry Tulugak, former negotiator to the Nunavik Regional Government, argued:

… one of the biggest blows Nunavik faced was surrendering the rights to their land when they signed the 1975 agreement. 'To me, that is one of the most demeaning things that this colonial mindset has ever imposed on any other group of people,' he said. 'But unfortunately, we live with it.' (Rogers, 2012, para. 5-6)

During the 1980s, Québec formally recognized the existence of ten distinct Indigenous nations, and the Inuit as well as their ancestral rights. Specifically, in 1985, the State resolved to establish harmonious relations with Indigenous Peoples based on mutual respect and confidence (Salée, 2003). Soon after though, in 1990, the Oka crisis attracted the attention of the entire world when the Mohawk stood strongly against plans to expand a public golf course into a cemetery on disputed land. Violent confrontations with the Sûreté du Québec (officer Marcel Lemay dies) and the Canadian military, along with the fuelling of intense racism against the Mohawk in Québec, attracted the attention of UN Human Rights bodies and convinced Indigenous Peoples nationwide that Québec would become the main battlefield for their self-determination in Canada (Barsh, 1997). Figure 2 gives an example of the some media covered
the events at Oka, whereby Mohawk warriors were portrayed as violent and savage. The conflict triggered an alarm indicating that the State put better measures in place to favor more equitable and just relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in the country.

Ultimately, the golf course expansion is cancelled. During the teacher education students’ group interview, Francis spoke poignantly to the violence at Oka:

"Y’avait l’armée à Châteauguay, le monde leur [les Mohawks] pitchait des pierres à Lasalle. J’sais pas si vous avez déjà vu ça le film [Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance (Obomsawin, 1993)] là, c’est assez intense. […] Ça vaut la peine de voir là... Vous voyez comme on est vraiment des bons sauvages nous autres aussi." (Francis (TE), group interview, p. 37)

[The army was in Châteauguay, people were throwing rocks at them [Mohawks] in Lasalle. I don’t know if you have seen the film [Kanehsatake: 270 years of resistance (Obomsawin, 1993)], it’s pretty intense. […] It’s worth seeing. You get to see that we’re pretty savage ourselves.]

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Figure 2. Un policier est tué dans le siege des barricades des Mohawks. This figure depicts the cover page of the widely read newspaper, Le Devoir, on the day following Marcel Lemay’s

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30 Here, Francis is purposely turning the derogatory stereotype on its head to accuse Québécois of savagery.
Problematically, it portrays what appears to be a Mohawk man, raising his arm, presumably in victory or display of pride. (Montpetit, 1990, July 12)

Leading up to the province’s second referendum for separation in fifteen years, Indigenous leaders warned the province that in the event of Québec’s secession, civil disobedience would be likely to occur. The La Presse newspaper article shown in Figure 3 cites Saskatchewan Métis leader Jim Sinclair: “Separation would be erecting a Berlin wall”, he is alleged to have proclaimed (Dubuisson, 1994, September 2).

In 1995, an overwhelming majority of Indigenous electors vote against Québec sovereignty, thereby confirming that they possibly represent the most significant “obstacle” to the quest for separation. If Québec had seceded, the Cree could equally have exercised their legal right to self-determination in order to re-attach themselves to Canada. Of course, this would strip Québec of
its lucrative hydroelectric developments and infrastructure (Barsh, 1997; Desbiens, 2004a). In general, as Barsh explains, the province relies heavily on extractive industries based in the north. “Hence, the feasibility of an independent Québec turns upon resources on lands claimed by Aboriginal peoples...” (p. 13).

In 2002, Québec and the Cree signed “La Paix des Braves”, which chief Ted Moses claimed fulfilled Québec’s obligations towards the Eeyou of Eeyou Istchee (James Bay Cree) in a way that set acceptable standards (Desbiens, 2004b). Nevertheless, the Cree had to abandon judicial processes and commit to not opposing hydroelectric development projects in the future, which is in continuity with Québec’s consistent efforts to deny or obscure Aboriginal land titles (Salée, 2005). In present times, the Parti Québécois government is in the process of promoting a resource extraction project in Northern Québec, “Le Nord pour tous” (a rearticulating of the Liberals’ large-scale resource extraction project named “Plan Nord”). In spite of the government’s commitment to respecting treaties and consultation in the process, the condition of Inuit consent is absent from the documentation. (Rogers, 2012) When the Plan Nord was presented by ex-Liberal Premier Jean Charest, the Innu Chief of the First Nations Assembly of Labrador and Québec, Ghislain Picard (2011) expressed his indignation in an open letter published in Le Devoir,

Il est tout à fait scandaleux et totalement insultant de voir les premiers ministres Fillon et Charest se déguiser en nouveaux «découvreurs» de ces prétendus territoires vierges du nord du 49e parallèle du Québec, faisant la promotion de cette nouvelle fièvre klondikienne du XXIe siècle. XXIe siècle ou XVIIe siècle? Les Indiens? Quels Indiens? On croit rêver! Nous, comme Premières Nations de ces territoires qu'on présente au monde comme étant des territoires vierges et offrant au premier venu des
In an attempt to avoid the essentialization of Indigenous women and men as victims of political processes, Salée (2005) warns against omitting the mention of legislative and constitutional protection that do, to some extent, equip them to deal with discrimination and racism. Unfortunately, this legislation is not enough. In spite of significant but slow institutional and political advancement for Indigenous people in Québec, an important socioeconomic divide remains between them and the non-Indigenous population in the province (Statistics Canada, 2009).

3.2 Attempting to Read Theory from the Literature: Ensuring a Coherent Dominant Identity in Québec and in Canada

Delâge (1991) asks how as a collectivity, Eurodescendent Québécois could have developed such an obvious social amnesia in relation to Indigenous Peoples, when in fact our histories were so intertwined initially. Québécois Jocelyn Létourneau (1989, 2000) has sought to expose French Canadian Québécois’ understanding of their (our) own history. In an attempt to shine light on the conditions under which a particular way of knowing becomes dominant, the historian examines high school students’ answers to questions on a history exam, and argues that “…the remembrance Quebecois have of their recent history […] reveals the boundaries of what was, for them, historically imaginable—the border between a thinkable and an unthinkable history of

31 It is completely scandalous and totally insulting to see Premiers Fillion and Charest disguise themselves as new “discoverers” of these so-called virgin territories north of the 49th parallel in Québec, promoting this klondike-like fever of the 21st century. 21st century or 17th century? The Indians? What Indians? It’s like we’re dreaming! As First Nations of these territories, which are presented as virgin and offering limitless resources to whomever gets there first, must once again remind the government of Québec that it has obligations toward our peoples...

32 This is from the 2006 Canadian census. More recent numbers relating to housing, employment and education from the 2011 census had not yet been published at the time that this thesis was being written.
Quebec."33 (Létourneau, 1989, p. 91) This is a powerful theoretical idea that helps frame my own thinking. Indeed, this thinkable space articulates a colonial relationship that assures a hegemonic and coherent identity for Québécois (Cornellier, 2010). As Salée (2005) explains, power relations turn into systems of domination that permeate the collective imaginary and simultaneously slip into an individual consciousness, which fails to recognize others, forgotten and unacknowledged. It is these very histories and the space of the unthinkable that then operate to “structure the feelings” of individuals (Williams, 1977). When power dynamics seep into the social order this way, they are naturalized and legitimated. By strictly keeping to legal obligations, without applying any latitude that has not first been shaped according to its own intentions (Mackey, 1991; Nock and Haig-Brown, 2006; Salée, 2005), the State’s and settlers’ so-called benevolence continues to be all too relative and communicates a desire to firmly remain in control of Indigenous Peoples’ destiny.

Speaking to the unequal relations described above as they unfold at the federal level, Godlewska, Moore and Bednasek (2010) summarize the situation:

From Jesuit misrepresentation of First Nations belief systems and social values, to post facto removal of Aboriginal Peoples from the Royal Proclamation of 1763, to public silence about the existence of the Indian Act, to the ignorance displayed by Trudeau’s attack on Aboriginal identity, Aboriginal rights and traditional lands in his 1969 white paper, to a century of silence about residential schools and subsequent silence about ‘the scoop’ (widespread removal of Aboriginal children from their families for adoption by middle class Canadians and Americans), each aspect of Canada’s history of ignorance served the interests of Canadian immigrants and settlers

33 The “unthinkable history” will be discussed further in chapter 4.
at the expense of Aboriginal Peoples, and at the expense of a healthy and inclusive Canadian society. (p. 419)

The “dominant” population’s ongoing opposition to what is deemed “unfair special treatment” of Indigenous Peoples in Québec and in Canada carries with it a deep misunderstanding or altogether lack of knowledge in relation to systemic inequalities and historical injuries that Indigenous Peoples have had to endure. Canada’s “well-intentioned” multicultural openness does the same by celebrating the songs, dances and diets of exoticized “Others” such that history and the unequal relations that compose it are erased (Austin, 2010; Bannerji, 2000; St-Denis, 2011). As a result, educators, who are responsible for shedding light on these histories for young people to better understand them continue to engage in the act of repetition (Hutton as cited in Gardner, 2010) of problematic colonial narratives, and ultimately imagine themselves as “perfect strangers” (Dion, 2007), unrelated to Indigenous Peoples’ ongoing existence, and in most cases, oppression. Paraphrasing Himani Bannerji (2000), Salée (2005) claims that the carriers of “otherness” that multiculturalism tries to draw together under the Canadian flag basically serve to validate a national project in which these groups have no input. This formal discourse of “equality” melts ethnic and cultural minorities into the nation’s homogenizing mould, so that their unity-threatening identity claims might fade away. This process is regulated through what Papaschase Cree scholar, Dwayne Donald (2012) has called “colonial frontier logics” and “fort pedagogy”. These are the manifestation of an imperial project of dividing Peoples, after which they are expected to fade into the “dominant” population’s customs and identity.

3.2 Scholarship in Education on the Incorporation of Indigenous Perspectives

In the field of education, the unequal power relations intrinsic to the particular history presented here have been found to permeate most of Western (and global) curriculum (Black,
Indigenous perspectives and versions of history have mostly been ignored, or completely eradicated from public memory (Haig-Brown, 2010; Regan, 2010; St-Denis, 2011). While research on means for disrupting taken for granted ways of knowing of settler teachers has begun to take place (Dion, 2004, 2007; Tupper and Cappello, 2008) simultaneously, a growing body of work exists, which recommends ways of incorporating Indigenous epistemologies into curriculum directed at both Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners in Canada and New Zealand (Anuik, Battiste, and George; Battiste and Henderson, 2009; Macfarlane, Glynn, Grace, Penetito, and Bateman, 2008). More specifically in Québec, conversations in education revolve mostly around the representation of Indigenous Peoples within textbooks since Arcand and Vincent’s (1979) determining book on the matter. Together, the authors concluded that Indigenous Peoples serve as a backdrop for the articulation of a national history. Over the next three decades, researchers in Québec would find that in spite of a growing focus on diversity, textbooks continued to present Indigenous Peoples mainly within the context of early contact as passive, harmonious national groups who barely resist colonization (Forget and Panayotova, 2003; Laville, 1991; Lefrançois, Éthier and Demers, 2010). In the realm of popular culture, Cornellier (2010) comes to similar conclusions in his study of the film Mémoires Affectives (Leclerc, 2004) whereby the Innu figure serves as a vector for the articulation of Québécois belonging on the land. In all of this literature, it is explained that Québécois existence on the land is justified through the relegation of Indigenous figures to the past.

The descriptive history revealed here has been theorized by Jocelyn Létourneau (1989, 2000) and Létourneau and Caritey (2008) to demonstrate how French Canadian Québécois imagine the province and nation to be a space historically dominated and now threatened by English powers. In addition, a clear hierarchy emerges out of the historical relationships between
Indigenous Peoples and French Canadian Québécois described above whereby the latter unequivocally occupy the top. The literature in education that speaks to these issues within the context of Québec is mostly limited to textbooks, and leaves much room for investigation into the role of higher education in shaping eurodescendant francophone Québécois’ knowledge of and attitudes towards Indigenous Peoples. Furthermore, these works do little to illuminate how young people who are directly invested in the understanding and dissemination of history make sense of such a problematic past once it has been identified as such. These matters seem crucial to assess, as all those living in Québec must navigate their relationships with Indigenous Peoples and each other, as well as with increasing migration communities that are crucial to the debates about Québec identity in the 21st century. In effect, little literature exists in Québec, which ties together the relationships between French Canadian Québécois, so-called immigrants, and Indigenous Peoples. A number of the authors cited here maintain that “nation to nation” relationships between Indigenous Peoples and the Québec State must be defined precisely, but none articulate what exactly this might look like. Though the potential for alignment of interests is unsure, the redefinition of Indigenous relationships with Québec could allow Québécois to redefine their own place in Canada (Delâge, 1991). Castro-Rea (2005) explains that together, Québec and Indigenous Peoples could “present a common front before Ottawa with a coherent joint strategy and a single objective in mind: reform of federalism to recognize national rights.” (p. 78) Cree chief Ted Moses reminds us that “Québéc’s relationship to the Crees and other First Nations in the province is necessarily tied to the colonial legacy of Canada as a whole and that against all expectations, it has the power to reshape this legacy toward more equitable outcomes” (Desbiens, 2004b, p. 362).

In the next chapter, I have interpreted and analyzed the data collected for this thesis. I will
show how participants’ claims about themselves as Québécois, as well as their understanding of the role of “immigrants” in the nation, embody a particular tension, which is associated with their specific location in Québec. This complex tension is the practice of repetition of colonial narratives while also partially attempting to interrupt them through re-evaluation of what it means to be Québécois today. However, I wish to argue that it is this simultaneous process, which fails to account for the historic and ongoing existence of Indigenous Peoples such that a Québécois sense of entitlement to the land is reproduced.
Chapter 4

Colonial Repetitions, Mediations of Selfhood and the Interruptive Dimensions of Rethinking Québécois(es)

In this chapter, I wish to showcase how, taken together, the data I collected (as described in the methods chapter) reveal distinct and subtle historical patterns. These patterns are both linked to and sometimes separate from the relationships described in chapter 3, that French Canadian Québécois have with Indigenous Peoples and territories. What seems most poignant is participants’ embodiment of what can be referred to as the practice of repetition (Hutton as cited in, Gardner, 2010). In collecting this data it has become more obvious to me that, in particular instances, participants’ understandings of the past and present arise out of a reiteration of colonial narratives, and embody an awareness that is bound by Létourneau’s (1989) “space of the thinkable”. While we witness the sedimentation of older ideas, simultaneously, some participants interrupted these moments; they attempted in part to move beyond such narratives in search of a wider, more open-minded way of identifying with the linkages between one’s existence as Québécois and the complexity of Indigeneity. In the first section, I will show how the politics of identity emerge out of a discourse of two solitudes that expunges the experience of recent immigrants, and Indigenous Peoples in Québec. In the following sections, I show how a specific Québécois identity and relationship to Indigenous Peoples and territories is shaped, layered and legitimized by the discourse of interculturalism and current debates about the “integration of immigrants”, as well as how participants have internalized them.

As the key researcher in this project, I do not wish to represent myself as serving as a unifying source of authority in the culmination of interpretations I have made in this work (Clifford, 1988). Indeed, both as part of a decolonizing approach and in an attempt to do justice to what was shared by participants, I want to acknowledge that the following analyses represent
what I have chosen to discuss (what seemed most poignant and relevant) from what arises out of my own interpretative frameworks and my understanding of my supervisors’ reflections around the data that I have collected. These are some of the stories that arose from my study, and this is just one way of telling them.

4.1 Opposing French and English: (Im)Permeable Boundaries

Quoting Patrick Hutton, Philip Gardner (2010) defines the process of repetition as “the moment that bears forward images of the past that continue to shape our present understanding in unreflective ways.” (p. 99) The process of repetition involves uncritically bringing the past into the now. Gardner goes on, “repetition invokes the persistence of pastness within the present, in what Hutton calls ‘habit of mind’ or ‘the collective memories that we associate with living traditions’.” (p. 100) In the context of Québec, Jocelyn Létourneau (1989) theorized something analogous to the process of repetition when he coined the phrase, the “space” of the thinkable, or the “thinkable and [...] unthinkable history of Québec” (p. 91). This space, which mainly came into being during the Révolution tranquille described in chapter 3, encompasses a discourse of knowledge, themes and categories that delineate what is historically imaginable in Québec. David Austin (2010) describes this space:

It is a master narrative of benign conquest and peaceful co-existence with Indigenous peoples prior to British conquest. With conquest, it is undeniably true, came two centuries of exploitation in which the language, culture and identity of French Canadians were ridiculed by the ruling British minority, who also controlled their economic fortunes. [...] it conveniently omits the sordid details of the period prior to British conquest, in particular the French colonisation of Indigenous peoples and the practice of slavery in New France. (p. 25)
When I began this research, I expected to find participants who greatly valued this version of history as I had until I entered graduate school: this is a narrative that implied and substantiated the argument that French Canadians had been oppressed since the Plains of Abraham and what is seen as the first symbolic dimension of British colonization of the French. I thought students would be invested in the dissemination of this tale. Of course, what I discovered was far more complicated. Rather, what I observed was a tension between participants’ firm foothold within this thinkable space, and their aspiration toward a more expansive history and identity. For instance, during the focus group with students in education, Alain conveyed the desire to imagine a different history for French-Canadian Québécois, which focuses on survival rather than victimhood:

C’est pas une théorie à laquelle j’adhère là. J’y crois pas là au peuple victime québécois, j’suis désolé. […] C’est l’envahisseur Anglais qui nous a vaincus aux Plaines d’Abraham pis après ça qui nous a opprimés pendant x nombre d’années; mais on oublie qu’il y avait quand même beaucoup de gens qui ont résisté pis qui ont continué à faire des choses. Pis moi je trouve que plutôt de se concentrer là-dessus, de dire « Ah on a été opprimé, on l’a eu tough », […] ben pourquoi est-ce qu’on se dit pas « Ben regarde, au contraire y’a des gens qui ont essayé de garder ça vivant, qui se sont défoncé pour qu’on survive, pour qu’on reste là. (Alain (TE), group interview, p. 12)

[That isn’t a theory that I abide by. I don’t believe in the victimhood of Québec people, I’m sorry. […] The English invader that vanquished us at the Plains of Abraham, and who oppressed us for x number of years; but we forget that there were quite a few people who resisted and who continued to do things. And I think that instead of concentrating on that, of saying « Oh we were oppressed, we had it tough », […] well why don’t we say to ourselves « Well look, on the contrary there are people who tried to keep us alive, who outdid themselves so we would survive, so we would continue to be.]

As Wendy Brown (2005) explains, “being paralyzed within injury […] prevents us from seeking or desiring a status other than that of injured” (p. 91). In this excerpt, Alain resists the dominant narrative of a painful past, rife with trials, sacrifices, and torment (Létourneau, 2000).

Nevertheless, the history of resilience that he wished to commemorate remains bound within the space of the thinkable. Indeed, this version, which he views as a counter-narrative shows us how identity in Québec is naturalized around a French-English dichotomy—Alain’s narrative is about survival in the face of the British. Nevertheless, this narrative glosses over the heterogeneity that exists within this binary and beyond. Such a version of history therefore persists in repeating
exclusions.

It could be argued that the space of the thinkable is captured in the narrative of “two solitudes”, an expression that Canadian author, Hugh MacLennan made famous in his 1945 novel of the same name. David Austin (2010) discusses nationalism and identity within the frame of these two cultural, linguistic and socio-economic entities: unequal and separate according to Québec, and co-existing on common ground from the perspective of English Canada. In *The Dark Side of the Nation*, Himani Bannerji (2000) explains that this binary colonial structure, which surrounds Canadian politics is so “natural” that all other inhabitants of the country fade into the nation’s backdrop and are rendered just a minor part of conversations around identity. Not surprisingly, this French Canadian Québécois understanding of the self as Francophone in inherent opposition to Anglophone did indeed arise in conversation with participants. It appeared, for instance, when the history student, Valérie, introduced herself during the group interview.

J’m’appelle Valérie, mois aussi j’suis une étudiante en dernière année, en troisième année au baccalauréat en histoire. Ben la même chose là, mes deux parents sont Canadiens Français. Je sais pas si ça peut avoir un instar (sic) par contre, j’ai été élevée dans un quartier très anglophone euh, dans l’ouest de l’île. Donc j’ai côtoyé beaucoup, beaucoup de gens qui parlaient anglais, mes deux belles-sœurs sont anglophones. Donc j’peux dire que j’ai quand même plus baigné dans les deux cultures que peut-être d’autres personnes. (Valérie (H), group interview, p. 3)

[My name is Valérie, I am also a student in my final year, the third year of my bachelor’s degree in history. Well same thing; both my parents are French Canadian. I don’t know if this has a bearing but I was raised in a very Anglophone neighborhood um, on the West Island. So, I really co-existed with a lot of people who spoke English, both of my sisters-in-law are Anglophone. So, I can say that I was really immersed in both cultures more than other people.]

Though Valérie identified Anglophone family members, which points to the possibility of the co-existence of linguistic groups, she nevertheless claimed to be somewhat of an exception in these respects. It would seem that these cultures are separate and have little relationship with each other, either as competing or as related and indeed mixed cultural communities. Chantal, a student in education, used surprisingly similar language in her introduction:

Donc, moi c’est Chantal, j’ai 25 ans. Je suis en quatrième année en éducation et (inaudible) aussi comme les autres.
Et oui, j’ai fait un Bac en anthro avant l’Université de Montréal. […] et ben j’ai fait mon secondaire au privé sur la rive sud et mon cégep34 en anglais à St-Lambert, donc c’était vraiment une baignade dans le monde anglophone qui est complètement différent du monde francophone. Ça m’a ouvert ben d’autres horizons sur la situation du Québec. (Chantal (TE), group interview, p. 2)

[So, I am Chantal, I am 25 years old. I am in fourth year education and (inaudible) also like the others. And yes, I did my bachelor’s in anthro first at the Université de Montréal. […] and well, I went to a private high school on the south shore, and did my cégep34 in English in St-Lambert; so that was really an immersion into the Anglophone world that is completely different from the Francophone world. It expanded my horizons in relation to the situation in Québec.]

Interestingly, both Chantal and Valérie employed some form of the term “baignade” (which literally means “swimming”, but figuratively is used to evoke “immersion”) to refer to their experience of the English “world” or “culture”. In so doing, the women have compared their time spent with Anglophones to being in a pool that they have only swum in on occasion. One must be clear that this “swimming” is not necessarily permanent or a way of life; indeed, the very possibility exists of getting out of the pool, thereby confirming David Austin’s (2010) characterization of Québec’s perception of each of the solitudes as distinct entities. Chantal pushed this claim further, by explicitly identifying these worlds as different. However, as McLeod and Thomson (2009) explain, “[t]he discourses that individuals employ exhibit traces of the historical era of their origin as well as the contemporary conditions of their performance and their social location.” (p. 124) While the “two solitudes” continue to exist in participants’ claims about their own identity, the contemporary conditions in which they experience this identity challenges the opaqueness of each of these groups. Later during their respective group interviews, Valérie and Chantal went on to show that the walls of the (Francophone) pool that they imagined themselves to swim in most of the time might not be as permeable as they had initially portrayed them to be.

Je m’avais toujours eu l’impression que on était vraiment coupé du monde anglo-saxon pis qu’on était vraiment

34 In Québec, secondary school lasts for four years (Secondary 1 through 4, or grades 7 through 11), then, students attend cégep (collège d’enseignement général et professionnel). These are public post-secondary collegiate institutions that offer two or three year programs.
Upon travelling to France, Valérie underwent the experience of cognitive dissonance. In spite of having been told and believing that her existence was entirely separate from the experience of English speakers in Canada, she realized that in fact she might have more in common with North Americans than with Europeans who speak the same language as she does. In sharing with her peers the realization that she came to in France, that Québécois are a hybrid, she challenged a notion of Québécois identity that is premised primarily on language. Valérie carried on,

Valérie distinguished between Québec and the rest of Canada in terms of political ideals. Though she claimed that Québec tends to be more leftist, (this opposition to the right as represented by Stephen Harper’s Conservative Party recurs during the study as an element that participants believe unites Québécois), she challenged the idea of completely distinct life experiences. In the following, Chantal was answering a question I had asked participants in the teacher education group about what leads to a sense of belonging for them in Québec. We should not be surprised that the matter of languages quickly arises:
Ben pour avoir beaucoup voyagé, y’a vraiment la langue là. Ça exclut pas par exemple l’anglais, mais le fait de se retrouver, mettons les gens se raconter leur fin de semaine ou des blagues ou peu importe c’est quoi le sujet, avec l’accent québécois, ben j’le remarque pas nécessairement, alors que quand t’es en voyage et t’es vraiment entouré par une autre langue, c’est complètement dépaysant, peu importe c’est quoi. (Chantal (TE), group interview, p. 20)

[Well, for having traveled quite a bit, language is a big one. It doesn’t exclude English though, but for instance, finding myself with friends recounting their weekend or telling jokes or whatever the topic is, with a Québec accent, well I don’t necessarily notice that. When you’re traveling though and you’re surrounded by another language, it causes you to be completely disoriented, regardless of what it is.]

Like Valérie, Chantal drew on her experience of travel to make a point. This is more obvious in the first example: Valérie explicitly described her own surprise in appreciating the shared attributes between herself and English speaking North Americans. To a lesser extent, Chantal expressed something similar in the beginning of her answer to my question. While she focused on the fact that hearing the (French) Québécois accent makes her feel like she belongs, in starting with an allusion that something analogous may be the case with English, she showed that she does not feel entirely foreign to Anglophones either. Perhaps these subtle but deeply meaningful affective dimensions of learning and language play a central role in thinking through difference or the ideas about the foreigner. Yet, in describing their experiences of travel, both participants expressed that they might have more in common with Anglophones than they had previously thought. In effect, what we see here are some ways in which affective experiences of space and connection challenge age-old paradigms of Québécois selfhood. The historically structured (Williams, 1977) boundaries between French and English that Valérie and Chantal invoked whilst introducing themselves were thus rendered less rigid as the conversation unfolded. Though it is difficult to theorize such changes, one might speculate that wider questions about space and place, as well as generational shifts, have begun to alter the ways in which diverse elements of Québécois identity are understood and enacted.

Shifts in thinking took place at different levels of understanding in relation to belonging and the nation. Various blurring of boundaries of older narratives of nationhood were, for
example, a regular event. For instance, it was clear that participants felt as though Québécois continues to be entirely distinct from the rest of Canada in terms of politics. A number of participants stood firmly in opposition to Stephen Harper and the Conservative Party. As Caroline, a student teacher, explained,

… tout ce qui a déboulé depuis le gouvernement Harper puis veut, veut pas c’est ça tsé... secondaire 5, cégep, tu commences à prendre conscience un peu de ce qui se passe pis là mon Dieu! Les valeurs qu’on prend pour acquis, « Tout le monde pense comme ça! », ben non, peut-être pas. Quand t’as j’sais pas combien de pourcentage de gens dans les Prairies ou ailleurs qui votent pour un gouvernement qui va complètement à l’encontre de ce que nous on... en tant que Québécois on se, on estime être vrai et bon si on veut… (Caroline (TE), group interview, p. 8)

[... everything that has unfolded since the Harper government, like it or not, you know… Secondary 5, cégep, you start to become conscious of what is going on and my God! The values that one takes for granted, “Everyone thinks like that!”; well no, maybe not. When you have I don’t know what percentage of people in the Prairies or elsewhere who vote for a government that goes entirely against what we, as Québécois, believe is true and good or what have you…]

Victor, a student in history, discussed the bout of intense nationalism that he (along with Valérie in history, and Francis in education) experienced in his mid teens, due in part to the rise into power of the Conservative Party:

… c’est Harper qui commençait [en tant que premier ministre] à la fin de mon secondaire pis là, j’pense que j’mé reconnaissais vraiment pu autour de moi faque c’était une raison supplémentaire pour me réfugier dans le nationalisme québécois. (Victor (H), group interview, p. 14)

[... Harper began [as prime minister] towards the end of my high school years and so, I think I really did not see myself reflected in my surroundings, so that was another reason for seeking shelter within Québec nationalism.]

In our individual interview together, Victor spoke more to this period of nationalism:

… à la fin du secondaire, euh j’ai commencé à développer une ferveur de québécois nationaliste dans la peau là. En écoutant par exemple les nuits de la poésie pis bon. […] Bon, j’ai changé depuis là. (Victor (H), group interview, p. 10)

[... towards the end of high school, um a Québécois nationalist fervor developed in my skin. From listening to ‘Les nuits de la poésie’ for instance, so yeah. […] I mean, I have changed since then though.]

Victor’s classmate, Valérie had similar memories:

Y’a une période à la fin de mon secondaire où j’ai vraiment eu c’que j’appelle mon « éveil nationaliste ». Là j’étais genre fan de René Lévesque, je le mettais partout dans ma chambre. C’était intense là. J’dévais avoir à peu près 15 ans. […] Mais j’dirais que c’est à peu près vers cet âge-là, milieu de l’adolescence, que j’ai vraiment eu un sentiment d’être plus... plus fervent même que je l’ai maintenant j’crois. (Valérie (H), group interview, p. 11)

This was a historic gathering of Québécois poets who came together for an evening of celebration of the French language. The event took place in the early 1970s.
[There was a period at the end of high school where I really had what I call my “nationalist awakening”. I was like a René Lévesque fan, he was all over my bedroom walls. It was intense. I must have been about 15 years old. […] But I would say that it was about at that age, middle of adolescence, that I really had more of a feeling of… more fervent that I am now I think…]

In teacher education, Francis too remembered having a nationalist phase:

Mettons de 15 à 18, j’avais la ferveur nationaliste là. J’avais mon drapeau du Québec tout ça pis j’étais très fier d’être Québécois puis ça s’est pas mal estompé. (Francis (E), group interview, p. 10)

[Let’s say that from age 15 to 18, I had the nationalist fever. I had my Québec flag and all that, and I was really proud of being a Québécois, and that has pretty much faded.]

Interestingly, both participants in teacher education and history shared in common the intensity of the nationalist sentiment they experienced in high school, and argued that it had since decreased to various degrees. Indeed, from the combination of participants’ anti-Harper sentiment, and their stories about being so nationalistic in secondary school, I expected that they would equally express a strong desire for sovereignty. However, the students who broached separation with me shared a concern around how this might affect relationships between cultural and linguistic groups in the province. As Francis explained:

F : […] hier, j’ai vu un vidéo d’une femme francophone, une Française, en Australie qui chantait dans un bus qui s’est fait vraiment crier des bêtises. « On va t’tuier ma chienne », tout ça, toute en anglais. « On va te couper les seins », bla, bla, bla. Parce qu’elle parlait en français...
A : … ok?
F : Moi j’ai eu la réflexion—parce que je l’ai posté ça sur Facebook, je l’ai renvoyé—pis j’ai eu la réflexion suivante : je crains que si le Québec se séparait du Canada, qu’on en viendrait peut-être à ces bêtises-là.
A : Oui.
F : Pas pour tout le monde, mais qu’on pourrait commettre… Parce que y’a des groupuscules anti anglophones qui pourraient agir de la même façon. (p. 12-13)

[F : […] yesterday, I saw this video of a French francophone woman in Australia who was singing in a bus and who was being yelled at. “We’re going to kill you bitch”, all that, in English. “We’re going to cut off your breasts”, bla, bla, bla. Because she was speaking French.
A: … okay?
F: And I thought—because I posted it on Facebook, I forwarded it—and I thought: I am concerned that if Québec were to separate from Canada, we might get to that point.
A: Yeah.
F: Not everyone, but we could commit… Because there are small anti-Anglophone groups who could act in the same way.]

Francis expressed a fear – perhaps something that Etienne Balibar (2009) refers to as a kind of border anxiety – with this rather violent comparison, that current linguistic tensions might be
exacerbated in a separate Québec. Marie, a history student, shared with me that in the case of a referendum, she would not know what she would vote for because of the discomfort she feels in relation to the separatist discourse. I asked her to elaborate on this discomfort:

Ben moi je trouve que c’est un discours nationaliste qui est vraiment moralisant? Un petit peu... Parce que si t’es Québécois—on s’entend, Québécois pure laine là—c’est un discours qui, en tout cas le discours majoritaire, il se prétend inclusif, mais en même temps euh, le PQ yé pas très diversifié là. Comme si ton mouvement est pas diversifié, que tu dises, « Oui on accepte tout le monde » pis tout ça, ben montre-moi le, dis-moi le pas là. […] Y’a ça. Aussi, c’est qu’il y a les bons qui sont les souverainistes, pis y’a les méchants qui parlent pas français, puis qui... c’est ça là, qui sont des lâches ou des traîtres.

[I feel like it is a nationalist discourse that is very moralizing? A little... Because if you are Québécois—Québécois pure laine that is—it is a discourse that is, at least the majority discourse, it claims to be inclusive, but at the same time um, the PQ is not very diverse. Like, if your movement is not diverse, whether or not you claim, “Yes, we accept everyone”, and all that, well show me, don’t say it. […] There’s that. Also, it’s that there are the good guys, the separatists, and the bad guys who don’t speak French and who... that’s it, who are like cowards or traitors.]

These excerpts relay juxtapose both memories of identifying strongly with Québécois nationalism, and an anti-Harper sentiment, with a recognition of the limits of any notion of a singular Québec, and what seemed like a reluctance to endorse the province’s separation. This dilemma resembles what McLeod and Thomson (2009) see as the most obvious tensions that young people face as they navigate various sets of dominant narratives around cultural identity. Participants’ assertions might be perceived to be about navigating border politics, either lived or metaphorical, which stem from a history that they (we) were born into, and which was therefore structured in the form of a historically changing identity. In this case, I have tried to better understand the narratives that came before me as inherited, structured by a dominant narrative (Williams, 1977) or thinkable space (Létourneau, 1989), which, at times, can be fragmented and interrupted. In the next section I seek to argue that wider questions about interculturalism also played a major role in shaping participants’ engagement with, and their understanding of, linkages between one’s position in the dialogue between Québécois and those perceived to be “foreign Others”.

57
4.2 Interculturalism: Navigating the Borders Between a Majority and Minorities

Despite participants’ attempt at disrupting the colonial narrative of the two solitudes, and nationalist discourses of separation, this disruption is only one part of a larger picture about the changing nature of cultural identity in Québec and its links to Canada as a more dominant cultural entity through which Québec must navigate. Indeed, at the same time as some interruption took place, the young Francophones continued to frame their identity through the lens of Canada’s two colonizing groups, who have defined themselves as founding members of Canadian society. This marginalizes those who do not neatly fit into these categories. “Native and foreign born Canadians with some non-French, and non-British ancestry” (Dewing and Lenman, 2006, p. 2) (mainly people of color) and Indigenous Peoples therefore exist in opposition to either of the solitudes, or they are completely absent. Perhaps this is a way for participants (or Québécois in general) to cope with the complexity of what is difficult to understand; perhaps it is an undermining of perceived political interests of “new comers”. Bannerji (2000) explains that so-called immigrants are subjected to the two solitudes discourse as well as the anxieties around bilingualism and forms of survival that it implies. I argue that this is equally the case for Indigenous people in Québec. This was epitomized during the 2007-2008 Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences (Bouchard and Taylor, 2008) a Québécois conversation around “diversity management” that generated widespread media coverage. Weeks before a provincial election, Premier Jean Charest announced the establishment of the commission and appointed sociologist and historian, Gérard Bouchard as well as philosopher, Charles Taylor, to “take stock of accommodation practices in Québec; analyze the attendant issues bearing in mind the experience of other societies; conduct an extensive consultation on this topic; and formulate recommendations to the government to ensure that accommodation practices conform to the values of Québec [...] as a pluralistic,
democratic, egalitarian society” (February 8, 2007 press release as cited in Maynard and Le-Phat Ho, 2009, p. 21). In appointing Bouchard and Taylor to be the ultimate jurors of immigrant communities and by privileging the voice of white Québécois, minority groups were positioned as inherently different and (potentially) threatening. Furthermore, not unlike other kinds of imperial practice, white male moral and rational authority to decide the “boundaries of tolerance” or “allowable diversity” were enacted and naturalized. (Maynard and Le-Phat Ho, 2009) Lastly, and most importantly for our purposes, the French colonization of Canada was completely omitted and centuries of cohabitation and mixing with a variety of peoples were therefore ignored. The fact that the entire consultation had taken place on Indigenous territories was indeed never acknowledged.  

The Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences resulted in the championing of “interculturalism”, a general model of integration for the “responsible management of ethnocultural diversity” (Bouchard, 2011, p. 437). This language alone reflects the trace of an old imperial narrative; the very phrase “management of diversity” speaks to the ways in which one might assume the idea of “population control”. It is presented as an egalitarian ideal, yet the vocabulary speaks volumes about who might be excluded, and carries with it a subtle notion of social control. This kind of liberal and apparently egalitarian language (while arguably important to degrees in its own time) also extends to Canada’s well-established framework of multiculturalism put forward by the


37 The word interculturalism carries some weighty baggage: for example, in the 1970s in many of the Canadian provinces, it was used as a training program to help people learn about cultural differences and similarities. In the 21st century, it has been reappropriated not only in the context of Québec, to resolve potential cultural differences and rights; it is also being taken up as a form of popular sloganism in the global South as a way of attempting to address political tensions and exclusion associated with dominant narratives of Latin American citizenship and Indigenous communities (Carrera, 2011). For my purposes, I refer to the version of interculturalism described by Gérard Bouchard (2011, 2012) and referred to regularly in the Québécois context.
federal government of Pierre Elliot Trudeau in 1971. This policy has tended to focus on the idea of cultural equality of racial and ethnic groups in Canada. In contrast, Gérard Bouchard’s interculturalism (2011, 2012) recognizes and legitimizes both the founding majority culture, and minorities arising out of recent or older immigration, and grants each of these the right to ensure their future according to their choices. Yet why only these two groups?

It has been argued that multiculturalism devalues the Québécois identity, rendering French Canadian Québécois “just another minority”, which it is not, some would have it, by virtue of its status as a “co-founding” nation (Taylor, 1992). Conversely, interculturalism is said to allow for an acknowledgment of the unique character of Québec and when deployed within the province, helps to reduce stereotyping while favoring participation and integration into society (Oakes and Warren, 2007). Though participants in my research never refer to interculturalism directly, a number of elements point to the possibility that they have internalized some of the foundational aspects of interculturalism (and perhaps earlier versions of multiculturalism) as its figurehead, Gérard Bouchard, has defined it both in written form, and during countless interviews in the media.

Most prominently, during the group interviews, participants studying in either discipline came to more or less of a consensus around the definition of the term Québécois: anyone living on Québec soil, and seeking to claim a Québécois identity should be allowed to do so.

… mais pour moi un Québécois c’est quelqu’un qui habite au Québec, point. (Camille (H), group interview, p. 17)[… but for me, a Québécois is someone who lives in Québec, period.]

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38 Gérard Bouchard (2012) gives, what he calls, a “flexible” definition of the term “majority”. It might be defined in narrow ethnic terms (French Canadian Québécois), or on cultural terms (citizens who speak French and share so-called common foundational values such as gender equality and non-violence).

39 Bouchard’s (2012) definition of the term “minority” is equally flexible in that it includes sub-populations characterized by cultural and/or social lives that are distinct from the majority’s, and whose borders can be quite porous.

40 Verna St-Denis (2011) argues the same for how the policy positions Indigenous Peoples.
Si eux acceptent ça pis ils se disent eux-mêmes Québécois. (Valérie (H), group interview, p. 30)

[If they accept it and call themselves Québécois.]

… j’considère que quand on habite en sol québécois, on est Québécois. (Katia (TE), group interview, p. 18)

[… I consider that when one lives on Québécois ground, one is Québécois.]

Gérard Bouchard (2012) does not appear to define the term Québécois explicitly, but he uses the word to designate people who live in Québec (regardless of whether or not they claim the identity). Participants articulated this inclusive definition of the term Québécois, but some also expressed awareness that if a person does not wish to identify as such, then they should not have to. For instance, Valérie acknowledged that this might the case for some Anglo-Canadians in Québec:

J’ai vécu dans un quartier avec des Anglais et mes voisins anglophones ne s’identifiaient pas québécois. Pour eux, y’étaient des Canadiens. Ils ne voulaient pas se faire identifier comme Québécois. Autant qu’ils vivaient dans le territoire du Québec, ils voulaient pas là. Y’étaient des Canadiens, des Canadiens Anglais. (Valérie (H), group interview, p. 18)

[I lived in a neighborhood with English people and my Anglophone neighbors did not identify as Québécois. For them, they were Canadians. They did not want to identify as Québécois. Even though they lived in the territory of Québec, they didn’t want to. There were Canadians, English Canadians.]

Marie recalled having watched a video capsule on the Internet in which a Mohawk man discussed his reasons for not voting in provincial elections in Québec. She came to similar conclusions about Indigenous people’s desire to identify as Québécois:

Parce que jusque là, dans ma tête, c’était, « Faut faire de la place au Québec pour les Autochtones qui appartiennent au Québec. » Pis là, j’étais comme, « Pourquoi est-ce que... » Ce moment-là j’ai fait, « Ben pourquoi est-ce qu’ils devraient appartenir à la nation québécoise? Pourquoi ils voutraient appartenir à la nation québécoise considérant le passé, les relations entre le Québec depuis le début de la colonisation et les Autochtones? » C’est complètement logique. (Marie (H), p. 17)

[Until then, in my mind, it was like, “We have to make room in Québec for Indigenous people to develop a sense of belonging.” And then I was like, “Why would they…” At that moment I thought, “Well why would they belong to the Québécois nation? Why would they want to belong to the Québécois nation considering the past, the relationships between Québec since the beginning of colonization and Indigenous people?” It’s completely logical.]

It would seem that this definition is one that reflects greater inclusion. Participants equally avoid imposing the Québécois identity upon others; indeed, the very idea of Québec, as linked to
histories that some might find less attractive, is recognized. However, interestingly, the territorial condition that participants set fails to account for Québécois who like myself, live elsewhere. As storied individuals, in these instances, do we not, at least in part, carry our heritage with us? Furthermore, in pursuing the conversation about the Québécois identity, most participants were equally unwavering in their insistence that for “immigrants” to claim a Québécois identity, they should be able to speak French.

C’est juste que s’ils respectent la langue, c’est vraiment ça la base. S’il respecte les règlements qu’on fait, moi je trouve que c’est vraiment un Québécois, Canadien ou Québécois, [...]. Peu importe s’ils sont Bouddhistes ou ils sont Musulmans, mais s’ils respectent la loi, ils respectent la langue, sont Québécois. (Eugène (H), group interview, p. 31)

[It’s just that if they respect the language, that’s really basic. If he respects the rules we make, I think that he’s really a Québécois, Canadian or Québécois [...]. Regardless of whether they are Buddhist or if they are Muslim, but if they respect the law, they respect the language, they are Québécois.]

Interestingly, this history student participant, Eugène, mentioned respecting both the law and the (French) language in the same breath. Though it is impossible to know if he considered these to be one and the same, the fact that he brought them up together points to the possibility that he may have. Eugène did not explain in detail what “respecting the language” entails. Does this mean for him that Québécois must speak it fluently, address themselves to others first in French, or was he simply recognizing that French is the official language of Québec? In any case, this requirement potentially denied historically settled Anglophone communities in Québec the possibility of calling themselves Québécois. Of course, this would also be the case for new immigrants who have yet to learn the rudiments of the language. Caroline, a student in teacher education, held a more comprehensive view of what it might mean to be Québécois.

Tu vois pour moi c’est... de participer mettons à la vie québécoise pour être Québécois. Quelqu’un qui habite au Québec mais qui parle pas français, ni qui parle pas anglais mais qui essaie un peu mais pas tant, qui reste complètement dans sa culture, qui trav... Tsé ya des gens qui se ghettoisent pas mal. Pour moi ceux-là, c’est dur pour moi de les définir comme étant Québécois parce qu’ils participent pas à la vie citoyenne ou à rien qui a rapport avec la communauté... (Caroline (TE), group interview, p. 17)

41 Indeed, during the course of my graduate studies, I have lived in British Columbia.
[See for me it’s… let’s say participating in Québécois life to be Québécois. Someone who lives in Québec, but who does not speak French, and does not speak English, but who tries a little but not that much, who completely stays in their own culture, who cros… You know there are people who ghettoize themselves quite a bit. For me, those ones, it’s hard for me to define them as Québécois because they do not participate in citizenship or in anything that has to do with the community…]

The imposition of language and an imperative to participate as active citizens are framed as so natural, admittedly even to myself, that at this particular moment in our interview I failed to ask Caroline why she believed immigrants should have to do these things. Victor, in the history group, also combined the matter of language and participation:

V: C’est beau qu’ils conservent leur culture, y’a des journaux tsé strictement en Asiatique, en langue euh… en Mandarin. Pis bon j’mé demande des fois, est-ce que ces gens-là font des annonces ailleurs? Parce que c’est important de sortir et juste faire une différence aussi auprès de la population que tu côtoies tous les jours. C’est ça. Faque… ouais, la langue.
A: Mais, les personnes asiatiques sont des gens qu’ils côtoient? Ils ont donc sans doute entre eux une influence sur les uns et les autres?
V: Ouais, mais moi j’parle de ceux qui parlent français… la majorité francophone. Dans le fond, le simple fait de parler français, tu offres un service à tout le monde, donc tu peux faire une différence pour tout le monde. Tsé, c’est juste ça. ((H) group interview, p. 31)

[V: It’s nice that they conserve their culture, there are newspapers you know, strictly in Asian language… um, in Mandarin. And well, I ask myself sometimes, do those people advertise elsewhere? Because it’s important to get out and just make a difference within the population that you rub shoulders with every day. That’s it… yeah, so the language.
A: Yeah but what if they rub shoulders with other Asian people? They probably have an influence on one another?
V: Yeah, but I am talking about the people who speak French… the francophone majority. I mean really, just speaking French, you offer a service to everyone so you can make a difference for everyone. You know, that’s all.]

In looking closely at Victor’s narrative account, we can witness a trace of the past or the practice of what Patrick Hutton (cited in Gardner, 2010) might refer to as repetition, as described previously. For example, he draws upon language from intercultural discourses in stating that immigrant populations (in this instance, Asian people) should interact with, and contribute to, the life of the francophone majority. At work within his and other participants’ statements, which reflect wider conversations about the “integration” of immigrants in Québec, are what Dwayne Donald (2012) calls “colonial frontier logics”. These are “epistemological assumptions and presuppositions, derived from the colonial project of dividing the world according to racial and cultural categorizations, which serve to naturalize assumed divides” (p. 92). Requiring that
people speak French and “actively participate” might appear as a way of bridging the gap between minorities and the majority—or indeed the categorizations that Donald refers to—but the unilateral move that these conditions command, are one of the major problems that political scientist, Daniel Salée (2010a), recognizes within interculturalism. Speaking French and participating would presumably allow for minorities to cross the border between itself and the majority; however under these conditions, the majority either does not need to (or does so when it is forced to) move towards the edges of national borders or even critique colonial logic at all. Hence, as Salée explains, in the guise of attempting to create a common space for interaction, interculturalism ultimately maintains majority control and operates in order to legitimize this majority’s right to determine the parameters for said interaction, and in so doing reestablishes the “dominant” population’s sociocultural hegemony. Implicit in the requirement that immigrants both learn French and exercise active citizenship is a fear of their presumed and naturalized difference. This was obvious when participants in the teacher education group discussed the lack of meaningful and long-term interaction with individuals perceived to be immigrants:

Peter: J’pense que les contextes qui nous permettent de créer ces liens-là, on s’y opposera pas en général, mais j’pense que c’est vrai qu’il y a une certain division qui se fait malgré nous. [...] C’est naturel, c’est quelque chose qu’on fait probablement malgré nous, mais qui, j’dirais qui tend à diminuer, mais qui existe encore. Ça, ça fait aucun doute.
Chantal: […] J’pense que c’est une question de sécurité humaine plus qu’autre chose là. On va avec ce qu’on connaît ou ce qui nous ressemble le plus là.
Peter: Par probabilité de compatibilité...
Chantal: J’imagine.
Katia: Peut-être qu’on a aussi plein de préjugés pis c’est inconscient là. (Group interview, p. 28)

[Peter: I think that there are contexts that allow us to develop relationships, we would not oppose them in general, but I think it is true that there is a certain division that is created in spite of us. […] It is natural, it’s something we probably do in spite of ourselves, but that, I would say is diminishing, but still exists. There is no doubt about it.
Chantal: […] I think it is a matter of human security more than anything else. We go with what we know or what appears to be most like us.
Peter: According to probability of compatibility…
Chantal: I guess…
Katia: Maybe we’re also filled with prejudice too, and it’s unconscious]

In this exchange, Chantal and Peter explicitly articulate the assumed divide between the “dominant” population and “Others” that Donald’s (2012) “colonial frontier logics” refer to. The
insidious nature of repetition may have been at work here, as Chantal did not try to unpack the lived separation between herself or her peers, and so-called immigrants. Rather, she justified this lack of interaction by stating that it was simply part of human nature. Again, we witness a form of border anxiety (Balibar, 2009). Katia—perhaps not coincidentally a person of color—disrupted the flow of the conversation by bringing up the possibility of internalized (or unconscious) racism. Indeed, Salée (2010a) argues, recognizing the equality of minorities’ different political systems and values would somewhat mean retracting the supposed superiority of the West, which might offend dominant majorities and threaten the hegemony of their culture and identity. These logics engender what Donald (2012) calls a “fort pedagogy”, which “works according to an insistence that outsiders must either be incorporated—brought inside to become like the insiders—or excluded in order for progress and development to take place in the necessary ways” (p. 101). Apparent in participants’ statements about belonging and interaction with “immigrants” is exactly this intercultural discourse. To call themselves Québécois, participants claim, immigrants should speak the province’s official language and participate: ultimately the argument is that they should strive to be more like the majority. Specifically within the Québec context, I wish to argue, as I imagine Daniel Salée would, that fort pedagogy does not operate towards an agenda of progress—as Donald explains with reference to Western Canadian history—but rather serves to look back in order to preserve an imagined “pure” Québécois culture from the presumed interruptions or disturbances that immigrants might produce. In recognition of the unilateral dynamic that her peers had established, the history student Marie⁴² explicitly challenged them.

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⁴² Throughout the study, Marie challenged her history peers’ assertions around race and gender. Among participants, hers was the only perspective that I felt appeared formally informed by critical anti-racist and/or feminist theory.
...si j’essayais de me mettre présentement dans [la peau de] quelqu’un qui vient du Maghreb, quelqu’un qui vient de la Chine ou quelqu’un qui vient de la Corée, j’suis pas sûre que j’aurais le goût de m’identifier comme Québécois parce que j’me sentirais pas bienvenue dans cette identité-là. J’me sentirais que pour m’identifier comme Québécois, je dois être blanc en fait… (Marie (H), group interview, p. 32)

[...if I tried right now to put myself in [the shoes of] someone from Maghreb, someone from China, or someone from Korea, I’m not sure I would want to identify as Québécois because I would not feel welcomed within that identity. I would feel like in order to identify as Québécois, in fact I would have to be white...]

Here, Marie troubled the assumptions that underlie participants’ claims around language and citizenship to clarify that what they were asserting held racial implications. The sameness that they demanded from immigrants really boiled down to requiring that they be more white; that is they must become part of the dominant group. In my individual interview with Marie, she also elaborated upon her discomfort around even trying to define identity in Québec. Her struggle to identify with a singular ideal of cultural identity served again as an interrupting force. By interrogating the very nature of the concept, Marie disrupted the notion according to which identity can be captured.

C’est pas quelque chose de figé qui existe à l’intérieur de toi. Pour te réclamer de l’identité, faut que tu te conformes à ces exigences-là là, qui sont quelque part. On sait pas trop qui a décidé que c’était ça cette identité-là, ni pourquoi, mais elle est là. Pis faut que tu t’y conformes si tu veux t’y identifier. J’trouve ça un peu étrange comme façon de concevoir, parce que j’conçois pas que l’identité existe en-dehors des gens qui vivent cette identité-là. [...] l’identité c’est chacun qui la définit. C’est quelque chose de fluide, de dynamique, de changeant. (Marie (H), p. 16)

[It isn’t something frozen that exists inside you. In order to claim the identity, you have to conform to those requirements that are somewhere. We don’t really know who decided that that was the identity, or why, but it’s there. And now you have to conform to it if you want to identify with it. I think that is a strange way to conceive, because I do not conceive of identity as something that exists outside of people who live that identity. [...] each person defines identity. It’s something fluid, dynamic, and changing.]

Ultimately, by listening to participants discuss matters of belonging, I began to witness how dominant narratives, in this case “interculturalism”, regulate individuals’ thoughts. Even in participants’ attempts to stray away from the stories they had inherited about themselves or “Others”, it was obvious that “colonial culture” (Harris, 2004) (the binary of civilization/savagery, assumptions about race and gender, ideas about the danger of difference and the hierarchies that these imply) was being reproduced. In a way, what this tells us is that struggles for equality are difficult given the power of “unspoken consensus”. In effect “enforced
silence about the condition of otherness” (Marker, personal communication, July 30, 2013) has the ability to hide truths, and therefore keep us from rewriting history.

4.3 Québécois as Hosts: Erasing Indigenous Existence and Ongoing Struggles on Land

Not surprisingly, the manner in which participants defined the term Québécois, described above, revealed some of the ways in which they understood land and Indigenous Peoples in the province. Ironically, in their definition lay a conspicuous contradiction. Indeed, there was a failure to recognize that asking immigrants to learn French and “participate” should entail a responsibility to enact these conditions in relation to the Indigenous Peoples whose land the population lives on. Particularly given the articulation of the importance of French, it was indeed surprising that participants barely broached the matter of Indigenous languages, in spite of their recorded decline as expressed in the Royal Commission Report on Aboriginal Peoples (as cited in Saganash, 2005). I argue here that such an oversight is equally related to and further naturalized by the intercultural discourse, through which Québécois are deemed the “société d’accueil” on the territory. Gérard Bouchard (2011) explains,

… the ‘cultural majority’ covers a quite large territory. In its narrowest meaning, it

43 Indeed, participants refer to Indigenous languages, but this was mostly to point out the fact that some French words (such as kayak and rabaska) find their root in these languages. Of note, education student Francis did appear to make the link between the importance of speaking French in Québec, and therefore needing to speak to Indigenous people in their language as well.

Pis j’étais tombé sur des Autochtones, pis ça paraît en fait que c’est des Autochtones. Pis j’ai juste regardé, j’ai dit , « Kwei ». Ça veut dire, « Salut ». Pis j’ai demandé comment ça allait en Mohawk, pis ils m’ont répondu. Un des deux m’a répondu, pis l’autre avait l’air bête. Mais, moi j’essaie toujours de rapprocher les deux cultures. C’est pour ça que j’aime parler aux gens dans leur langue, pour faire des rapprochements pis eux autres me répondent. (Francis (TE), p. 12)

44 “host society”
coincides with the most militant fragment of the ‘old stock’ French-speakers. Yet in its widest acceptance, the majority includes all French-speakers and even the entire *host society.* (italics added, p. 446)

Kanien’kehaka (Mohawk) scholar-activist Taiaiake Alfred states “we have never really resolved the problem of colonization’s theft of our lands” (2010, p. 5). In a piece on colonial dispossession, geographer Cole Harris (2004) critiques postcolonial literature for its, at times, exaggerated focus on culture and representation. He argues that thinking about how colonialism is maintained through culture and ideas from the colonial past is an area of inquiry that is rich and full, this partial lens nevertheless ignores the fact that colonialism continues to be maintained *through land.* During the teacher education students’ focus group, Francis discussed this contentious issue:

Ben au Québec, y’a un grand sentiment de nationalisme assez répandu et puis ben les gens qui veulent l’indépendance du Québec le veulent pour le Québec et les Québécois et ça inclue un territoire. Si on... veut accepter que les Amérindiens sont là, sont une part importante de la société pour, bref, qu’est-ce qu’ils ont accompli, ben on légitime aussi leur droit à l’indépendance probablement, parce que si on est pour l’indépendance du Québec, ben moi personnellement j’suis pour l’indépendance de tous les peuples, en fait l’auto-détermination. (Francis (TE), group interview, p. 40)

[Well in Québec, there is a great and widespread feeling of nationalism, and people who want Québec’s independence want it for Québec and Québécois, and that includes a territory. If we… accept that Amerindians are there, are an important part of society because of, well, what they have accomplished, well we probably also legitimize their right to independence, because if one is for the independence of Québec, well I personally am for the independence of all peoples, self-government I mean.]

The naturalization of Québec’s right to remake its inhabitants (immigrants) in its own image, or at least according to a hegemonically decided upon “norm”, must be framed within the context of place. As Francis explained, much of the land in Québec continues to be claimed by Indigenous Peoples. If Québécois who desire sovereignty are to be coherent, this must somehow be resolved. The matter of land is of particular concern in the context of this work given that Indigenous Peoples, who according to their own demands are to be related to on a “nation to nation” basis,
are deliberately excluded from the intercultural model that Bouchard (2011, 2012) proposes. Deeming any group, other than Indigenous people, as “host” on the land effectively erases the colonization of Indigenous Peoples and their continued existence on land in Québec. Ultimately, choosing the term host is not very different from somewhat identifying as Indigenous to assure a coherent identity for Québécois in history and on the territory (Cornellier, 2010). In effect, as I showed in chapter 3, Québécois have a history of laying nationalistic claims to the land (Desbiens, 2004a, 2004b) as though it had always belonged solely to them (us). This is highly problematic. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) argues,

…descendants of settlers who lay claim to an ‘indigenous’ identity through their occupation and settlement of land over several generations or simply through being born in that place—though they tend not to show up at indigenous peoples’ meetings nor form alliances that support the self-determination of the people whose forebears once occupied the land that they have ‘tamed’ and upon which they have settled. Nor do they actively struggle as a society for the survival of indigenous languages, knowledges and cultures. (p. 7)

Indeed as Alfred (2010) puts it, “North American society has never collectively confronted the root of its existence in this land” (p. 6). To be sure, the recognition of Indigenous sovereignty, and distinguishing between immigrant minorities and Indigenous Peoples, as Bouchard does, are

45 With the same reasoning, Indigenous people were equally excluded from the provincial government’s 2006 consultation document Vers une politique gouvernementale de lutte contre le racisme et la discrimination (Towards a government policy to fight against racism and discrimination) (Gouvernement du Québec, 2006).

46 After the Révolution tranquille, hydroelectric projects took on the allure of important nation building exercises, complete with slogans such as “La Baie James appartient à tous les Québécois” and “Nous sommes Hydro Québécois” (“James Bay belongs to all Québécois” and “We are Hydro Québécois”). In the process, natural resources were redefined as national ones. Furthermore, following a Lockean inspired rationale for attributing value to land, the “gars de chantier” (construction worker) became the epitome of the Québécois hero. By “mixing his labor with the land, [he was turning] a ‘wasted’ natural resource (water) into a useful commodity, (hydroelectricity), not for himself alone, but for the good of the larger national community.” (Desbiens, 2004, p. 358)
crucial and valid. Nevertheless, the sociologist’s decision not to include a discussion of the relationships with Indigenous nations living on and with the land in Québec in the current most pervasive discourse surrounding diversity in the province is highly problematic. It is in keeping with historical patterns described in chapter 3 of this thesis, whereby French Canadian Québécois’ interaction with Indigenous Peoples and land in Québec are often viewed by scholars as self interested, and on terms decided upon practically and, in this case entirely, unilaterally. If a given Québécois group, broad though its definition may be, is host, what role then are Indigenous Peoples attributed? This striking omission perpetuates the exclusion of Indigenous Peoples from an ongoing discussion about “difference” (from the eurodescendant Francophone majority) and excuses all Québécois from having to think about contemporary Indigenous realities by effectively willingly choosing not to discuss their presence on a territory that has been co-opted by generations of settlers.

4.4 Thinking Through Québécois’ Ethnocentric Relationship With Land

In a highly ingenious use of the photography exercise, Peter, a student in teacher education, explored Québécois’ relationship with land (see Figure 4).

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47 Indeed, this distinction does not exist within high school curriculum in Québec. Young people do not learn about the different nature of Anglo-Québécois, and Indigenous group identities, or about their legal status, which distinguishes each of these groups from “immigrant minorities” in Québec (McAndrew, 2010), While an in-depth look at curriculum content would be useful as a means of furthering this inquiry, such an endeavor falls beyond the scope of this research. Indeed, this project seeks in part to consider how participants have taken up curriculum, where they are now.

48 It is important to acknowledge that Indigenous Peoples may not be interested in being included in Québec as it stands. However, I believe that it is equally important to emphasize that so long as Indigenous and non-Indigenous people live on the territory within the province’s borders, they will be called upon to interact with one another. These unavoidable relationships stand to be discussed and problematized just as much as do the relationships between the non-Indigenous majority and minorities in Québec.
Peter (TE) photographs a bicycle lane and a bench in a park

… j’me suis mis à réfléchir à ce parc-là, cette piste cyclable-là qui est située dans le nord de Montréal. Pis j’me suis mis à réfléchir sur le rôle du parc dans une ville. Tsé le parc c’est un espace de détente, un espace de loisir, un espace qui est réservé à ça dans une ville urbaine en mouvement, etc. dynamique. Pis j’me suis mis à réfléchir, qu’est-ce qui arriverait si on voulait changer la vocation du parc pour en faire un terrain immobilier ou bref peu importe, changer la fonction du parc pour y faire perdre sa fonction de loisir, de détente, etc. Là je me suis dit, ça passerait pas. Dans le quartier il va y avoir des pétitions, il va y avoir des plaintes. Dans les quartier, les habitants, peut-être l’île au complet réagirait et dirait, « Ben non, on peut pas toucher à ce territoire-là, c’est un territoire qu’il faut protéger », etc. (Peter (TE), p. 3)

[…] I started to think about that park, that bike lane, which is in the northern part of Montréal. And I started thinking about a park’s role in the city. You know, parks are a space for relaxation and leisure, reserved for that within an urban city that is constantly moving, dynamic, etc. And I started to wonder, what would happen if we wanted to change the park’s vocation to turn it into real estate or whatever, change the park’s function and cause it to lose its leisure and relaxation functions. And I thought, that just would not fly. In the neighborhood there would be petitions; there would be complaints. People in the neighborhood, perhaps even the entire island would react, would say, « Of course not, we can’t touch that piece of land, we have to protect it », etc.]

Peter reflected on the value that urban Québécois associate with parks; they are important recreational spaces available for relaxation and leisure. He imagined that, in the face of economic development in these spaces, Québécois would resist by engaging in political action. Peter continued,

Là ça m’a emmené à extrapoler au territoire autochtone, qui eux, c’est pas un espace de loisir ou de détente, c’est un espace vital, pis pourtant quand vient le temps de changer la fonction de ce territoire-là, ben on le fait pis on s’en lave les mains. (Peter (TE), p. 3)

[Then I extended my thinking to reflect on Indigenous territories. For them it’s not about leisure or relaxation, these are vital spaces. Yet, when it comes to changing the function of their territories, well we wash our hands clean of
The scene Peter photographed had him reflecting on the way Indigenous land is “treated” and valued (or not) by Québécois. Though he did not elaborate on his understanding of Indigenous Peoples’ connections with land, he did express an awareness of this relationship as a “vital” one. What Peter picked up on was the ethnocentrism, and sense of entitlement that characterizes the selective attachment to land that he identified. Québécois’ internalization of their role as supposed “host” perpetuates what has already been described as an established sense of entitlement to land in Québec. This justifies making wide-scale decisions on how land is used and where. This matter is of particular interest at the moment in Québec. As I briefly mentioned in chapter 3, the Parti Québécois is in the process of coordinating and promoting a development project based on the mining potential of Northern Québec, entitled “Le Nord pour Tous” (Gouvernement du Québec, 2013). On the project’s website, Premier Pauline Marois (2013) states, “Le Nord du Québec recèle un formidable potentiel de développement économique et de création de richesse pour tous. D’ailleurs, nous avons dévoilé un nouveau régime de redevances minières qui fera en sorte d'enrichir davantage les Québécois à qui appartiennent les ressources.” (italics added) In effect, Pauline Marois confirms that the natural resources in Québec belong to everyone in Québec, a statement that is without regard for the treaties that actually distribute them between Peoples (Rogers, 2012). In so doing, Marois states for everyone that Québécois are masters of the territory. Of course, I explore these ideas as a way of thinking through (and the dismantling) matters of ownership and borders. Nevertheless, I recognize other dimensions of an ethical sovereignty, which first and foremost commit to preventing the harm of

49 “North For All”
50 “Québec’s North bears a formidable potential for economic development and the creation of riches for all. In fact, we have revealed a new mining tax regime that will see to it that Québécois, to whom the resources belong, are more enriched.”
4.5 Conclusion

In short, what I have argued that participants simultaneously engage in both the repetition (Hutton, as cited in Gardner, 2010) and the interruption of colonially structured narratives around identity in Québec. I have shown that these disruptions take place through participants’ challenge of the French-English binary, their expression of concern for the well-being of various minorities in the hypothetical case of Québec’s separation, Marie’s discomfort with defining identity as though it were fixed, and Peter’s questioning of Québécois’ ethnocentric relationship with land. At the same time though, some of the same participants show that the internalization of intercultural discourses has enabled many Québécois to imagine that they are in a position to impose criteria for belonging to newcomers. These discourses may also regulate how a specific dominant understanding of being Québécois means that they (we) are “hosts” on the territory. In these instances, Indigenous Peoples’ presence on the land since time immemorial, as well as their rights, languages and cultures are disregarded, and seem to be silent in the French Canadian landscape and mindset.

As Bruno Cornellier (2010) explains, in spite of its own historical attempts at decolonization, and its efforts to establish solidarity with “minorities”, Québec has yet to free itself of the tensions and contradictions borne out of its own imminently complex colonial history, as well as the violent structures that are foundational to all identity formations. Analysis of the data I have collected suggests that nationalist discourses may have weakened in part in a younger generation. Yet at the point in conversation in which participants had still only discussed their own belonging, and the belonging of “immigrants”, the shift in thinking through understandings of “Québécois” were not yet engaged with the wider politics of anti-racism and
alliance building. Nor did they acknowledge the ways in which the erasure from memory—and therefore of ethical politics—of colonial practices makes invisible those who do not identify with the majority population.

In the following chapter, I will demonstrate how the visual material created by participants suggests that their encounters with and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples’ histories and current realities had mainly been limited to brushes with a frozen “imaginary Indian” (Francis, 1992), a fictitious figure that equally represented some form of colonial repetition (Hutton as cited in Gardner, 2010). I show that, faced with the limits of their own knowledge and understanding, some participants had begun to question the way in which dominant historical narratives in Québec learned through formal schooling and popular culture have had an impact on the settler population.
Chapter 5

The “Imaginary Indian”: Distant in Space, and Vanished in Time

In this chapter, I argue that despite changes in the ways in which participants think reflexively about being “Québécois”, it remains the case that students’ understanding of Indigenous people, cultures and knowledges relegate them to far away places, both spatially and temporally. I go on to explain that, not unlike the focus limited to the integration of “immigrants” within the discourse of interculturalism, participants are unable to imagine relationships with Indigenous Peoples. Indeed, relationships with Indigenous people do not figure within their thinkable spaces. As such, they can only be imagined as inherently disconnected from Québécois. As I outline, participants express awareness and concerns linked to the stereotypical representations of Indigenous Peoples conveyed by both the media and curriculum that elicits questions around the impacts of Québec’s historical narratives. Nevertheless, for the most part, participants cannot view themselves as anything other than what Susan Dion (2007) calls the “perfect stranger”, distant from, and ignorant about, Indigenous people’s lives.

Figure 5. Caroline (TE) photographs an old feudal domain in Terrebonne, Québec. With this image, Caroline wishes to represent the running over, and resulting absence, of Indigenous ”traces” in her environment.

A student teacher participant, Caroline, captured the scene above (Figure 5) in order to
represent a void that she identified in her environment. She explained,

... j’habite à Terrebonne, c’est une ancienne seigneurie. Ça c’est une trace d’établissement de la seigneurie, donc une maison seigneuriale, le moulin et tout ça. Ça, ça m’a fait penser à comme le fait que... Mettons la culture francophone est arrivée pis a comme pris l’espace, pis que l’espace était mettons pu dédié tant à la nature comme dans l’histoire. [...] Y’a un nouveau système en place qui dans le fond mettait de côté ce qui avait été fait par les autres avant. [...] Dans le fond c’est l’absence peut-être d’éléments amérindiens qui m’a fait penser à [photographier] ça. (Caroline (TE), p. 3)

[... I live in Terrebonne, this is an old seignory. That is the trace of the lord’s establishment, so a feudal domain, the mill and all that. That kind of reminded me of the fact that... Like, the Francophone culture arrived and took the space, and that the space was no longer dedicated to like nature like it had been historically. [...] There is a new system in place that brushes aside what others had previously done. [...] Maybe it’s the absence of Indigenous elements that caused me to think [to photograph] this.]

Just as Peter had photographed a park to question Québécois’ relationship with land (Figure 4) as described in the previous chapter, Caroline’s photo draws attention to unquestioned codes of habitual practice (Prosser, 2007). In this case, she has highlighted an absence, a missing piece of a narrative of Canada and Québec — the replacement of one history by another, the resulting erasure of Indigenous Peoples’ presence in the past and in the now. This picture is representative of a larger sentiment that was conveyed by participants throughout my study. For most of them, it seemed as though Indigenous people alive today (as opposed to fictitious or historic Indigenous people) are almost entirely physically absent from their experience of interaction with others in Québec. This understanding of First Nations, Inuit and Métis as either geographically distant or vanished in time reflects an actual pattern in participants’ lives structured in part by the colonial project, and embodied in the everyday sensibilities of both Québécois and other Canadian young people. Though I may not be able to provide a definitive answer, a key question, or at the very least, a curious reference point we are left with is whether this is the case in Québec in ways that are different from other parts of the country?

5.2 Recalling the “Official Curriculum”, Forgetting Indigenous People

The first question I asked participants that related directly to Indigenous people came near
the end of our first encounter, the focus group. I asked them to recall or attempt to retrieve what they had learned about Indigenous Peoples through formal schooling. The responses in both the history and teacher education groups were very similar. Many students recited, almost systematically, a specific body of knowledge that all Québécois learn in school.

Alana: De quoi est-ce que vous vous rappelez avoir appris à l’école sur les Autochtones?
(rires un peu cachés de la part du groupe)
Chantal: La base de qui habite dans des maisons longues pis...
Caroline: Ouin.
Chantal: Qui est du nomadisme et...
Caroline: Sédentaire.
Chantal: Toutes ces classifications très, très générales et euh...
Alain: Un peu arbitraires!
[...]
Caroline: Ils nous ont beaucoup véhiculé aussi le mythe du « Bon Sauvage » là...
Chantal: Mhm.
Caroline: La relation qu’on avait avec eux, « On va échanger des fourrures contre des miroirs…». ((TE) group interview, p. 34-35)

[Alana: What do you remember having learned about Indigenous Peoples in school?
(participants laugh under their breath)
Chantal: The basic stuff, about having lived in long houses and…
Caroline: Yeah.
Chantal: … and about being nomadic and…
Caroline: Sedentary.
Chantal: All those classifications that are very, very general and um…
Alain: Kind of arbitrary!
[...]
Caroline: They also really conveyed the “Noble Savage” myth…
Chantal: Mhm…
Caroline: The relationship we had with them, “We’ll exchange furs against mirrors…”]

The student teacher participants, Caroline, Chantal and Alain, were all talking about a set of “pre-contact” traits that supposedly pertain to Algonquin and Iroquois Amerindians (I too have my own high school memories of having to commit these to memory). Furthermore, Caroline stated explicitly that the “Noble Savage” stereotype was conveyed to her—a well-established patronizing representation of Indigenous people as “innocent, virtuous, and peace-loving, free of the guile and vanity that [comes] from living in contemporary society” (Francis, 1992, p. 7). A very similar conversation took place in the history students’ group interview. In the excerpt below, Marie could not recall having learned anything about Indigenous Peoples, and Valérie
alluded to the list of “arbitrary attributes” touched upon by the student teacher group.

Alana: … qu’est-ce que vous vous souvenez avoir appris à l’école sur les Autochtones?
(soupirs, un peu de rires)
Marie: Très honnêtement, jusqu’avant d’être entrée au cégep, euh non, à l’université...
Valérie: L’université ouais.
Marie: …. euh, strictement rien. On ne m’a jamais parlé. J’savais qu’il y avait des Autochtones et ça se limitait à ça. Même pas sûre de... J’étais trop petite pour la crise d’Oka donc je m’en souviens pas là, mais strictement rien vraiment. Absolument rien.
Valérie: Moi j’pense que mon souvenir le plus lointain c’est, ben lointain... Histoire seconde 4 là, avant l’arrivée des colons européens, on a eu un cours sur « La famille des Indiens Iroquois » pis « La famille algonquienne », « Ils vivent dans des wigwams, des tepees, sont sédentaires, sont matriarcales » et c’est tout. Après ça, après l’arrivée des Européens, pu parlé des Amérindiens. Genre jusqu’à 1990, « Ah, y’a eu une crise d’Oka en passant! » (rire) Ça été ça genre. ((H) group interview, p. 35)

In both groups, participants snickered, or perhaps they were laughing nervously, after I asked them to recall what they learned about Indigenous Peoples in school. This may have been indicative of their understanding of the limited and problematic history with which they were presented in high school or the forms of anxiety that arise from not knowing something important about one’s own and others’ history. Indeed, that they recalled either “learning nothing”, or learning what is basically a checklist of characteristics from two Indigenous “families” (and did not specify which characteristic pertains to which “family” moreover) during the “pre-contact” era, is significant. As Philip Gardner (2010) elaborates on the practice of repetition, he explains that we repeat:

…those things that we have learned and remember in the course of life—most typically perhaps at school—and, even after, can recall or recite without having to learn them over again. […] Such is learning ‘by heart’, in which remembered
knowledge becomes, in Thucydide’s expression, our ‘everlasting possession’. (p. 100)

While we cannot blame participants for this limited knowledge of course, it is after all what they can remember, it is possible to infer from these conversations the detrimental effects of the limited curriculum that they were taught. Indeed, the fact that, as I mentioned earlier, participants practically recite these traits exemplifies the way in which repetition does not involve learning again. Rather, it is precisely a phenomenon that renders unlearning quite difficult. This portrayal of Indigenous Peoples as participants recall it, both essentializing and dehumanizing for its reduction to words in diagrams - as Victor’s words below denoted - does little to convey the complexity of Indigenous histories, and what has caused some of the struggles that Indigenous Peoples face today:

Ben on trouvait ça [l’histoire des Autochtones] plate parce que c’était présenté de façon, j’me rappelle, schématisée là. Sur des lignes du temps ou des trucs comme ça là avec des énumérations de peuples pis on cochait « chasseur/cueilleur »... Ça c’était très plate. Si on avait fait l’histoire comme ça des peuples Blancs, y’a personne qui aurait aimé l’histoire-là. (Victor (H), p. 15)

[Well we thought it [Indigenous Peoples’ history] was boring because of the way it was presented, I remember, it was like in diagrams. On timelines or things like that, with Peoples enumerated and we had to check off « hunter/gatherer »… It was really boring. If we had done White Peoples history like that, no one would have liked history.]

In one of Létourneau’s (1996) few mentions of Indigenous Peoples (indeed, his work focuses mainly on French Canadian Québécois), the historian notes that once colonization has commenced in Québec, textbooks focus on the development of the French colony. As a result, Indigenous Peoples progressively disappear, only to reappear in the 1980s at the time of great territorial confrontations between Indigenous people and Whites. In the conversation that took place in the history group transcribed above, I could detect sarcasm in Valérie’s account of having learned about “contact”, then about Oka. However, her account regrettably echoed Létourneau’s textbook analysis. Indeed, in spite of the recognition that Indigenous Peoples are part of North American history, participants’ memories signify a near erasure of the last three
hundred years of First Nations, Inuit and Métis existence in Québec. It is this erasure of memory that ultimately has the power to eradicate the potential for the emergence of a new and ethical politics of alliance building in Québec. As Peter, a teacher education participant explained,

… après justement l’épisode de la Grande Paix [de Montréal], 1700 ou même un peu avant ça, j’mé rappelle même pas de c’qu’on a pu voir d’eux au secondaire. C’est comme si leur société était figée dans le temps pis que a l’évoluait pas. Donc, c’qu’on a vu en 1500, ça s’applique encore en 2000. C’est un peu comme ça qu’on le percevait. (Peter (TE), group interview, p. 36)

[… after the Great Peace [of Montreal] era, 1700 or a bit before, I don’t remember what we learned in high school. It’s as though their society was frozen in time without evolving. So what we saw in 1500 can be applied to 2000. That’s kind of how we perceived them.]

It is interesting that Peter explicitly used the term “frozen” to describe the way he feels about the representation of Indigenous people in the history he was taught. This securing of Indigenous people in a far away time is all too familiar. As Mackey (1991) explains, and it is no surprise, Indigenous people are often:

frozen in the glorious past of teepees and headdresses. Most Aboriginal people in Canada do not live in teepees: as citizens of the twentieth [now twenty-first] century with a long history of colonization, many live in poverty in small, unromantic homes on reserves, or in apartments and houses in urban centres. (p. 78)

Though these were realities that Mackey was underscoring in 1991, this continues to be the case. As Paulette Regan (2010) further argues, “much of the social dysfunction, violence, and poverty that exists in communities today is part of the intergenerational legacy of Indian residential schools” (p. 3). Extremely noteworthy is indeed the fact that none of the participants recall ever having heard of residential schooling while they were in secondary school. It seems safe to say that what participants know, or believe to know, about Indigenous Peoples in contemporary times was for the most part not learned in school. Though if it was learned there, it is remembered in a form that showcases the power of a colonial history to repeat the past or to render marginalized groups irrelevant to a particular historical narrative. In the history group,
Marie used the term “frozen” as well. For her, it appeared as though this restrictive focus on Indigenous Peoples had persisted in her experience of the undergraduate level.

Pis même l’image qu’on en parle, même un petit peu, même à l’université y’a quelque chose de figé dans les Amérindiens qu’on nous présente. [...] on parlait des Amérindiens, mais on parlait pas des sociétés amérindiennes en tant que tel : comment elles ont évolué, comment la colonisation a eu un impact sur les civilisations, les cultures amérindiennes. On parlait toujours des relations entre l’État et les peuples amérindiens, mais t’avais l’impression qu’ils vivaient exactement de la même façon que en 1760 ou en 1600. (Marie (H), group interview, p. 39)

[And even the image that we discuss, even a little, even in university there is something frozen about the Indigenous people that we are presented with. [...] … we spoke about Amerindians, but we did not talk about Amerindian societies per se: how they evolved, how colonization impacted their civilizations, Amerindian cultures. We always covered relationships between the State and Amerindian Peoples, but you would get the impression that they lived the exact same way in 1760 or in 1600.]

Marie added to the idea of a stigmatized and unreal frozen representation by highlighting the Eurocentric approach to history that she has had to confront. Other participants felt that it had indeed been through higher education that they had come to know more about Indigenous Peoples. For instance, Francis completed a bachelor’s degree in history before studying to become a teacher. During our one on one interview, he explained that this degree had contributed to helping him to develop more of an open mindedness towards Indigenous people whom, as a result of hearing racist media coverage of the Oka crisis at the age of nine, he had previously regarded in a highly violent and negative light.

Mais c’est sûr que le cours que j’ai fait sur les Autochtones au 19e ça, ça a joué un gros, gros, gros rôle. Ça a joué un

51 During the group interview, Francis explained to his peers:

Ouais, j’étais au primaire pendant la crise d’Oka. Faque c’était le bordel, j’haïssais les Indiens, j’pensais qu’il fallait toute les faire sauter parce que j’écoute Gilles Proulx [un animateur radio qui aime Chocquer et connu au Québec] à radio (rires du groupe). J’comprénais pas trop c’qui se passait. Ben j’mé souviens cet épisode-là, j’peinturais la clôture dans cour chez nous, c’est ça qui jouait pis j’comprénais pas. (Francis (TE), group interview, p. 7)

[Yeah, I was in primary school during the Oka crisis. So it was nuts, I hated Indians, I thought that they should all be blown up because I listened to Gilles Proulx [a well-known “shock jockey” in Québec] on the radio (group laughs). I didn’t really understand what was going on. But I remember that episode, I was painting a fence in the yard at my house, that’s what I was listening to and I didn’t understand.]

52 I have hesitated to reproduce this conversation. However, I feel that Francis conveyed honestly the raw experience of being a French Canadian Québécois child living in Châteaugay, near the Mohawk community of Kahnawà:ke at the time of the Oka crisis.
gros rôle dans cette ouverture-là. […] Ça faisait longtemps que j’pensais qu’il fallait faire sauter les Indiens. Mais ça m’est toujours resté qu’à neuf ans, je pensais ça. Ça m’a toujours traumatisé. Encore aujourd’hui, j’suis troublé de ça là. Parce que je me dis qu’il y avait du monde qui était plus vieux que moi qui se disait la même chose à ce moment-là. Ça c’est troublant. […] Ça, pis quand j’ai décidé de faire mon… mon travail de recherche de fin de bac en histoire, […] Là c’était un travail, genre de travail dirigé sous forme de séminaire. On était un groupe avec une enseignante. C’était une spécialiste en histoire des États-Unis. Pis à ce moment-là j’avais décidé de faire mon travail sur le rôle joué par les cinq nations iroquoises dans l’indépendance américaine. (Francis (TE), p. 17-18)

[But definitely, the class I did on Indigenous people in the 19th century, that played a major, major, major part. It played a major part in my open mindedness. […] I had not been thinking of Indigenous people as a group that should be blown up for a while by then. But it has always stayed with me that at the age of nine, I did think that. It always traumatized me. Still today, I am troubled by that. Because I think to myself that there must have been people who were older than I who thought the same thing at the time. That is troubling. […] … that and when I decided to do my… the final research paper for my bachelor’s in history. […] It was like a directed study in the form of a seminar. We were in a group with one teacher. She was a specialized in American history. And at that moment, I had decided to do my paper on the part that the five Iroquois nations played in American independence.]

Indeed, Francis repeatedly demonstrated an awareness and understanding of current Indigenous realities that most of his peers did not. Overall, I am unable to say whether or not higher education has served to reproduce dominant narratives for participants, or disrupt them. I attempt to argue in this thesis that these processes occur simultaneously to varying degrees. That which seemed obvious from discussing with participants though was the “occidocentrism” (Wolfe, 1999) that cloaked the versions of history that they had been presented with, even at the university level. This is to say that history seemed to have been taught to participants from an overwhelmingly Western perspective. For in effect, Francis’ final research paper was about Indigenous Peoples’ contribution to the independence of the United-States. As the history student, Camille explained,

… pour l’histoire, faut se fier aux sources coloniales je pense. Mais [un de nos professeurs] essaie de nous faire voir comment on peut interpréter pour essayer d’aller voir la version autochtone, mais c’est compliqué. Y’a comme tout le temps la version européenne qui est là. (Camille (H), p. 22)

[… for history, we have to rely on colonial sources, I think. But [one of our professors] tries to present us with ways of interpreting in order to grasp the Indigenous version, but it’s complicated. The European version is like always there.]

In other words, not only did students feel as though their knowledge of history was limited, but also that the knowledge they did have failed to incorporate Indigenous perspectives that might challenge the colonial narrative. Overall, participants’ accounts of learning about Indigenous
Peoples in school bring to mind a passage in which Vincent and Arcand summarize findings from studies focusing on the representation of Indigenous Peoples in textbooks carried out in English Canada prior to the 1980s. This is to position their work on Québec within the larger Canadian context:

… on n’y présente jamais les événements historiques d’un point de vue amérindien; on ne mentionne pas les moments de notre histoire qui sont souvent pour eux les plus importants; on n’enseigne à peu près rien sur l’organisation socio-politique et les valeurs des sociétés amérindiennes traditionnelles et rien n’est dit non plus de leur situation politique actuelle. (Vincent and Arcand, 1979, p. 19)\textsuperscript{53}

In what might have been the only obvious distinction between the two groups that I worked with, I was surprised by the extent to which the student teachers’ recollection of Indigenous Peoples’ history of European contact was accompanied by an expression of gratitude. Though I am unable to say for sure, it is possible that this was indicative of the nature of the high school curriculum that these participants, as future history teachers, were being trained to teach. For the photography exercise, Alain took a picture of a wooded area in Outremont, Québec (Figure 6).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{wooded_area.png}
\caption{Alain photographs a wooded area in Outremont, Québec. With this photograph, Alain makes the association between Indigenous people and nature.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{53} … historical events are never presented from an Indigenous perspective; moments from our history that often, are most important to them, are not mentioned; practically nothing is taught about traditional Amerindian societies’ socio-political organization or values, and nothing is said about their current political situation either.
I asked Alain to tell me about the photograph; he explained,

Pour moi, la forêt représente un peu les Amérindiens. Je les associe de façon très étroite, autant par les représentations que j’en ai eues lorsque j’étais plus jeune que tout ce qu’on a pu me rabâcher depuis que je fais ma formation, depuis le secondaire... Le bois c’est pas un univers qui est européen; c’est pas un univers qui est canadien français. On pourrait pas y survivre sans les Amérindiens. Aujourd’hui peut-être, mais pas lorsqu’on est arrivés. […] Pis encore une fois on a survécu les Blancs, grâce aux Amérindiens, en plein hiver. On savait pas comment ça marchait l’hiver là. (Alain (TE), p. 4)

[For me, the forest kind of represents Amerindians. I associate them with it very narrowly, because of representations of them from when I was younger, as well as from everything that was hammered into me from the beginning of my schooling, since secondary… The woods are not a European environment; they are not a French Canadian environment. We could not survive them without Amerindians. Today maybe, but not when we got here. […] And again, us white people survived, thanks to Amerindians, in the middle of winter. We didn’t know how winter worked.]

Though, as I described previously, Alain’s peers in teacher education identified and were critical of the “Noble Savage” stereotype during the group interview, he did not name it when he described this photograph to me. Rather, due in part to what he could remember from schooling and his childhood in general, Alain appeared to uncritically associate Indigenous people with forests. Though it is clear that Indigenous people today can be discussed in terms of an ontological and spiritual connection to land (Archibald, 2008; Barnhardt and Kawagley, 2005; John, 2009; Deloria, 1994; Macfarlane, Glynn, Grace, Penetito and Bateman, 2008; Marker, 2011), this is not what Alain was referring to. Rather, his photograph served to recall a weighted myth of surviving in the wilderness. Katia demonstrated the “trace” of Indigenous people in her life by photographing the furry hood of a winter coat (Figure 7).
Like Alain, Katia drew a connection between Indigenous people and the winter climate.

… ça évoque surtout, ben c’est sûr ça me fait toujours penser aux premiers hivers que les Européens ont passé ici, que y’a plein de choses que les Amérindiens avaient déjà développées que les Européens ont approprié pis ça les a aidé à survivre. (Katia (TE), p. 2)

[… it evokes mostly, well it definitely reminds me of the first winters that Europeans spent here, that there are plenty of things that Amerindians had already developed that Europeans appropriated, which helped them to survive.]

Francis looked back on the narrative of “help” that he was taught in school with a sarcastic tone.

C’était les bons sauvages là avec qui on avait échangé, c’est ça des objets de pacotille, pis qui finalement nous ont aidés à pas avoir le scorbut là. (rires du groupe) Mais grosso modo c’était ça. Ça j’me souviens par exemple qu’ils nous ont sauvés. Pis qu’on voyait ça, mais c’était pas ben, ben plus... (Francis (TE), group interview, p. 36)

[They were the noble savages with whom we traded, mostly junk, and who ultimately helped us not to get scurvy (group laughs). Basically that was it. That I do remember though, they saved us. And we saw that [in school], but not much more…]

Though participants in education were able to recall elements of historical collaboration with some detail, they did not discuss the violence of colonization nearly as elaborately. Drawing on

54 Indeed, here Francis used a sarcastic tone to recall what he learned in school. From my interpretation, the group is not laughing to ridicule Indigenous Peoples. Rather, they seem to be aware that this is a very limited understanding of Indigenous Peoples’ role in Québec’s history.
Daniel Francis, Dwayne Donald (2012) explains,

I believe that myths are actually truths about culture and conventional views of history that have both been heavily influenced by the stories of Canadian nation and nationality told in schools for many generations. These **truth-myths** are idealized versions of history that are simplified and made coherent when we select “particular events and institutions which seem to embody important cultural values and elevate them to the status of legend” (Francis, 1997, p. 11). (p. 95)

I do not wish to deny that some collaboration did take place between Indigenous people and French colonizers; indeed, this is how the Métis nation was born. However, the narrative according to which Indigenous Peoples “helped” Europeans to survive harsh winters in what is now North America selectively erases the specifics of the violence of colonialism, and replaces it with a tale of collaboration, thereby justifying Québécois “cohabitation” and belonging on the land. Indeed, viewing Indigenous groups solely as “assistants” or “helpers” is precisely what keeps them trapped in time and unable to emerge as a legitimate and recognized identity in their own right. Furthermore, as David Austin (2010) argues, “conveniently, the murder, enslavement, torture and systematic use of state-sponsored and church-condoned genocidal violence against Indigenous groups […] are omitted from this tidy formula.” (p. 26) In Québec, this has meant a co-optation of the collaboration narrative, which allows descendants of French colonizers to deny that their ancestors or themselves were ever guilty of colonization. As Bruno Cornellier (2010) explains, “Ainsi, l'Indien, lorsque libéré, désincarné de sa réalité politique et historique et soumis au régime discursif et pédagogique qui l'inscrit/l'écrit dans la mythologie nationaliste dominante, devient ici l’un des principaux symboles de la différence culturelle et de la
territorialité québécoise en terre d'Amérique."  

5.2 Imagining the “Indian”: Immortalized Into the 21st Century

Just as participants’ accounts of learning about Indigenous people in school conveyed a limited and problematic narrative that relegated Indigenous Peoples to history, the visual material that they developed and shared paralleled the idea of being frozen in time, and in a space locked outside of a modern and contemporary world. Again, as Tuhiwai Smith (1999) reminds us, the repetition of a colonial practice traps Indigenous Peoples in a specific past. We can gather from analyzing some of the participants’ timelines and photographs that their encounters with Indigenous Peoples or Indigeneity seem in many instances limited to food, fashion and camp fires, in ways that are evocative of the “imaginary Indian” (Francis, 1992). In effect, it would seem that many have not only had very limited engagement with Indigenous individuals but also held little critical and up to date knowledge of the current political situations that many Indigenous groups face in relation to Québec and Canada.

In a book that argues that there is no such thing as “real Indian”, Daniel Francis (1992) conceptualizes the “imaginary Indian” as “the White man’s fantasy” (p. 5). By analyzing representations of Indigenous people in Canadian popular culture, Francis explains that from the mid-nineteenth century (at least) onward, “Euro-Canadians continued to perceive Indians in terms of their own changing values.” (p. 8) The visual exercises that I asked students to engage in did not require that they represent Indigenous people as they knew, or imagined them. Rather, I asked participants to render their encounters with people or things that might be characterized

55 Thus, once the Indian is released and disengaged from his political and historical reality, and submitted to discursive and pedagogical regimes that inscribe/write him into dominant national mythology, he becomes one of the principal symbols of Québécois cultural difference and territoriality on American land.
as Indigenous. As a result, I cannot say, the way Francis does, whether any kind of value can be inferred from the images that participants created. However, it is possible to claim that these brushes were indeed for the most part with “imaginary Indians”, who were not alive today. For example:

Figure 8. Caroline’s timeline. Caroline divides her visual representation into numbered categories: food, nature, dwellings, sports, school, arts, and culture.

Caroline, a participant studying to become a history teacher, divided her visual creation (Figure 8) into categories that represented the ways in which she has come into contact with Indigenous peoples in her life. Starting from the top left, clockwise, she represented (popular) culture by writing the word ‘Pocahontas’ on a television. Next, Caroline drew a small image of

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56 It is interesting that Pocahontas recurs in eight of the eleven timelines. This points to the extent of the impact the Disney film had on shaping participants’ views of Indigenous Peoples. As Tuhiwai Smith explains, Pocahontas is an example of a romanticized European traveler’s account that “fed the public imagination with tales of daring and
corn to express her knowledge of the fact that Indigenous people initially cultivated some of the foods that she eats. She then drew a figure at a desk to represent herself learning about Indigenous people in school. In the lower right corner, we can see an igloo, and a tent (or possibly a teepee), that as a child she built for playing, she explained. Then we see the sports that Caroline partook in during seasonal camping trips (canoeing and tobogganing). She went on to depict a tree and beaver next to which she wrote, “The importance of nature and respecting animals”. Lastly, Caroline depicted the arts by drawing a museum, and what might be a beaded piece of jewelry. Together these images show that Caroline cannot recall having encountered an Indigenous person. Rather, her brushes with what might be Indigenous stem from either popular culture, or the objects and practices that she associates with Indigenous people, presumably from having learned about them on various occasions. Perhaps most importantly, nothing I can see in this timeline shows that these encounters with representations, objects and activities (not with individuals) have conveyed any memories or counter memories of history. Figures 9, 10, and 11 show similar timelines by Alain (TE) Marie (H), and Camille (H) in which they described their interactions through encounters with books, movies, activities, and cultural artifacts.
Figure 9. Alain’s timeline. Within the overarching figure of the teepee, Alain lists the ways in which he has encountered Indigenous people: through popular culture (literature and film), outdoor activities (camping, canoeing, kayaking, fishing), museums, and history classes.

Figure 10. Marie’s timeline. Marie divides her timeline into squares in which she represents phrases that refer to Indigenous people (‘becs d’eskimaux’, and ‘s’asseoir
en indien”, a dream catcher, snow shoeing, the Pocahontas film, and reading Jeanne, fille du Roy.

Figure 11. Camille’s timeline. Camille draws a timeline, but also writes a number of words underneath it: snow shoe, teepee/igloo, moccasin, totem, canoe, longhouse, etc.).

A number of the participants’ pictures demonstrated that their present surroundings were in keeping with the experiences from their past, which the timeline activity had incited them to share. In effect, the photography exercise revealed the ways in which participants’ current environments practically solely incite interaction with an “imaginary Indian” (Francis, 1992). In Figure 12, we see the teacher education participant, Peter’s photograph of a feather earring. When I asked him what had caused him to associate feathers with Indigenous Peoples, he responded:

P :… j’dirais que c’est dans la mémoire collective. Parce que j’pense pas avoir déjà abordé cet aspect-là à l’école.

57 “Eskimo kiss” and “sitting like an Indian”. The latter is a commonly used expression in French (that, interestingly, I have never heard to be deemed offensive), which refers to the position one is in when they are seated with their legs crossed.
58 Jeanne, fille du roy is a well-known Québécois novel by Suzanne Martel, about a young woman sent to “New France” to marry, and contribute in increasing the settlement by having children.
In this instance, my desire to employ a decolonizing strategy, one that would cause participants and I to decenter our assumptions, seems to have partly been achieved. When I asked Peter to reflect on the knowledge that he took for granted, he realized that it may in fact be false. This passage brings me back to Gardner’s claim (2010), quoted previously, about the way in which the practice of repetition turns knowledge into what is often an unquestioned possession. In this case, it turns out that Peter’s supposed knowledge of a piece of Indigenous people’s history had not come from any Indigenous source. Rather, he came to realize that it had grown out of a “collective” (presumably settler) “memory”. Furthermore, the participant’s answer relegated the important symbolism of feathers to the past. Though feathers have been appropriated and used in detrimentally universalizing ways to represent Indigeneity, they continue to have deep spiritual significance for a number of Indigenous people today (Keene, 2010). Peter appeared to be unaware of this.

The history student in history, Valérie photographed a glass-encased kayak (Figure 13) found in what she called a “cultural window” in one of the buildings she regularly passes through on her way to class. Valérie explained,

V : … Pis tse ça disait, y’avait des fiches explicatifs qui disaient que c’est une technique authentique. Celui-là j’pense que c’est inuit. Pis euh, celui-ci a été fait par quelqu’un encore qui fait des trucs artisanaux là.
A : Ok. Pis, pourquoi est-ce que ce kayak-là est là? Genre, pourquoi il est dans la vitrine?

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59 This is information I shared with Peter as we pursued the conversation about feathers.
V : Mm! Bonne question. Ben... (pause) Dans cette section-là, y’a aussi des œuvres d’art, une sculpture au mur qui est pas amérindienne là, mais j’sais pas... Une vitrine culturelle là. (Valérie (H), p. 4)

[V : … And that one said, there were explanatory panels that said that this it was an authentic technique. That one, I think it was Inuit. And um, that one was made by someone who still does artisanal work.
A: Okay. Why do you think this kayak is here? Like, why is it in the window?
V: Mm! Good question. Well... (pause) In that section, there are also works of art, a sculpture on the wall that is not Amerindian, but I don’t know... Like a cultural window.]

Figure 12. Peter photographs a feather earring. For Peter (TE), this photograph showcases how Indigenous people are represented through what he refers to as “collective memory”; they often appear adorned in feathers.

Figure 13. Valérie photographs a glass-encased kayak in one of Université de Montréal’s buildings. Valérie (H) explained that behind this kayak, there were panels explaining that it had been made according to an authentic technique.

In order to demonstrate the weight of this term, “authentic”, Susan Dion quotes Thomas King, a well established novelist of Cherokee and Greek descent:

In the end, there is no reason for the Indian to be real. The Indian simply has to exist in our imaginations. But for those of us who are Indian, this disjunction between reality and imagination is akin to life and death. For to be seen as "real", for people to "imagine" us as Indians, we must be "authentic". (King, 2003, p. 54) (2007, p. 329)

Indeed, Valérie’s use of the term evokes the notion of Indigenous people who, as she imagines
them, may be more real than others. The fact that she had little information about the kayak, 
other than the fact that it was “authentically produced” gave her somewhat free-range to imagine 
what that meant.

Taken together, the timelines and photographs shown here represented a conglomerate of 
references to food, fashion, and camp fires, or as Cree and Métis scholar, Verna St-Denis (2011) 
explains drawing on Fleras and Elliot, “’cultural others’ [whose participation in social life is] 
limited to the decorative and includes ‘leisure, entertainment, food, and song and dance’.”(St- 
Denis, 2011, p. 308). The images convey a relationship with an “imaginary Indian” who, like 
the Indigenous people that participants’ remember learning about in school, is frozen: frozen on 
a screen, in a book, in a song, in a past conveyed by Europeans, etc. The folklorization of 
Indigenous Peoples’ that these images represent demonstrates the need for narratives that teach Québécois “about Aboriginal culture and history[, which] go beyond cultural artifacts” (St- 
Denis, 2011, p. 314).

5.3 (Beginning) To Interrupt the Trope of the Far-Off “Indian”

    Eugène, a history student, drew a timeline that differed slightly from his peers’:
Figure 14. Eugène’s timeline. Eugène represents his encounters in chronological fashion; he represents popular culture, a visit to Mont-Royal, secondary history lessons, a visit to a museum, and a conversation with his mother.

In Figure 14, we see that Eugène drew events in his life that occurred between 1995 and 2012. Through the drawings on the left hand side, we continue to witness how symbolically weighty popular tropes of the “Indian” are as they are reflected in participants’ memories. Eugène represents 1995, when he was in Switzerland. While living in Europe, Eugène’s only knowledge of Indigenous people was gleaned from comic books and movies (we can see Peter Pan, Pocahontas, Tintin, Asterix et Obelix). Then, in the top right hand corner, Eugène represented the moment in which he recalled learning about actual Indigenous people for the first time:

…ça m’a fait à un vieux souvenir que lorsque j’étais petit, on est allé sur le […] Mont-Royal qu’on voyait la vue (j’m’rappelle plus le nom), mais à l’intérieur y’avait une maison avec plein de fresques. Y’avait une chose qui m’avait beaucoup plus marqué, c’était Jacques Cartier qui rencontrait les Indiens. Ça m’a marqué et je disais, « Mais c’est pas c’qu’ils étaient dans l’album de Tintin » et j’m’en souviens j’ai posé une question à ma mère qui était là, en disant « J’comprends pas? » et elle m’a jamais répondu. Et c’est sûr que la première fois que j’ai entendu parler des Amérindiens. (Eugène (H), group interview, p. 36)

[… this is an old memory from when I was little—we went to the […] Mount Royal where there is the view (I can’t
remember the name), but inside, there was a little house with all these frescos. Something there really left a mark in me, it was Jacques Cartier encountering the Indians. It left a mark on me, and I said, “But that’s not who they were in my Tintin book”, and I remember asking my mother who was there, saying “I don’t understand?”, and she never answered. That is definitely the first time I heard about Amerindians.

Upon seeing an art work that portrayed the historic encounter in what became “New France”, Eugène realized that Indigenous people were not fictitious. They were not merely a figment of the colonial imagination and indeed were legitimate actors in the context of Québec and Canada. The student in history then went on to draw a portrait of himself in 2006 during secondary 4 (grade 10). Again, in 2006, Eugène drew a visit to a museum in the Côte-Nord region (a dozen hours drive away from Montréal) where he became familiar with an Indigenous community who, in his words, “is struggling for the recognition of their rights”. This image is an important one. Eugène’s drawing of a museum visit was one of few by participants that depicted an encounter with a living Indigenous person, and an acknowledgement of political agency. When we spoke about his visit to the museum in the Côte-Nord region during our one on one interview, Eugène described his surprise at seeing Indigenous people who were not unlike himself:

Et dans mon imaginaire, j’imaginais les Amérindiens comme vraiment comme Pocahontas avec le film et tout ça. Et quand je les vois, et surtout que on était dans le nord, y’avait beaucoup de moustiques... alors moi j’étais habillé à peu près comme ça, long. Eux, ils étaient en t-shirts, certains avaient des lunettes, certains avaient des cellulaires, certains avaient des jeans. Vraiment, c’était […] … des fois ça me surprend qu’est-ce que j’ai pensé d’eux et qu’est-ce que j’ai vu. (Eugène (H), p. 17)

[In my imagination, I imagined Amerindians like in the Pocahontas movie and all that. And when I see them, especially since we were up north, there were a lot of mosquitoes, so I was dressed about like this, long clothes. They were dressed in t-shirts, some had glasses, some had cell phones, some were wearing jeans. Really it was […] … sometimes I am surprised by what I used to think of them, and what I saw.]

During our conversation, and through the timeline exercise, Eugène recalled the cognitive dissonance he experienced when he came face to face with actual living Indigenous people who contradicted the colonial representations he had internalized. Again, the fact that Eugène felt confused by these Indigenous people’s modern dress speaks back to the previous section in which participants claim to be familiar with a representation that freezes Indigenous people in the past. Though it is significant that Eugène’s encounter in the Côte-Nord challenged his
imagination, I want to focus here on the fact that it conspicuously took place outside of Montréal. Fieldnotes I kept while working with history students indicate a similar understanding on the part of Eugène’s peers. During the group discussion held after the timeline activity, a number of students in his class explicitly stated that the reason they did not know much was because Indigenous Peoples “do not live in Montreal”. The idea of Indigenous people thriving in a Québec urban environment fell “outside of the hegemony of meaning of dominant discourse—unthinkable because it is unreachable through [the dominant] discourse’s problematic, language, imagery, and culture of evocation and figuration.” (Létourneau, 1989, p. 91) In general, Indigenous Peoples and settlers’ relationship with them seemed to fall outside of participants’ thinkable space.

It is important to note that it did not appear as though participants or their peers\textsuperscript{60} were uninterested in the politics of Indigeneity. Rather, they spoke to their everyday experiences of space; these are decisive in the construction of their own (lack of) understanding. Bearing in mind this piece of the story I seek to tell, we begin to uncover a particularity of the Québécois context. Demographic distribution in no way justifies the problematic relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in Montréal, or Québec. However, it assists us in contextualizing and comparing Canadian urban centers. Table 1 uses Canada’s 2011 National Household Survey data (Statistique Canada, 2013) to show the distribution of Aboriginal People in some major Canadian cities:

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{60} As explained in chapter 2, in accordance with the course’s professor, participants’ classmates were invited to take part in the timeline creation activity, which took place during class time.}
Table 1
Aboriginal population in some major Canadian cities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Urban population</th>
<th>Aboriginal identity</th>
<th>% Aboriginal identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Halifax</td>
<td>384 540</td>
<td>9 655</td>
<td>2.511%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montréal</td>
<td>3 752 475</td>
<td>26 285</td>
<td>0.700%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>5 521 235</td>
<td>36 990</td>
<td>0.670%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winnipeg</td>
<td>714 640</td>
<td>78 415</td>
<td>10.973%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calgary</td>
<td>1 199 125</td>
<td>33 375</td>
<td>2.783%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>2 280 700</td>
<td>52 375</td>
<td>2.296%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This data reveals that 0.700% (26 285 people) of Montréal’s population identifies as Aboriginal (Statistique Canada, 2013). The proportion is higher in Halifax (2.511%), Calgary (2.783%), and Vancouver (2.296%), and significantly higher in Winnipeg (10.973%). Of these major cities, only in Toronto is the proportion of Aboriginal identified people lower (0.670%) than in Montréal. The combination of timelines, photographs, and oral accounts that participants shared reveal both the symbolic and lived effects of Montréal’s particular urban reality in which, in many instances, Indigenous and non-Indigenous people might rarely be in the same physical space. This leads me to ask many questions of the city I call home, one of which is how welcoming it is of Indigeneity, and how this relates to wider questions of belonging and legitimacy in the Québec nation. While Indigenous people across the country continue to negotiate the politics of their evolving urban identities (Lawrence, 2004), some participants in my study actually denied Indigenous Peoples’ existence in Montréal altogether. We must be careful in assuming that individuals on their own prefer this situation. Rather, we must look to

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61 It is important to note that this data only accounts for Registered or Treaty Indian status individuals. It is certain that these numbers would be higher if they also included non-treaty or non-status Indian identified individuals.
the systemic and institutional realities that perpetuate ignorance. Indeed, how is it that, as privileged university students, participants do not appear to have been taught otherwise?

Faced with the realization of their limited knowledge and understanding, some participants, such as Victor, expressed bewilderment.

Ouais mais, dès le début là, dès le premier exercice, j’en revenais pas à quel point on était confronté à quelque chose. J’avoue, on se pose pas la question. J’me pose jamais cette question-là. Les Autochtones c’est du passé ou c’est des choses qui nous concernent pas dans les régions avec lesquelles on n’a pas affaire. (Victor (H), p. 2)

[Yeah but right from the start, from the first activity, I couldn’t get over the how much we were coming up against something. I admit, we don’t ask ourselves the question. I never ask myself that question. Indigenous people, that’s the past or those are things that have nothing to do with us or the areas with which we deal.]

In this excerpt, Victor reflected critically upon his own assumptions in order to clarify that the hidden or erased dimensions of Indigenous histories are problematic. He acknowledged explicitly the challenge that being made to reflect on Indigenous Peoples represented for him.

Indeed, in asking students to participate in my study, I had invited them to think—in front of another French Canadian Québécoise—about questions that have revealed themselves to be incredibly complex, to which there are no simple answers or, when there are, they are acts of colonial repetition. Other participants agreed that the photography exercise had been difficult:

… je savais pas trop c’que tu voulais! J’savais pas si tu cherchais quelque chose de contemporain, d’aujourd’hui…? […] Ben, au niveau historique, c’est plus facile. Mais comme j’té disais, au niveau contemporain, moi j’savais pas qu’il y avait un centre des personnes Autochtones [le centre d’amitié autochtone de Montréal]. J’suis jamais passée devant, ça me disait rien, faque tse c’est sûr, comme t’as vu, mes photos c’est plus historique. (Camille (H), p. 1)

[… I didn’t know what you wanted! I didn’t know if you wanted something contemporary, from today…? Well, at the historical level, it’s easier. But like I said, at the contemporary level, I didn’t even know that there was a center for Indigenous people [the Montreal Native Friendship Center]. I had never been in front of it, it didn’t ring a bell, so you know, as you saw, my pictures were definitely more historic.]

J’ai trouvé ça difficile un peu de trouver des traces. Pis y’a vraiment fallu que je m’arrête, pis ça m’a fait réaliser des choses sur lesquelles j’m’étais jamais arrêté auparavant. (Alain (TE), p. 1)

[I thought that finding traces was hard. And I really had to stop, and it caused me to realize some things that I had never thought to consider.]

The surprise with which students greeted the second visual activity I presented raises questions about how Québec’s narrative around being a “fragile majority” (McAndrew, 2010) undermines
other (perhaps worse) experiences of minoritization in the province, and ultimately prohibits Québécoises and Québécois from building alliances where they might be useful. As one of many examples of the need for these partnerships, the guest speaker at McGill University’s 2012 Aboriginal Awareness Week, Ellen Gabriel of the Kanien’kehá:ka Nation and Turtle Clan maintained, “We need to help you survive climate change.” In other words, Québébois, and presumably Canadian in general, require Indigenous Peoples’ assistance in order to overcome the growing consequences of poor ecological choices. Participants speculated as to why the information they had encountered at school was so limited and sparse. Though they began by invoking guilt, students in history and in teacher education then proceeded to complicate their answers:

Ouais, j’sais même pas si c’est… si c’est juste qu’on a honte [d’avoir volé des terres] (Victor hoche la tête) ou qu’on veut juste les écarter de l’histoire. C’est même pas qu’on a des remords sur ce qui est arrivé. C’est juste qu’il faut pas les inclure dans l’histoire parce que ça a déchiré un peu la perspective de l’histoire nationale des Canadiens Français tsé? « Ah oui, on est un peuple opprimé. Mais on veut pas dire qu’on a opprimé d’autre monde! » Faut complètement l’oublier ça, juste pas l’inclure. J’ai un petit peu l’idée que c’est ça aussi. Même pas un sentiment de honte, le fait de pas en parler, ben ils vont être oubliés. Comme ça notre histoire nationale va être... J’pense pas que c’est comme un plan machiavélique que tout le monde a en tête là, que tout le monde veut faire ça. C’est juste que c’est inculqué. On n’en parle pas faque toi quand tu deviens enseignant, ben t’en parles pas plus parce qu’on t’en n’a pas parlé à l’école. Pis ça fait qu’ils sont marginalisés automatiquement. (Valérie (H), group interview, p. 39)

[Yeah I don’t even know if it’s... if it’s that we’re ashamed [of having stolen land] (Victor nods) or if we want to move them out of history. It’s not even that we feel remorseful about what happened. It’s just that we cannot include them in history because that would tear apart the French Canadian national historical perspective, you know? “Ah yes, we’re an oppressed people. But we can’t say that we oppressed other people!” We have to totally forget that, just not include it. I’m thinking that might also be it. Not even a feeling of guilt, just that not talking about it, well they’ll be forgotten. That way, our national history will be... I don’t think it’s this diabolical plan that everyone has in mind, that everyone wants to do this. It’s just that it’s inculcated. We don’t talk about it, so when you become a teacher, well you don’t talk about it because no one talked about it when you were in school. So that causes them to be automatically marginalized.]

In this powerful passage, Valérie’s reference to what I have repeatedly identified as the thinkable space (Létourneau 1989) of Québec, shows that such a limited historical narrative might leave little room for developing what Simon and Eppert (1997) call a “commemorative ethics”, which

62 Indeed it is cogent given the findings in this study that such a week exists at McGill University. If something analogous takes place at the Université de Montréal, participants did not mention it at all during the course of this research.
admit those that one does not know into their “moral community” (p. 177, 187). Valérie found that as a result of this narrative, bound in a particular understanding of history, Indigenous people continue to be marginalized. In the teacher education group, Chantal wondered how coming to know the truths that she believed were long hidden from her might help Québécois be better people:

Chantal: […] it’s not necessarily just guilt. It’s that we want to uphold a history of resistance, a history of good people, having done good things, who always worked hard for what they achieved, who always worked towards a better society, bla, bla, bla. We often hide… the horrible treatment, exactly like the residential school stories, or even before that, the first treaties, the 1876 law, which deemed that Indians were not… well not human in fact, they were considered…

Francis:… they were minors. […]

Francis and Chantal: The Indian Act.

Chantal’s claim that these things had been concealed from her equally reveals the ways in which historical narratives, and political discourse in Québec may operate in part to keep Indigenous Peoples outside of the “thinkable space”. Indeed, it is telling that Chantal did not wonder how a better “commemorative ethics” (Simon and Eppert, 1997) might have a positive impact on Indigenous people.

Ultimately, it was clear throughout the study, and as I explained in the previous chapter, that participants were able to discuss the matters of immigrants’ belonging and identity; these are issues that participants had obviously considered before. In contrast, in what might be the result
of very little contact with Indigenous people alive today, the students that I worked with had for the most part given thought to neither their relationships with, and understanding of, contemporary Indigenous Peoples, or their histories, and current realities. As I have tried to demonstrate in this chapter, when participants of both groups were asked to think with me on these matters, they were able to identify to varying degrees consigning Indigenous Peoples as existing only in the past, as well as the pervasiveness of stereotypes relating to them, as problematic. Of course, I cannot take all the credit for having caused these disruptions in some of the narratives that participants’ had perhaps previously ascribed to.\textsuperscript{63} Nevertheless, it appeared as though my study might have helped participants to begin to see the ways in which history repeats itself by trapping particular groups in time. For instance, Victor shared with me the realization that he came to in attempting to undertake the photography exercise:

Tsé pour vrai, j’ai honte de ça là. J’ai l’impression que c’que j’aurais pu apporter comme photo, ça aurait pu être une photographie de personne, mais j’avoue j’pense que j’aurais regardé au niveau des itinérants. Parce que ben, les rues... y’en a souvent. C’est un peu remarquable ici là, facile à remarquer. Non... Tsé, en même temps, j’ai l’impression, j’suis tellement stéréotypé, j’cherchais... J’cherche un totem, quelque chose comme ça! J’connais pas d’autres choses. (Victor (H), p. 2)

[I mean really, I feel ashamed. I feel like the only photo that I could have contributed would have been of a person [which was prohibited in the context of this exercise], but I’ll admit that I would have looked to homeless people. Because well, in the streets there are a lot. It is kind of noticeable here and there, easy to notice. No... But at the same time, I feel like I hold so many stereotypes, I was looking for… I was looking for a totem pole or something like that! I don’t know anything else.]

In order to avoid taking pictures that he knew would be problematic, Victor ultimately chose not to take any photographs at all. In terms of methodology, this was what I had hoped would happen. The photography exercise gave Victor some control and agency in relation to the research process, and ultimately allowed him to access knowledge that he likely had previously

\textsuperscript{63} Relatively “much” was brewing in the sense of visibility for Indigenous Peoples across Canada during the fall of 2012 when my research took place. For instance, the Mohawk woman, Kateri Tekakwitha was canonized, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was gaining increasing coverage from the media. In participants’ lives, the teacher education students received as a guest speaker on a panel about teaching in unique environments, a Québécois teacher having worked on a reservation. Furthermore, the student in history, Valérie, who was taking a course on Québécois film, had just covered “Indigenous cinema” (though she claimed that the class had focused more on form than on content).
been unaware of (Rose, 2001). The education student Chantal came to similar conclusions. Most of what she could identify as an Indigenous trace would convey a stereotype. To remedy the issue, Chantal took a picture of a necklace beaded for her by a friend (Figure 14).

Figure 15. Chantal photographs a beaded necklace. With this photography, Chantal hoped to transcend problematic stereotypical imagery by conveying her awareness of the significance of beading within some Indigenous cultures.

Though the necklace admittedly had no direct relation with any Indigenous person or group, Chantal knew that beadwork is important for some of them. She explained that in sharing this photograph, she was purposely trying to convey something about Indigenous people that would go beyond what can be gathered from stereotypes.

Chantal: … À part les clichés j’veux dire, de vêtements et de... de modèles, tsé de modes de transport ou de... […] C’est peut-être pour ça aussi que j’ai autant hésité parce que... c’est un peu, j’voulais pas nécessairement prendre juste des clichés. Faque je voulais aller peut-être un peu plus loin. C’est pour ça que le collier ça me tentait, ça me semblait pas si mauvais parce que je l’associe comme pas juste « artisanat primaire », mais plus comme à leurs méthodes de fonctionnement pis tout ça. Donc j’pense que c’est pour ça là.

Alana: Pis pourquoi tu voulais pas aller avec les clichés, tout ça?
Chantal: Ben parce que... je sais pas. Pour moi ça représente pas, oui... Dans le sens que oui, c’est vrai. Y’a certaines choses qu’y s’y attachent pour vrai, mais c’est des traces peut-être vraiment plus passées pis peut-être plus un modèle dans lequel on essaie de les enfermer, on dirait? ((TE), p. 2-3)

[Chantal: … Other than clichés, I mean, clothing and models or means of transportation… […] Maybe that’s why I hesitated so much because… it’s a little, I didn’t necessarily want to just take clichés. Like, I wanted to go beyond that. That’s why I liked the necklace, it didn’t seem like a bad choice because it doesn’t just convey artisanry, it’s also about ways of functioning and all that. So I think that’s why.

Alana: And why didn’t you want to go with clichés, all that?
Chantal: Well because… I don’t know. For me they don’t represent, yes… In some ways yes, it’s true. There are certain things that are connected for real, but maybe these are really traces from the past, and it seems that maybe
that’s a model that we try to trap them in?]  

In some ways, Marie in history, as well as Peter and Francis in education, also challenged the portrayals of Indigenous people that arose from their peers’ photographs and timelines, as assigned to the past or geographically disconnected from the reality of being Québécois. Through their photographs, Marie and Francis identified contemporary traces of Indigenous Peoples’ presence in Montréal and the surrounding areas.

Figure 16. Marie photographs a billboard outside the Berri-Uqâm métro station. This photograph shows a promotional billboard for the upcoming release of Inuit singer Elisapie Isaac’s album, Travelling Love.

Figure 17. Francis photographs promotional billboards near Kahnawà:ke. This photographs shows billboards that advertise for businesses in Kahnawà:ke.

Marie photographed a billboard just outside Montréal’s central métro station, Berri-Uqâm, promoting the upcoming (at the time) release of Elisapie Isaac’s album entitled Travelling Love (Figure 15).64 Francis’ photograph equally presented billboards, but these were advertisements for various businesses (such as a motorcycle dealership) in Kahnawà:ke (Figure 16). To be sure, in some ways, these pictures also convey a limited portrayal of Indigenous Peoples. For instance,

64 Elisapie Isaac is an Inuit singer from Nunavik, Québec who sings in French, English, and Inuktitut.
the Elisapie Isaac billboard might be criticized for portraying an Indigenous woman in a
sexualized light, and the imagery on the billboards in Francis’ picture use stereotypical referents
such as feathers and arrows. However, with each of these photographs, Marie and Francis, unlike
most of their peers, demonstrated awareness of Indigenous people today who are in some way
active (in these cases, artistically, and economically). As for Peter, he was the only participant in
education to suggest that in the future, he might invite an Indigenous person to his classroom to
avoid the reproduction of problematic representations.

Alana : Puisque tu identifies les problèmes dans les matériaux scolaire, dans le contenu du programme, où est-ce que
tu vas trouver l’information pour leur expliquer [à tes élèves] ce qui est arrivé?
Peter : Dans des recherches comme la tienne? (rires) Non, pour vrai, j’ai pas... Comme le professeur qu’on a reçu
comme invité, qui se souciait peu du programme, j’ai pas une très grande foi dans le programme. J’veux bien
appliquer... j’sais qu’il y a du bon pis j’veux utiliser ce qu’il y a de bon dans ce programme-là [mais], c’est sûr que
c’est pas dans celui-ci que je vais piger mes informations […] Donc ça va être par des recherches personnelles, pis
surtout ça je dirais.
Alana : Ok... Des recherches, genre sur internet?
Peter : Sur internet ou par des contacts. J’sais que... j’connais beaucoup de personnes qui ont des liens avec des
Autochtones en région. (Peter (TE), p. 13)

[Alana : Since you are able to identify the problems within school materials and curriculum, how will you find the
information to explain to them [your students] what happened?
Peter : In studies like yours? (laughs) No, really, I don’t have… Like, the guest teacher who came to speak to us,
who did not really care about curriculum, I don’t have much faith in curriculum. I would like to apply… I know
there is some good, and I want to use what is good in the curriculum, [though] it is certain that this is not where I
will get my information […] So it will be through personal research, mostly that I would say.
Alana: Okay… personal research, like on the internet?
Peter: On the internet, or through connections. I know that… I know a lot of people who have connections with
Indigenous people outside of the city.]

While most participants intended to seek out reliable documentation to transcend the problematic
representations within government approved curriculum, Peter’s claim showed variation and a
critical perspective. He was almost alone in acknowledging that it might be possible for him to
develop a relationship with an Indigenous person, from whom he and his students could learn
about the past and present.

For the most part, participants were aware that the visual material they were sharing was
problematic, and for some, what the exercise had revealed came as somewhat of a surprise.
Ultimately, these exercises conveyed how participants’ experiences have kept them
metaphorically and literally separated from Indigenous Peoples, both spatially and temporally.

Dwayne Donald (2012) discusses these separations: “The overriding assumption at work […] is that Aboriginal peoples and Canadians inhabit separate realities. The intention is to deny relationality.” (p.3) Indeed, when asked what their relationship is with Indigenous Peoples, many claim not to have one.

Alana: Ok. […] Quelle est ta relation avec ce qui est autochtone ou les Autochtones aujourd’hui?
Camille: Inexistant! (Camille (H), p. 16)

[A : Okay. […] What is your relationship with that which is Indigenous, or Indigenous Peoples today?
Camille: Non existent!]

During a friend’s master’s thesis defense, faculty member at UBC’ Department of education, Shauna Butterwick explained from what she had learned from an Indigenous guest speaker in her class, there are many ways in which settlers are related to Indigenous Peoples. To illustrate this point, the speaker had shut the lights in the room; electricity, which is generated thanks to resources on Indigenous territory, is indeed one of the many ways in which settlers and Indigenous people are related. However, the participant Camille, and others framed themselves as “perfect strangers” (Dion, 2007)—disconnected and mostly ignorant—to Indigenous Peoples’ ongoing social, cultural, political existence. As Susan Dion (2007) argues, Canadians’ understanding of Indigenous people, history and culture stems from dominant discourses. “Until teachers have an opportunity to investigate and transform their understanding of Aboriginal people in Canada dominant discourses will continue to be reproduced maintaining the ‘imaginary Indian’ as ‘the Indian’ Canadians have in mind.” (p. 330)

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that participants’ encounters with Indigenous Peoples or Indigeneity have mainly caused students to consider them as either vanished in time, or distant in
space, and has lead to ignorance around current matters associated with Indigenous Peoples’ knowledges and cultures. Indeed, it is evident in considering the data here that participants have encountered very little that contradicts dominant discourse surrounding Indigenous identities. In school, participants mainly remember having discussed a list of some Indigenous Peoples’ attributes at the time of contact. In failing to cover the last three hundred years of Indigenous Peoples’ history, it seems that mainstream curriculum has been unsuccessful in conveying, at least to participants in this study, a narrative that brings Indigenous Peoples into the twenty-first century. Participants in teacher education are unique in their, at times uncritical, expression of gratitude towards the Indigenous Peoples who ensured their colonizer ancestors’ survival in North America. This tale of collaboration, a truth-myth as Donald (2012) would characterize it, conveniently erases the violence of colonization, and upholds a peaceful version of history in which French colonizers and Indigenous people were solely allies. The visual materials that participants shared reveal that students had rarely, if ever, interacted with live Indigenous people. Instead, they had mainly come into contact with Indigeneity through popular culture, diet, and outdoor activities. Rather than conveying a counter-narrative about Indigenous Peoples’ history and place in Québec, these brushes with “Indigeneity” (if indeed we can call them such) reinforced participants’ understanding of Indigenous people as far away, or not in Montréal. Though it is impossible to say that this entirely distinguishes Québec from other Canadian provinces, we begin to witness that what seemed to be limited opportunities for encountering Indigenous people in the province’s metropolis might have had a weighty impact on participants’ knowledge and understanding. At the same time, this elicits questions that participants began to ask around how Québécois narratives about theirs and others’ histories may undercut the possibility for developing a politics of collaboration with Indigenous people. Participants used
the research activities to question these dominant myths. Others still found traces of the existence of economically and artistically active Indigenous people in and around Montréal. For the most part though, this chapter has attempted to reveal the necessity of deconstructing and reconstructing how ideas about the self, and Indigenous “others” are conveyed in Québec through systemic and institutional realties. Indeed, while the previous chapter demonstrated that to some extent, participants had already given thought to their interaction with so-called immigrants, this chapter attempts to show how little participants had ever really considered relationships with Indigenous Peoples, who appeared mainly to fall outside of the space of their thinkable (Létourneau, 1989). As a result, these students have been able to continue to imagine themselves as “perfect strangers” (Dion, 2007) to Indigenous Peoples. Though participants displayed what might be called a hopeful open-mindedness as they began to visualize the borders around their understanding, it is difficult to say whether they connected this in any way to either the privilege that arises out of such limited knowledge, or how they have benefited from it.
Chapter 6

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have strived to make the familiar move from studying the power of culture to studying the cultures of power (Marker, 2003). Most who have attempted this in the past are acutely aware of how difficult such a task is and what it means to attempt transgressive politics through the work of scholarship. I like to imagine I have managed both these things in part but of course, like other qualitative researchers, I recognize that entering a field of any kind that is new and in some ways unfamiliar creates challenges and tensions. I will confront some of these, as well as attempt a summary of what I have gleaned from this work and what I believe I can offer to interested readers.

In some countries, two or more groups may sometimes possess relatively equal power to have an impact upon the state and impose their definitions of the nation, as is the case with Flemish speakers and French speakers in Belgium. In other instances, such as in Québec or Catalonia, clearly identifiable majorities are nonetheless minorities at a larger nation-state level, which creates a situation of ambiguous ethnic dominance. McAndrew (2010) has coined the term “fragile majority” to describe each of these groups. In this sense, I considered Francophone Québécois not as a minority in North America, which they (we) are, but as a majority in Québec. In spite of their (our) status as a minority on a large (cultural, geographic, economic, etc.) scale, they (we) represent the dominant ethnic majority within the Québécois context. My aim was to shed light on the power that arises out of this position, bearing in mind the fragility inherent to this groups' ongoing existence, to understand its impact on views and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples in the province.
6.1 Revisiting Method: The Challenge of Decolonizing Work

The methodologies with which I engaged through this work arose out of my supervisor’s and my desire to make this project both an interesting creative endeavour, as well as a pursuit in rigorous qualitative analysis. I began the study with the intention of exploring the possibility of incorporating decolonizing methods into research with members of the majority population. In order to gain some understanding of what might be social change in the context of my work (McLeod and Thomson, 2009) in Québec, I applied a multi-level methodology by combining historical contextualization and traditional ethnographic methods, such as the focus group and individual interview (Clifford, 1988; Geertz, 1973), with image making activities (Rose, 2001; Pink 2001) like the personal timelines and photography exercises. This helped me to incorporate, in my own way, some of the decolonizing strategies presented by Maori scholar, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) and Plains Cree and Saulteaux scholar Margaret Kovach (2009). Most importantly, these methods gave participants a variety of means for telling diverse stories about themselves and others. The merging of these methods equally arose out of a desire to practice in my own life the principles gleaned from my time spent on traditional and unceded xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) territory listening and learning about Indigenous ways in education. As a settler growing increasingly knowledgeable about the historically structured (Williams, 1977) dynamics of power and privilege, this felt as though it would allow me to undertake my research in a good way. My work has incited interesting questions in terms of the ethical challenges one might be presented with when attempting to employ decolonizing strategies with “dominant” groups. For instance, what to do when participants are able to identify (in rereading transcripts of their own interviews for example) the problematic nature of their own discourse, and ask the researcher not to include it in their analysis? At the core of this question is the matter of to whom researchers are accountable in the context of research that seeks to understand settler subjectivities. This is a
question that I have yet to provide a satisfying answer to. Furthermore, I continue to wonder about the lack of input in my project from community members Indigenous to the land where my study took place. On the one hand, as a self-identified settler researching French Canadian Québécois, I felt uncomfortable potentially distracting Indigenous people who do not have the responsibility of assisting me or any other settler in understanding our own histories of imposing colonization (Regan, 2010). While I sought council from my committee member, Arapaho scholar Michael Marker, and other Indigenous professors who read and commented excerpts of my work, I am still unsure whether or not this was an appropriate logic.

It became evident that the project of “decolonizing” my research would be a near-impossible endeavour in the context of a master’s level, three-month project with a small number of individuals whom I only encountered briefly, or even with long time friendships who were participants of the pilot study. Readers who are familiar with Indigenous ways might smile, given the value that is inherent to much of what I have learned from them, which is the need for time. In actuality, the decolonizing principles presented at the beginning of this thesis (analyzing power, developing relationships and accountability, and the incorporating Indigenous perspectives) were broached mainly theoretically in the context of my work. As such, they would need to be explored further on the ground. I believe that decolonizing research can begin to take place at the level of “dominant” populations through work that is collaborative, and between participants and researchers who have developed a relationship over a period of time longer than the three months that were available to me. This connection between researcher and participants resists older notions of objectivity in research. However, unlearning habits does indeed take much longer than a single term. In spite of my intentions to give participants a sense of ownership over their work (indeed some used the image making activities as a way of exercising
their agency as participants), I mostly remained the leader of conversations, interpretations, analysis, and presentation of findings. Though I continued to verify the work with participants throughout the project via e-mail, I am unsure that this virtual process was sufficient. Perhaps this thesis represents a particular starting point for decolonizing work with members of a majority population. A way of beginning to know this would be to return to the participant groups to reassess and re-evaluate their thinking on the matters of the thesis at a later date, that is, as a form of longitudinal study.

6.2 Summary of Findings and Theoretical Analyses

I set out to do a comparative study of undergraduate students in history and teacher education to better grasp the ways in which they would narrate their knowledge of, and encounters with, Indigenous communities and associated issues. Interestingly, the data that I have collected implies that little distinguishes these students from one another in terms of their overall thoughts and attitudes with regard to themselves as Québécois, so-called immigrants to Québec, and Indigenous Peoples of the province. This work has contributed in rendering visible the contradicting claims that all settlers hold, which continue to exist because of, and are enabled by, the “colonial cultures” (Harris, 2004), or “occidocentric” (Wolfe, 1999, p. 1) epistemic perspectives, which somewhat inevitably structure our mindsets. These are junctures of dissonance that are often at odds with other groups’ struggles, and inhibit us from building useful solidarities (Smith, 1999). I have argued that French Canadian Québécois’ history of colonization is deeply layered and complex. As descendants of both colonizers and colonized people, participants in my study simultaneously express what might be thought of as a desire to honor their own history, and a recognition of the limits of a single version of what it means to be Québécois, which translated into a desire to recognize others. This desire to acknowledge and
appreciate both immigrants and Indigenous Peoples is nonetheless steeped in the repetition, as theorized by Patrick Hutton (as cited in Gardner, 2010), of colonial narratives that are bound by a narrative of minoritization in Québec, or what Létourneau (1989) has called the “thinkable space”. In chapter 4, I showed how participants in history and in teacher education identify according to a French/English binary, and in some cases have previously ascribed to particular notions of Québec as entirely distinct, politically or otherwise, from the rest of Canada. In other words, participants’ knowledge and perspectives were constrained by the trace of imperial practice. Yet, all the while, Marie, Valérie, Chantal, Francis, and Peter have especially begun to challenge these narratives in ways that blur the boundary between each of the two solitudes and demonstrate how change operates simultaneously with the expression of inherited stories (McLeod and Thomson, 2009), which may no longer entirely correspond with the experiences of young urban Québécois. The change expressed is limited though, as in many ways, it fails to incorporate groups of people who do not identify primarily with extremities of the French/English dichotomy in Québec. Furthermore, I argued that participants appear to have internalized the discourse of interculturalism, Gérard Bouchard’s (2011, 2012) model for the “integration” of so-called immigrants. In interesting and useful ways, interculturalism accounts for the dynamic between a French Canadian majority and other minorities, but deliberately excludes Indigenous Peoples, in Québec. In part, participants recognized the challenge that the presence of non French Canadian Québécois represents to the “pure laine” Québécois identity: participants were keen to define Québécois as anyone living in Québec and seeking to identify as such. However, students also articulated criteria for belonging to Québec that ultimately displayed the ways in which intercultural discourse is part of what Papaschase Cree scholar Dwayne Donald (2012) calls a “pedagogy of the fort.” It requires a unilateral move on the part
of, in this case, racialized immigrant minorities so that they might become more like French Canadian Québécois (more white, as Marie aptly pointed out) thereby reinforcing the latter’s social and economic hegemony. The expectation that new comers learn the French language is representative of larger dimensions of the erasure of Indigenous Peoples’ ongoing presence on the land in Québec, given the majority population’s failure to express a corresponding concern for the well-being of threatened languages of the Indigenous People whose territory they live on. Indeed, interculturalism determines a “host society” on the territory now called Québec. The policy of interculturalism, as Bouchard (2012) describes it, explicitly does not incorporate Indigenous Peoples. As a result, the majority population’s power to decide what is allowable in terms of diversity within its borders (Salée, 2010a), in a display of what Balibar (2009) might call “border anxiety”, is legitimized. Of course, this dismisses Indigenous Peoples’ antecedence on the land, as well as their ongoing land claims and demands for sovereignty. In chapter 5, I primarily discuss the visual materials that participants shared with me in the context of this study, which trace encounters with Indigenous people in their own lives. It is clear that participants have come across very little that interrupts notions of the “imaginary Indian” (Francis, 1992), frozen in time and space, that Canadians have in mind (King, 2007). In effect, participants mainly recall learning a list of pre-contact attributes of the Algonquin and Iroquois from their formal schooling. The student teacher participants specifically recalled and expressed gratitude around a narrative of collaboration between French colonizers and Indigenous people during the early colonization era. This account of the beginning of colonization represents what Donald (2012) calls a truth-myth, a simplified and idealized version of history used to cement a particular notion of identity. In the case of Québec, I tried to show, like Cornellier (2010), that such narratives legitimize and reinforce Québécois right to exist on the land. Of particular note is
the fact that not a single participant remembered having learned about the Indian Residential School System throughout their primary or secondary school education. These narrow versions of historical snapshots erase the violence of colonization and fail to convey the strategic and systematic oppression of Indigenous Peoples into the twenty-first century. The images that participants shared represented encounters with folklorized versions of Indigenous people through food (corn), elements of fashion (feathers), seasonal leisure activities (canoeing, kayaking), and popular culture references (Pocahontas, Tintin). These images most likely do not articulate cut and dry boundaries around what participants know, however these representations were the most prevalent in terms of their exposure to Indigenous histories and knowledges over time. Crucially, hardly any of the participants recalled having met an Indigenous person, and when they did, for the most part, these encounters happened outside of the city. This caused me to question how the demographic context in Montréal has shaped participants’ (lack of) knowledge, and points to ways of thinking of Québec as perhaps distinct in some respects. Some students tried to use the photography exercise to convey their awareness and to acknowledge that the histories with which they were familiar were problematic. Others still were able to identify traces of living (not fictitious) Indigenous Peoples thriving in urban areas. Peter even suggested that as a teacher seeking to transcend the problematic curriculum, he might be able to develop a relationship with Indigenous people who could help him and his students learn more about the histories of Indigenous Peoples in Québec. It appeared, however, that the idea of co-existing in common spaces with Indigenous people fell mainly outside of the bounds of these urban Québécois participants’ thinkable space (Létourneau, 1989). As Lenape/Potawatami scholar, Susan Dion (2007) argues, until Canadians are made to face narratives that disrupt dominant discourse, they will continue to hold up images of the “Indian” they already have in mind, deny
relationality, and imagine themselves as “perfect strangers” to Indigenous Peoples. In Québec, the challenge is an important one given the majority population’s experience of minoritization on the scale of North America, which has given way to narratives that have the potential to undermine other experiences of oppression in the province. Alan Gordon (2012) summarizes one of Létourneau's main concerns from his most recent book: the dilemma for individuals who identify as members of the “dominant” population (French Canadian Québécois) is of "how to reconcile its past to newer versions of an inclusive, post-nationalist identity in which old tropes of Quebecois identity" (p. 519) are challenged and expanded upon. This predicament is palpable as participants, before my researcher eyes, struggle to acknowledge their own history of (admittedly relative) injustice, and move forward with a more “open minded” and “global” perspective of themselves and their relationship with other Québécois. Clearly, this tension demonstrates precisely the strains that arise out of a politics of identification in a globalizing social world (McLeod and Thomson, 2009).

6.3 Limitations

The small sample size (eleven participants, and six pilot participants) limits the scope of this study, and the analysis that it engenders. Although the study was composed of nearly an equal number of men and women (five men, and six women), 65 no gender analysis was conducted. This was also the case for class analysis. Though it appeared that participants were generally from the same middle-class background, this is not information that I asked about. That said, it is undoubtedly the case that gender and class are just a few of the many factors that have

65 Gender was unevenly distributed among participants in the pilot study, which initially counted five women and a single man, and fizzled to just two women for the final exercise.
the potential to influence individual’s relationship with carriers of various identities. Of course though, no single study could entirely do justice to the diversity of participants’ characteristics. Importantly, this study only involved participants who live in and around the city of Montréal. It is likely that a study of people living in rural areas in Québec would have revealed a different pattern of encounters with both so-called immigrants and Indigenous Peoples. From a theoretical perspective, I wish to acknowledge that this work would have benefited from the input of more scholarly, and non-scholarly contributions by Indigenous people from traditional Haudenosaunee territory, where the study took place. It is unlikely that such material is non-existent; I nevertheless found it difficult to locate. Some might find that my work has failed to incorporate critical perspectives on whiteness in Québec. Anoop Nayak (2003) engages critically with the meaning of 'whiteness', untangling its binds by "drawing upon young people's cultural and material histories and situating these in a manner more favorable to the complexity of coming times." (p. 11) Without glossing over or denying the power and privilege that being white affords a person in Québec,66 indeed, to my own surprise, I found during the course of my study that in ways that I had not expected, "White" was a category that was insufficient to account for power in the province. While I do not wish to tokenize the only participant of color in my study, hers was the single experience of being racialized in Québec that I had to draw from for my work. As the daughter of a Haitian immigrant father, and French Canadian Québécoise mother, Katia identified strongly with her Québécois roots, and self-identified as a member of the “dominant” population. In refraining from referring regularly to whiteness, I hope to have cautiously opened the door to conversations about the possibility that some racialized Francophone individuals may in fact identify with and benefit from the same privileges in relation to Indigenous Peoples as do

66 For an interesting look into whiteness in Québec, see master’s thesis by Amélie Waddell (2007), Breaking the shell of whiteness: Naming whiteness in Québec.
white French Canadian Québécois. Lastly, as a researcher writing a master’s degree thesis, I was forced to make decisions about what data to focus on and analyze. As a result, a number of findings were not presented here.\textsuperscript{67} Hopefully, these will be the object of further writing as I move forward.

### 6.4 Contributions

In thinking back to what I feel this work has accomplished, this study brings to the field of educational research a dialogue on the relationship between settlers and Indigenous Peoples, and seeks to showcase a number of contributions. First, a limited amount of scholarship exists in English in the field of education that explores these relationships in the Québec context. Building on the important works of the historian Jocelyn Létourneau, as well as the political scientist Daniel Salée, this study combines a critique of both taken for granted histories in Québec and interculturalism with the hopes of highlighting the ways in which both may have had an impact on the majority population’s understandings of, and knowledge about Indigenous Peoples’ experiences in the province. Also, in attempting to demonstrate the changes or disruptions to colonial narratives that appear to occur in simultaneity with (McLeod and Thomson, 2009) their repetition (Hutton as cited in Gardner, 2010), I have begun to explore how young people in Québec challenge taken for granted notions around identity and belonging in the province. What’s more, this study moves beyond a familiar, yet important, analysis of Indigenous representations in textbooks in Québec, to incorporate an analysis of the perceptions that individual members of the “dominant” population have in relation to Indigenous Peoples. In

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\textsuperscript{67} For instance, I did not discuss the dichotomy that participants appeared to imagine between themselves and rural Québécois. I also did not explore teacher education participants’ insistence on identifying as “open minded”. Furthermore, I did not look into some participants’ perception of Indigenous Peoples’ as unable to reconcile urban realities with their reserve life. These are just a few of the findings that I did not analyze in my thesis.
keeping with research across Canada (Berger and Ross Epp, 2007; Dion, 2007; Marker, 2006; Tupper and Cappello, 2008) that identifies the need for new and innovative ways to train non-Indigenous teachers for discussions around histories that they are uneasy with or plainly not knowledgeable about, my work demonstrates that memory of Indigenous Peoples’ existence on land in Québec is not present in the institutions where it should be. It is an interesting case that in Québec, in spite of the curriculum reform implemented in 2008, little has changed from the way participants and I learned about Indigenous Peoples, in some cases almost a decade ago. After our one on one interview, the education student Peter sent me an e-mail to summarize some of his thoughts. In it, he said:

L'idée que le programme de formation propose une étude de l'histoire autochtone selon un angle subjectif, voire biaisé, ça résume bien mes pensées aussi. C'est un peu le même principe que "La version de l'Histoire qui passe à la postérité est celle des vainqueurs et non des vaincus". L'idée ici n'est pas de comparer les Autochtones à des "vaincus", mais simplement que le programme de formation de l'École québécoise a été créé PAR des "Blancs" POUR des "Blancs", sans égard aux autres. (Peter, personal communications, January 29th, 2013)

[The idea that the curriculum presents a study of Indigenous history according to a subjective, or even biased, angle aptly summarizes my thoughts. It is similar to the principle according to which “The version of history that is left to posterity is the conqueror’s version, not the version of the vanquished “. The idea here is not to call Indigenous people vanquished, rather it is to emphasize that Québec school curriculum is created BY “Whites” FOR “Whites”, without much concern for others.]

Lastly, this thesis makes connections between feelings about the self as French-Canadian Québécois, and perceptions of immigrants and Indigenous Peoples. In so doing, my works sets up a triangular web of relationships (which already exists in works such as Sunera Thobani’s (2007)) that has not been elaborated upon very much in the Québécois context. Thobani’s work sheds light on the ways in which so-called immigrants, or “exalted subjects” are in some ways complicit in oppressing Indigenous Peoples in Canada. In this work, I have attempted to demonstrate that French Canadian Québécois’ thoughts about so-called immigrants actually

68 Ironically given my previous assertions around discussing whiteness in this work, this was in fact one of the few cases in which it arose explicitly, though this is not necessarily an indication of how influential whiteness is or is not in the scheme of my thesis’ work.
reveal, in part, their attitudes towards Indigenous Peoples.

6.5 Proposed Directions

Undoubtedly, this has been a scholarly piece of work with political motivations. Thus, I end with thoughts on praxis. What I am offering are not proscriptions, rather these are suggestions for a sense of purpose, and what might be seen as the aesthetic value of this work. What might ways forward look like?

6.5.1 Imagining further research.

In proposing directions for further research, I cautiously recommend additional inquiry into decolonizing work in “dominant” settings. As I have witnessed by attempting to entertain some of the strategies proposed by Indigenous scholars in a small-scale study, decolonization has the potential to stand as a trope in academic work, which undermines the challenges of its application on the ground. Of course, there is no question as to its value as a theoretical ideal, but as Paulette Regan (2010) reminds us, we cannot just theorize decolonization, we must do it. I argue that this is especially the case for settlers conducting research about themselves. For work that seeks to link history, memory, and the future is ultimately undertaken with the goal of being good allies to Indigenous people. In the Québécois context, research should be conducted in rural areas in order to ascertain how the experience of space impacts the story that I have sought to tell here. This study begins to explore the tension between a concern around the loss of specific Québécois historical narratives, and a desire to both welcome newcomers, and acknowledge the ongoing struggles of Indigenous Peoples. However, more qualitative research would help us to better understand the extent to which these actually coexist, the ways the feelings work together, and how they are expressed through lived experience. Ultimately, further research into what is taught in Québec schools in terms of Indigenous histories and current political struggles would
be critical. While British Columbia has undertaken to conclude Aboriginal Education
Enhancement Agreements in every district, and Saskatchewan has made treaty education a
mandatory part of curriculum across the province, it seems that for the time being, Québec is
lagging behind in these respects.

6.5.2 Thinking politically.
It is doubtless that more written material that assists us in unpacking and understanding
matters relating to colonization, race, sexuality, class, gender, etc. exists in English (perhaps than
in any other language). In recognition of efforts that are already underway, I believe that it is
crucial to continue to develop further vocabulary for discussing these matters in French. To
bring this thesis to life beyond the ivory tower’s walls, I hope to be in touch with activists in
Québec who are interested in pursuing conversations around the matter of belonging and its
relationship to Indigenous Peoples in the province. In effect, this study points to a gaping hole
within the pervasive intercultural discourse. Across Canada, and particularly in Québec, we must
entertain a political dialogue that encompasses relationships between and among settlers and
Indigenous Peoples to the same extent as relationships with so-called immigrant minorities. As
Daniel Salée (2010b) has aptly put it:

Placer les peoples autochtones au coeur de la re-narration de l’histoire nationale
représente un geste essentiel dont on ne doit plus faire l’économie. […] Cette
réécriture doit se faire à deux mains et combiner rigoureusement et sans raccourci
deux visions du passé, aussi contradictoires puissent-elles être, celle de l’Autochtone

69 An excellent example from this work is the lack of a term in French that corresponds exactly to the meaning of the
English word “entitlement”.

121
These conversations must be undertaken bearing in mind that borders between groups, if they maintain a hierarchy, violate our ability not to fall back on ourselves as members of a fragile, but dominant nonetheless, majority. Even Gérard Bouchard would agree that our politics “require […] something more than an egoism which predefines remembrance as that which confirms who one is and what one knows.” (Simon and Epper, 1997, p. 177) Indeed, it is the responsibility of Québécois(es) to both honor and move beyond their (our) own identities and desires to transform their (our) relationship with Indigenous people in flight of a better social justice (Salée, 2010b).

Of course, this is only desirable insofar as Indigenous Peoples want such a conversation to take place. In April 2011, at a guest lecture at Marianopolis College by human rights advocate Ellen Gabriel of the Kanien’kehá:ka Nation and Turtle Clan, I became familiar with the two row wampum belt of 1768. This was an agreement made between the Haudenosaunee people and European colonizers: the belt—beaded white, and traversed by two parallel purple lines—teaches, “What’s ours is ours, what’s yours is yours”, Gabriel explained. The two purple lines are indeed a symbol of the path forged in water by separate canoes, whose trajectories do not cross. This historical agreement tells those of us who are settlers on traditional Haudenosaunee territory how to coexist with Indigenous people on this land. Perhaps ironically, we must think together with the Haudenosaunee people what this means for us all today.

6.6 Final Thoughts

In discussing future avenues for my work with a dear friend, I was made aware that the

70 It is a necessary gesture, and we can no longer avoid placing Indigenous people in the retelling of national history. [...] This rewriting must be undertaken with two hands and rigorously combine, without shortcuts, two visions of the past, contradictory though they may be, the Indigenous version and the Eurodescendant version.
sincerity with which participants expressed a desire to be open-minded and welcoming carries multiple meanings. A bleak analysis of this sentiment might accuse it of inertly serving as a substitute for actual action, or challenge to the status-quo. My friend went on to explain that a more hopeful analysis would acknowledge the colonialism that structures the lives of everyone, disempowering individuals and causing them to feel helpless in the face of the problems that they are able to identify. As I have tried to argue here, these struggles do not belong to singular groups; they affect all of us. Nevertheless, one must recognize hierarchy and privilege as it plays out in these matrices of colonial relations. The data showcased in this study has shown that in the 21st century, after five hundred years of settlement, knowledge of what might constitute a widened notion of democratic life and sense of belonging in many ways remains quite narrow. Though young people tend to imagine themselves as open minded and progressive, my study contributes to the scholarship that claims that their (our) words, their (our) bodies, tend to speak back to the official narratives they (we) have inherited. At times, the narratives change, but on many occasions, they are reinforced. As UQÀM’s Chair of research on ethnicity, immigration, and citizenship, Micheline Labelle (2012), has said, “Il est donc temps de se mettre à l'ouvrage. Peu a été fait, beaucoup reste à faire.”71 These are discourses that we must all engage with, and act upon. If Québécois were to exercise what Simon and Eppert call, their (our) “responsibility to convey accurately a tangible sense of prior events [that have shaped the province] in ways that enable their remembrance and the assessment of their significance” (1997, p. 176), they may find themselves gaining credibility as a unique minority in Canada. In fact, this would give Québec and Indigenous Peoples who live in Québec the opportunity to lead the way for some form of Indigenous sovereignty in Canada.

71 It is therefore time to get to work. Little has been done, and much remains.
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Appendices

Appendix 1

Assessing undergraduate students’ understanding of Indigenous knowledges in history and the present: Interculturalism, identity and the case of Québec in a new transnational order

Dr. Jo-Anne Dillabough and her M.A. student, Alana Boileau (UBC) want to learn more about how senior year undergraduate students in History and Education who identify as Francophone and Québécois think about what the Québec nation, belonging and exclusion, and Indigenous peoples in the province. This study will help us learn more about how Québécois understand the nation’s history, and how this shapes current views and opinions about Indigenous peoples.

What will be expected of participants?
Between September 2012 and December 2012, participants will be asked to partake in two meetings, and two creative activities, for a total of approximately 6.5 hours:

- We will meet once for a group interview with other participants in your field. This encounter will last between 90 minutes and two hours.
- In agreement with your professor, on a single occasion during class time, you will be asked to participate in a visual creation activity.
- Before we meet for the last time, you will be asked to take three photographs in the city of Montréal (you can use your cell phone’s camera). You will have at least a week to take these pictures.
- Lastly, we will meet alone for an interview that will last between an hour and 90 minutes.

The results of this study will be reported in a graduate thesis and may also be published in journal articles and books. To ensure your anonymity, none of the information sensitive to your privacy will be disclosed, and you will be given a pseudonym for all written materials.

What are the benefits of participating?
You may benefit from the opportunity to reflect on your own feelings and knowledge about Québec and its diversity. You might also gain a heightened awareness of how your knowledge of history impacts upon your every-day understandings of Québec and notions of nationhood and citizenship, and how this might influence their practices as future historians, history teachers and active members of your local communities. You will also become familiar with two research exercises (ie., timeline creation, and photo narratives) that you might want to use in your future praxis in the form of pedagogy, social service agency work or historical research.

Accounts of participants’ knowledge and understandings may assist diverse educational communities in better understanding how ‘Québécois’ represent and utilize their knowledge about Indigenous peoples and associated issues in Québec and the Canadian context, as well as how they talk about nationalism, Indigeneity, belonging and legitimacy in Québec.

*** If you decide to take part, you may choose to pull out of the study at any time without giving a reason and without any negative impact on you or your school standing. ***

If you have any questions, or if you are interested in taking part in this research, please contact:

Alana Boileau
Appendix 2

Assessing undergraduate students’ understanding of Indigenous knowledges in history and the present: Interculturalism, identity and the case of Québec in a new transnational order

Traces of Indigeneity in Montréal: a photo narrative

Thank you for your ongoing participation in the study. Before our final encounter, which will consist in an interview, I would like you to complete a second and last visual creation activity.

As you know, Montréal is first and foremost an island that was inhabited by Indigenous peoples, who continue to live and work in the city today. Many of us are unaware of Indigenous peoples’ presence and influence on the place we live though. In upcoming days, I invite you to pay special attention to your surroundings during your habitual wanderings in Montréal. See if you can detect what yourself and others might identify as traces of Indigenous peoples (or Indigeneity) having lived here in the past and continuing to live here in the present... For our next interview, I invite you to take three pictures of these traces. You can use the camera on your cell phone if you’d like. Caution! You can photograph places or objects, but not people.

Please send me your photographs via e-mail at least three days before our scheduled interview so that I may prepare some questions about them ahead of time.

Be creative! Do not worry about being right or wrong. These photographs will serve as a point of departure for conversation during your interview.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you!

Alana Boileau
Appendix 3

PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM

Assessing undergraduate students’ understanding of Indigenous knowledges in history and the present: Interculturalism, identity and the case of Québec in a new transnational order

I. Who is conducting the study?

Principal Investigator: Dr. Jo-Anne Dillabough
Co-investigator: Alana Boileau
Departement of Educational Studies

II. Who is funding the study?

This study is being funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

III. Why should you take part in this study?

- You are being invited to take part in this research study because you have identified yourself as a francophone Québécois student in the final year of an undergraduate degree in either History or Education.
- We want to learn more about how students in these fields who identify as both francophone and Québécois think about the Québec nation, belonging and exclusion, and Indigenous peoples in the province. This study will help us learn more about how Québécois understand the nation’s history, and how that shapes current views and opinions.

IV. What happens if you say, “Yes, I want to be in the study”?

If you say ‘Yes’, here is how we will do the study:
- Between the months of September 2012, and December 2012, you will be asked to partake in two meetings, and two creative activities:
  - We will meet once for a group interview with other participants in your field. This meeting will last approximately two hours. During this group meeting, we will discuss your ideas about the nation, belonging, histories and Indigenous peoples in Québec.
  - In agreement with your professor, on a single occasion during class time, you will be asked to participate in a visual creation activity in which you will be invited to construct two timelines and present them to your group. The timelines and presentations of those who did not previously agree to participate in the study will not be included in the research.

   • Before we meet for the last time, you will be asked to take three photographs in the city of Montréal. You will have one week to 10 days to take these pictures.
Lastly, we will meet alone for a one-on-one interview. This meeting should last anywhere between 30 minutes to an hour and a half. During this interview, we will talk about your timelines and the photographs that you were asked to take.

Both the group discussion and your interview will be recorded with an audio device for the purposes of transcription, and the work associated with this research.

V. Study results
The results of this study will be reported in a graduate thesis and may also be published in journal articles and books.

If you would like a copy of the transcription of your interview and/or the chapters that contain data that concerns you, please provide us with your mailing address here:

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

VI. Is there any way being in this study could be bad for you?
Participating in this study will not harm you physically or financially. However, group discussions and/or interview questions might upset you. Please let one of the study staff know if you have any concerns, so that we may help you to find counseling services available at the university.

VII. What are the benefits of participating?
You may benefit from the opportunity to reflect on your own feelings and knowledge about Québec and its diversity. You might also gain a heightened awareness of how your knowledge of history impacts upon your every-day understandings of Québec and notions of nationhood and citizenship, and how this might influence your practices as a future historian and/or history teacher and active members of your local communities. You will also become familiar with two research exercises (ie., timeline creation, and photo narratives) that you might want to use in your future praxis in the form of pedagogy, social service agency work or historical research.

Accounts of participants’ knowledge and understandings may assist diverse educational communities in better understanding how ‘Québécois’ represent and utilize their knowledge about Indigenous peoples and associated issues in Québec and the Canadian context, as well as how they talk about nationalism, Indigeneity, belonging and legitimacy in Québec.

VIII. Confidentiality: How will your privacy be maintained?
To ensure your anonymity, none of the information sensitive to your privacy will be disclosed, and you will be given a pseudonym for all written materials.
Because the study involves group interviews, only limited confidentiality can be offered. We encourage participants not to discuss the content of the focus group to people outside the group; however, we can’t control what participants do with the information discussed.

All of the material from the study (individual and group interview audio files and transcripts, as well as files and prints of the timelines photographs, and your own photographs) will be password protected. Once the study is finished, the material will be transferred to CDs and along with hard copies, securely locked in a filing cabinet of the Principal Investigator’s office for five years.

IX. Payment

We will not pay you for the time you take to be in this study. However, if you would like more information on the topic of Indigenous issues in Québec, you will be directed to resources that have the potential for improving your teaching, employment and research practices.

X. Who can you contact if you have questions about the study?

If you have any questions or concerns about what we are asking of you, please contact the study leader or one of the study staff. The names and telephone numbers are listed at the top of the first page of this form.

XI. Who can you contact if you have complaints or concerns about the study?

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research subject and/or your experiences while participating in this study, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.

XII. Participants’ consent and signature

Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part, you may choose to pull out of the study at any time without giving a reason and without any negative impact on you or your school standing.

• Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

• Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

____________________________________________________
Participant Signature Date

____________________________________________________
Printed Name of the Participant