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Editor’s Note

Congratulations to all of the authors who contributed to Volume II of the Ryerson Historical Review! We are happy to be able to showcase your hard work in planning, researching, and writing these papers.

The papers featured in this journal were submitted to the RHR during the 2019-2020 academic year. After a slight delay following the Winter 2020 semester’s shift to online learning, we are happy to have completed the final publication. Many of the students who submitted were completing the final months of their degrees when the COVID-19 pandemic swept in. Though we lost the ability to celebrate their accomplishments in-person, we hope the History Department and its students are proud of the work that their fellow students have produced. Each paper in this issue represents the dedication to research and passion for learning that Ryerson’s history students pursue.

This edition’s submissions ranged in a variety of topics within the eighteenth to twenty-first centuries. Aviva Gomes-Bhatt has written an essay exploring the formation, key moments, and complexities of major Polish partisan movements through the course of the Second World War. Ryan Harmina covers the archaeology of the notorious 1912 maritime disaster of the RMS Titanic and the issues which arose concerning illegitimate salvaging and publicity operations in the 1980s and 1990s. Simon Raposo compares Benjamin West’s 1770 painting The Death of General Wolfe and Kent Monkman’s 2017 painting The Scream, as counter-hegemonic pieces of art that challenge Canada’s long-standing hegemony against the First Nations people. Kyle Resendes explores the intersections of race, class, and gender among domestic servants during the Great Migration. Serena Rice considers the protection and conservation of quilts, with a focus on the challenge of conserving old or damaged quilts. Finally, Julia Tomasi explores the material culture of Eaton’s and Simpson’s department stores between the late 1800s to the 1930s.

I would like to thank those involved in RHR’s second volume. First, thank you to all the students who submitted their work to be published. You did not make the selection process easy for us. That said, I’d like to thank Michelle Ransom who helped to select these essays amidst her final semester at Ryerson. I’d also like to thank Aileen Falcones-Guzman for helping us to ensure the selection process was a double-blind peer review. Special thanks to all the faculty members in the History Department for their help in preparing the essays for this journal, including Professor Simon Fisher, Dr. Carl Benn, Dr. Jennifer Hubbard, Dr. Peter Mersereau, Dr. Ian Mosby, Dr. Ron Stagg, and Dr. Robert Teigrob.

While we did not expect to publish Volume II during an online semester, we thought it was especially important to recognize student achievements during this time. History students have had to adapt the ways in which they study and produce their work. We are living in the history that future students will write about.

Alexandra Ouzounis
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A Flame of Resistance: 
Polish Partisans in the Second World War

Aviva Gomes-Bhatt

The Second World War remains the most catastrophic conflict in human history. One of its most defining characteristics is the utilisation of “total war,” or, the direct involvement of civilians, both as military targets and fighting forces. As such, partisan movements became commonplace, especially in Axis-occupied territories. Poland was one such state. It arguably experienced more duress than any other occupied European nation during this time, what with being subject to simultaneous occupation from two major powers. This resulted in unimaginable horrors that were amassed onto both the ethnic Polish and Jewish populations. Partisan movements in Poland were the epitome of resilience, as they worked to regain their independence and counter the atrocities being committed by their occupiers. Perhaps the most important role these organizations played, however, was upholding the morale of the Polish people, and giving them a reason to keep fighting until the end.

On August 23rd, 1939, the foreign ministers of Germany and the Soviet Union signed what would come to be known as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact; a treaty of nonaggression between the two budding European superpowers. As part of this treaty, the two nations came to an agreement that involved the division of Poland (and other parts of East and Central Europe) into respective “spheres of influence.” As such, when Nazi Germany invaded Poland in September of 1939, effectively beginning the war in Europe, the Soviet Union consequently followed suit and began their own invasion from the East a few days later, thus dividing the country. From the German side, the military conquest of Poland took roughly one month, during which time a number of “Free Poles” were able to escape and eventually settle first in France, and then in Britain. These “Free Poles” fought alongside Allied Forces as the “Polish Armed Force of the West.” As for those who remained in the country, they continued to fight, “believing that this was a decisive battle of the war, that the Allies would organize an offensive to prevent Poland from being conquered.” Unfortunately, the Poles would receive no substantial aid from the Allies at this time, rendering them essentially isolated and fighting a losing battle. Nevertheless, the

3 Ibid., 133-134.
5 Ibid., 11.
initial loss of territory in 1939 to both the Germans and the Soviets did not yield a passive population. The more they were pushed, the more the Polish citizens would resist, and it was out of this mentality that the first inklings of resistance were born.

Polish partisan movements started out small, with groups of people who knew each other well, such as families, neighbours, co-workers, and the like, who used communal groups like athletic federations and scouts groups as local rallying points. Larger resistance groups formed, some with significantly greater influence and resources. For example, following the initial siege of Warsaw in 1939, defence commander Juliusz Römmel commissioned General Michał Tokarzewski-Karaszewicz to take on the task of continuing the fight through means of resistance. Tokarzewski-Karaszewicz was a “born politician,” convincing representatives of political parties to join his cause, resulting in the formation of the Służba Zwycięstwu Polski (SZP), in October of 1939. The aim of this organization was to continue resisting German occupation until West Poland was liberated, and a temporary Polish government was established. Tokarzewski-Karaszewicz was successful in this to a degree; he did garner the cooperation of three major parties: the socialist Polska Partia Socjalistyczna (PPS), the peasant-based Stronnictwo Ludowe (SL), and the right-wing Stronnictwo Narodowe (SN), but not without difficulty. This was due to some aversion in entering alliances with any military-based groups, given the military’s role in the previous Sanacja government.

In Western Europe, a government-in-exile had been established first in France, and then relocated to London in June 1940 following the fall of France. Władysław Sikorski was appointed Prime Minister of this government, taking charge of politics, military activity, and maintaining contact with the Poles back in Poland. Part of the latter included the establishment of an “official” resistance/government movement in Poland with which he could maintain contact. While Tokarzewski-Karaszewicz’s SZP may have been an obvious choice for Sikorski, he was an opposer of the old Sanacja regime, and as such was not amenable to the idea of an organization created both without his consent and that had ties to the old government. He therefore arranged for the creation of the Związek Walki Zbrojnej (ZWZ), and placed General Stefan Rowecki in charge. Rowecki had been a tank commander during the initial September invasion, and after briefly escaping, he returned to Warsaw, serving as

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7 Zander, *Hidden Armies*, 137.
9 Ibid.
12 Winstone, *The Dark Heart*, 211.
Tokarzewski-Karaszewicz’s chief of staff.\textsuperscript{14} Sikorski’s main goal for the ZWZ was to be a centralized resistance movement that encompassed all of Poland. This was not the case as the ZWZ was only one of hundreds of other movements that had begun to spring up since the initial September invasion.\textsuperscript{15} As with the SZP, the ZWZ also ran into some issues in garnering support from other groups because of its ties with Sikorski’s government-in-exile. While some held suspicion about collaborating with the government, others chose not to amalgamate because they felt the ideals of their own organizations did not align with those of the ZWZ. For example, the Armia Ludowa (AL) was a communist party that was more closely linked to Soviet partisan movements, and while they maintained an amicable relationship with the ZWZ, they remained separate.\textsuperscript{16} This being said, the ZWZ was able to bring together dozens of groups, essentially becoming the largest partisan resistance movement in Poland.\textsuperscript{17}

At the same time, Sikorski’s government also worked to create a “shadow government” that would operate out of Warsaw on behalf of the government-in-exile.\textsuperscript{18} Officially called the Delegatura, but dubbed the “Underground State,” this government was complex and extremely well organized given how stifling Nazi oppression was. The Underground State was divided into five principal branches: the Department of the Interior, which dealt with administration and visibly emulating the government-in-exile; the Department of Press and Information, which collected and secretly disseminated news from overseas; the Department of Education and Culture, which focused on running secret classes for children and adults alike; the Judicial Branch, which contained the Underground State’s own justice system which was used for the persecution of local criminals and collaborators; and finally, the Military Arm, under which the ZWZ would fall.\textsuperscript{19}

In February of 1942, the ZWZ officially changed its title to become the Armia Krajowa (AK). The AK, also under the supervision of the Underground State and Sikorski himself, had similar intentions as the ZWZ before them. Their end goal was to fight against both Nazi and Soviet occupation, ultimately pushing both parties out and restoring Polish independence.\textsuperscript{20} The AK officially oversaw four main areas of activity: the sabotage of German communications and transportation, the capture and execution of Nazis and collaborators, the gathering of intelligence to be shared with Allied forces, and finally, overseeing the preparations for an eventual uprising.\textsuperscript{21} However, in reality, the AK were responsible for much more than what fell under

\textsuperscript{14} Winstone, \textit{The Dark Heart}, 211.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} Halik Kochanski, \textit{The Eagle Unbowed: Poland and the Poles in the Second World War} (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2012), 279.
\textsuperscript{17} Zander, \textit{Hidden Armies}, 137.
\textsuperscript{18} Wrobel, \textit{The Devil’s Playground}, 22.
\textsuperscript{19} Zander, \textit{Hidden Armies}, 138.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 137.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 138.
these jurisdictions.

The preservation of Polish culture, primarily in German-occupied parts of the country, was of the utmost importance to the majority of underground organizations. In the eyes of the Nazis, Poles were ranked the second lowest racial group in Europe, just after Jews and Gypsies. Consequently, there was an effort to destroy all remnants of Polish culture, including the suppression and banning of education, foreign news, entertainment, and more. In retaliation, the Poles arranged for professors and scholars who had not been deported to give secret lectures, often in apartments or basements. Secret underground presses disseminated print information such as speeches from Roosevelt and Churchill, interviews from the government-in-exile, and warnings about local Gestapo and SS activity. Illegal radio stations also began to appear, and as soon as one was shut down, several more emerged to take its place. Leisure activities were arranged as well, including communal poetry readings and satire performances of SS officers. These all played a significant role in maintaining the morale of both resistance fighters and regular Polish citizens, and allowed for them to retain some semblance of identity.

While some partisan organizations remained independent by choice, Polish Jews were forced to form their own through pure necessity. While attitudes towards ethnic Poles were negative to say the least, it was evident from the start that German treatment of Jews was drastically different. Coverage of Jewish concerns began as early as January 1940, with the AK’s Biuletyn Informacyjny publishing a warning that stated “any direct or indirect cooperation with the Germans in the persecution of Jews is exactly the same as any other form of collaboration with Poland’s mortal enemy.” In the same month, Sikorski publicly announced that the government-in-exile would be officially aligning its ideals with that of Britain and France, and firmly breaking away from Poland’s old totalitarian regime, which had fostered some antisemitic sentiments within the Polish population. This threw a wrench in the Germans’ plan to “capitalize on the existing Polish anti-Jewish attitudes as a way of garnering Polish support for the German occupation.”

Initially, there was a degree of estrangement between Poles and Jews as deportation to ghettos began. The chaos that ensued within the Jewish communities meant that it would be a while before an official Jewish resistance movement could be established, and longer still before they could establish relations with external organizations. The Jewish ghetto in Warsaw was not only the largest, but also the

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25 Ibid., 73.
26 Ibid., 74.
breeding ground of the most well-known Jewish resistance movement. Within the Ghetto, political parties and youth movements sprang up, each contributing to some form of resistance. Political parties held large-scale public events in hopes of garnering support among the Ghetto inhabitants, and also performed underground work in “small cadres,” so as to not attract unwanted attention.\textsuperscript{28} For example, the Socialist Bund Party maintained contact with Polish socialist movements outside the Ghetto, and through this connection, was able to get in touch with the Underground State.\textsuperscript{29} Through messengers called mekashroth, who were often young girls due to their inconspicuousness, Jewish resistance workers managed to bring messages out of Warsaw and to other parts of German-occupied territory. These included messages to Polish movements about the state of the Ghetto, and warnings to Jews not yet deported about the gruesome murders that were occurring.\textsuperscript{30}

Perhaps the most momentous act of resistance Jewish groups were able to carry out was the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. By 1942, Jews from the Ghetto began to be rounded up by the thousand for a so-called “resettlement.” While at first the inhabitants of the Ghetto believed this to be a move to labour camps, it was discovered through resistance communication lines that the selected Jews were actually being taken to the death camp Treblinka and executed en masse.\textsuperscript{31} This was a last straw for many Jews. As Israel Gutman explains, “only when all hope for survival was abandoned did armed resistance begin with the Ghetto.”\textsuperscript{32} Up until that point, the Jews had only entertained relatively peaceful methods of resistance, focused on bettering the lives of the Ghetto’s inhabitants and attempting to petition for outside help.

Thus, preparations were made, primarily by two major groups: the Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa (ŻOB), and the Żydowski Związek Wojskowy (ZZW). Both had reaches all over Poland, and used their connections to secure meagre supplies.\textsuperscript{33} On January 18th, 1943, German forces once again demanded thousands of Ghetto inhabitants be ready for “resettlement”—only this time combined resistance forces would assume control and push German forces out of the Ghetto. Inside, bomb shelters and barricades were being erected. This attempt at a lockdown would last for three months, until on April 19th, German police stormed the Ghetto with SS officers in tow, brutally crushing the rebellion. Although the Germans did suffer casualties, and the Jewish resistance fought relentlessly, the Ghetto was utterly destroyed, and on May 16th, after the final surrender, over fifty thousand Jews were rounded up and taken to camps.\textsuperscript{34} Although the uprising itself was unsuccessful, the

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 121.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 126-128.
\textsuperscript{31} Zander, Hidden Armies, 143.
\textsuperscript{32} Gutman, Resistance, 150.
\textsuperscript{33} Zander, Hidden Armies, 143.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 143-144.
fact that the Jewish resistance managed to put up as strong a front as they did was a testament to their resilience and determination.

During the war, Polish partisans maintained a working relationship with the Allies, through the Underground State and government-in-exile. As Dwight D. Eisenhower, the supreme commander of Allied forces stated, Polish partisans made a “decisive contribution to the Allied war efforts.” The AK, for example, put a lot of emphasis on intelligence gathering and sabotage, as opposed to flashy attacks, in order to avoid reprisal killings from the Germans. Another major contribution was in August of 1943, when the RAF sent over six hundred bombers to destroy a plant in Poland that contained secret German weapons, including V-1 bombs and V-2 rockets. The AK and Polish pilots were also able to deliver two captured V-2 rockets to their allies in London. The mission was highly successful, and only possible because of intelligence that had been gathered and passed on by the AK. In return, however, the Poles were only able to receive very minimal aid from the Allies. For one, just as organizations like the AK were forming, the Special Operations Executive (SOE) in Britain was also just developing. The SOE would be the main body that arranged for supplies to be delivered to the Polish underground, and since their own resources were limited at first, so too was the amount they could afford to send to Poland. Nevertheless, the British still managed to make 485 airdrops, delivering 600 tons of supplies, weapons, and food. The SOE also trained upwards of 300 agents that were dropped into Poland to assist the AK in operations, under the authority of the government-in-exile. There was no consistency to these flights, however, as the precarious enemy territory between Britain and Poland meant that Royal Air Force (RAF) pilots had to make the journey there and back in one go, as there was no neutral or safe ground to land on.

Perhaps one of the most significant events carried out by an underground organization was the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. Following the launch of Operation Barbarossa by the German army in 1941, alliances shifted, and partisans in Poland found themselves having to cooperate with their former enemy, the Soviet Union. This caused much chaos and internal divide, both in Poland and in London, but nevertheless, the Polish-Soviet Pact was signed on July 30th, 1941, and the Underground State was forced to cooperate. By 1944, the Soviet army had managed to turn the tide and started advancing, pushing the Germans out of the Soviet Union, through Poland, and back into Germany. Once it became obvious that the Nazis were in a losing position, the Poles came to the realization that after the Germans

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36 Ibid., 152.
37 Ibid., 22.
38 Zander, *Hidden Armies*, 139.
39 Ibid.
were gone, the Soviets would most likely assume control of the whole country, much in the same way they did in 1939. Essentially, there would be no hope for the Poles to retain independence. This fear was solidified after the Soviet Operation Tempest in March and April of 1944, when the AK colluded with the Red Army to carry out a series of small local uprisings behind German lines. In having to deal with this chaos, the German forces were therefore rendered less capable when facing the Soviets. However, once these were complete, the Soviet secret police, the Narodnyy Komissariat Vnutrennih Del (NKVD), disarmed all Polish fighters, either amalgamating them into the Soviet forces, deporting them to gulags, or executing them.

Therefore, after much deliberation on the part of both the government-in-exile and the Underground State, it was decided that the best course of action would be for the resistance to launch an uprising and push the Germans out of Warsaw. The Poles would then be able to establish an independent Polish government, so as to meet the advancing Soviets on equal footing. While the AK exhibited some hesitation because they did not want to risk civilian casualties, in the end it was agreed that the uprising would commence.

On July 29th, 1944, German Field Marshal Walter Model launched a counter-offensive against the Soviets. It was completely unexpected, and resulted in a decisive victory for the Germans. In Warsaw, however, the AK, anticipating a strong Soviet advance, heard the fighting and mistakenly thought the Soviets had come out on top. Consequently, the AK’s Warsaw Commander, Colonel “Monter” relayed to the AK’s leader, General Bór-Komorowski, that the Soviets were in the nearby district of Praga, and as such Komorowski gave the go ahead for mobilisation to commence.

On August 1st, the AK carried out their attack, and within three days, were in control of most of the city. However, this victory was short-lived. The Poles had not been planning on a lengthy attack, and soon found that they were running out of supplies with no aid in sight. What they had also not anticipated was that Heinrich Himmler would personally petition to have his own SS men take charge of quashing the Uprising. In fact, the Warsaw Uprising would become “the only major German ground combat operation of the Second World War to be run almost entirely by the SS.”

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40 Wróbel, The Devil’s Playground, 23.
41 Zander, Hidden Armies, 145.
42 Richie, Warsaw 1944, 9-10.
43 Zander, Hidden Armies, 147-151.
44 Wróbel, The Devil’s Playground, 25.
46 Wróbel, The Devil’s Playground, 26.
47 Zander, Hidden Armies, 150.
soldiers but the German army’s most notorious and brutal fighting force instead.  

When the Red Army finally arrived outside the city, the desperate Poles experienced short-lived jubilation, as they expected aid. However, the Soviets did not advance, instead content to see the resistance crushed at the hands of the Germans. The Soviet government at this time also refused to let Allied forces use Soviet air bases to airlift supplies in or make stops on the journey. As such, the Allies deemed the journey too treacherous to make non-stop, and so the Poles would receive no help from them either. Fleeing was also not a viable option for very long, as the Germans soon realized that the AK had been utilising the underground sewer network to smuggle people out of the city, and began to regularly toss grenades and flamethrowers into sewers. All this time, the Germans sent wave after wave of new units, and by September, the resistance had fully run out of all supplies. A month later, on October 2, 1944, Komorowski officially surrendered, resulting in around fifteen thousand Poles being taken as POW and sent to camps. Overall, there were between one hundred fifty to two hundred thousand casualties, and the AK was completely wiped out. The Uprising was a horrific failure for the Poles, and come the end of the war, the Soviets would assume control for almost fifty years thereafter.

The end of World War II did not bring the liberty and independence that Polish partisans had fought so diligently for. However, this does not mean that the efforts of partisans during the war was for naught. Despite being often unsuccessful, the uprisings played a significant role in disrupting the status quo of violence from occupation. Additionally, partisans proved highly useful in delivering information and equipment alike to Western Allies, which they would likely not have been able to obtain otherwise. Underground organizations were invaluable when it came to the preservation of Polish culture and morale. By drawing in diverse membership to assist with everything from education to entertainment to insurrections, it was ensured that Poles from all walks of life were able to find a role in fighting for their freedom. Although the role of partisans in Poland is often grossly overlooked or undermined, it holds great significance not only for Poland, but as a testament to the resilience of civilians in the midst of chaos.

49 Ibid.  
50 Wróbel, The Devil’s Playground, 26.  
51 Zander, Hidden Armies, 150.  
52 Ibid., 151.  
53 Wróbel, The Devil’s Playground, 27.  
54 Ibid.  
55 Zander, Hidden Armies, 151.  
56 Ibid.
Bibliography


Aviva Gomes-Bhatt

Aviva Gomes-Bhatt graduated from Ryerson in 2020 with an honours BA in History and English. While at Ryerson, she held the position of Vice-President of the Ryerson History Society, and co-host and leader of the International Issues Discussion Series. She is currently completing an MA in European and Russian Affairs at the University of Toronto, focusing on 20th century German history.
The Site of the Titanic Tragedy:
A Story of Conservation and Exploitation

Ryan Harmina

Underwater archaeology is an endeavour that is fraught with high-risk dangers, expense, and technical challenges. Accessing deep sea sites requires specialized expertise and equipment, and the archaeologists involved must take into account interaction with the natural environment. Shipwrecks, while not the sole focus of underwater archaeology, are notoriously intriguing to researchers and the public. The tragedy and mystery associated with maritime disasters propel these stories into the realm of folklore. Never has this more true than in the sinking of the RMS *Titanic*, the most famous ship of all time. The perplexing sinking of this Edwardian marvel on its maiden voyage in 1912 fuelled speculation and fascination for over a century. Only in the last forty years have marine researchers had the technology to access its remains and begin to understand what occurred and preserve some of its artifacts. However, the exploration of the *Titanic* has been controversial from the beginning, with some groups claiming altruistic goals of conservation and others arguing for exploitation. This paper will analyze, in the case of *Titanic*, whether the ends justified the means; in other words, did the sensationalization of this tragedy provide greater historical benefit for the conservation and investigation of the wreckage, and for maritime archeological practice, than would otherwise have been the case?

The dawn of the twentieth century was an era of innovation, where the momentum of industrial progress seemed unstoppable, and technological advancements seemingly drove man into the modern era. The White Star Line’s RMS *Titanic* was no exception. At the time she was the largest moving object made by man and the most luxurious ship afloat, weighing at forty-six thousand tons, and having a total length of eight hundred eighty-three feet, and a height of eleven stories.¹ Built with state of the art design, *Titanic* was said to be one of the safest ships afloat, and a maritime marvel worthy of the cultural importance it held even before its demise. Besides numerous A-list passengers, the ship also had an experienced crew including the prestigious Captain Edward John Smith.² *Titanic* set sail on her trans-Atlantic maiden voyage from Southampton to New York City, but it was only four days into the crossing that *Titanic* would fatally strike an iceberg and founder into the icy North Atlantic in the early morning hours of April 15, 1912. The collision wounded the ship’s watertight compartments, causing it to go under. All the while, women

² Ibid., 149.
and children were instructed to enter lifeboats, of which there were not enough for all passengers on board. The result would be catastrophic as over fifteen-hundred would perish with the ship, producing one of the first international newsflashes in the modern age and resonating through public fascination with the disaster. For over one hundred years, the doomed vessel held an immediate place in the popular imagination. The Titanic tragedy produced safety legislation for ocean liners and inspired well-known fiction and non-fiction creations which have maintained the lasting legacy of this most iconic wreck.

Beyond the seemingly never-ending narratives of the liner, Titanic itself remained lost for more than seventy years following the disaster. During that time numerous salvage proposals, particularly in the nineteen-sixties and seventies, were advanced. This included bringing the ship to the surface as in the 1980 film Raise the Titanic, where buoyancy devices filled with hydrazine (a chemical foaming agent) would be loaded into the ship to lift it. These types of salvaging plans reflected not only the enduring notoriety that still surrounded the mysterious fate of the vessel across the decades, but also ignorance of the technicalities of deep sea excavation. It was only in 1985 that Titanic’s wreckage would be located three hundred miles off the coast of Newfoundland, Canada. The site was discovered by a partnership between the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) from the United States and the French Research Institute for the Exploitation of the Sea (IFREMER). The Titanic wreckage was discovered by a team of explorers led by oceanographer Jean-Louis Michel and marine geologist Dr. Robert Ballard. Ballard, a retired Navy officer, led expeditions to find the wreck, funded by the United States Navy, which was enthusiastic about testing contemporary deep-sea submersible technology.

Controversy begins with the discovery of the liner, as it was revealed that Titanic was essentially discovered as an afterthought to a Navy intelligence-gathering operation. According to Richard Howells, a professor at King’s College in London, who has written on the Titanic in popular culture, Ballard’s Titanic expedition was a sort of cover story to a real mission objective: “the discovery and inspection of two American submarines lost at sea during the Cold War.” The Navy had originally sent Ballard to explore the wrecks of the nuclear submarines, USS Thresher and USS Scorpion, after which only a limited amount of time was left for Titanic’s discovery.

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1 Ibid.
2 Ibid., 144.
3 Richard Howells, One Hundred Years of the Titanic on Film (2012), 85.
5 Ibid.
6 Howells, Titanic on Film, 86.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
The investigation into the sunken submarines did prove valuable as they revealed distinct debris fields which actually led to the discovery of Titanic. By following the notably large debris field left from Titanic breaking apart upon sinking, Ballard was able to locate the wreckage of the vessel, with help of French surveying technology that could detect objects on the seafloor.\(^{11}\) Titanic was discovered on September 2, 1985. As the unmanned deep-sea video camera Argo retrieved the first pictures of the wreck in seven decades, the Titanic made international headlines around the world once again.\(^{12}\) The wreck lies submerged four thousand meters (thirteen thousand feet) below the ocean’s surface. Each dive would take approximately two and a half hours to descend and ascend alone.\(^{13}\) No natural sunlight can penetrate such depths; thus Titanic rests hidden away in complete blackness, on the slopes of a small, deep-sea canyon, where water pressure amounts to about six thousand pounds per square inch.\(^{14}\) Ballard’s investigation solved numerous questions about the mysterious wreck. For example, it was discovered to have broken into two sections. This proved that the ship had broken between the third and fourth funnels upon sinking (a structural weak point due to large spacious rooms).\(^{15}\) The question of structural weakness had spurred much debate amongst survivors and eyewitnesses. The bow, which had already pointed downward as it flooded, broke away from the stern and gathered speed, eventually burying its nose sixty feet into the sea floor.\(^{16}\) The stern had not flooded as completely as the bow, and air that was trapped inside it as she finally sank caused this second half of the ship to essentially implode. The power of the stern hitting the bottom caused the decks to collapse into each other, leaving it in a twist of mangled steel.\(^{17}\)

In the years following Titanic’s discovery, continuous expeditions to the wreck would bring to light numerous issues in terms of her conservation. The wreck that was discovered two and a half miles beneath the sea symbolized growth in technical advancements, essentially beginning the enterprise of deep ocean salvaging projects. As this was a developing industry, Titanic became the subject of questionable recovery interests. A major issue at play was that the wreck was lying beyond any state’s territorial limits. In other words, no country or individual could technically claim ownership over Titanic.\(^{18}\) In fact, a millionaire tycoon by the name of Jack Grimm, who only a few years prior to Titanic’s discovery had himself been attempting to locate her, began claiming ownership of the ship as he argued he had found her in...

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12 Ibid., 98-100.
14 Ibid., 112.
15 Ibid., 115.
16 Ibid., 112.
17 Ibid., 117.
the first place. Ballard began to push for legislation to protect the wreckage from looting. The “RMS Titanic Maritime Memorial Act of 1986” was created by the United States as an immediate response to protect the ship. However, there was a lack of support from countries such as Canada and France on the topic. Besides the issue of ownership, in 1987 an American organization called Titanic Ventures Inc. (later RMS Titanic INC.) in combination with IFREMER organized a salvaging operation to gather artifacts from the site. The operation recovered thousands of artifacts, primarily from the debris field, sparking outrage amongst the public and scholars alike. Titanic of course holds significant cultural and historical importance, yet the initial recovery missions to the ship were seen as detrimental to the sanctity of the gravesite at which over fifteen hundred souls were lost. A considerable moral issue was raised as recovery of the ship’s sunken artifacts began, this is the controversy of heritage exploitation.

Profiting from Titanic became a prevailing problem in the 1990s. Starting in 1993, RMS Titanic Inc. conducted an exhaustive sequence of dives recovering thousands of artifacts. In 1994, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, Norfolk Division, placed RMS Titanic INC. as the “salvor-in-possession” of Titanic which authorized “exclusive salvage rights to the site.” In one 1996 instance, RMS Titanic INC. sought to raise a large section of Titanic’s outer hull that would come to be known as the “Big Piece”. Raising the twenty ton section of the ship which held four portholes became a sort of publicity stunt, as two cruise liners were present for the raising of the “Big Piece”, each offering hundreds of passengers a live broadcast of the recovery process for upwards of six thousand USD, with accommodations. The raising ended in disaster when the tethers supporting the piece snapped a mere two hundred feet from the surface, causing it to plummet over two miles back down and lodging itself upright into the sea floor. Marine archaeologists, Titanic survivors, and historians condemned the salvaging operation as a reckless entertainment act. A second attempt to raise the section was successful in 1998 by RMS Titanic INC., where the piece was thereby subjected to conservation processes and research analysis. According to Conservation of the RMS Titanic “Big Piece”: A Case Study and Critical Evaluation, the authors sum up the significance of the recovery for Titanic’s largest artifact:

It is difficult to overstate the importance of the Big Piece and the expeditions

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20 Dromgoole, Protection of the Titanic, 4.
21 Ibid., 2.
23 Dromgoole. Protection of the Titanic, 4.
24 Matthew Brace, Real-life Drama Unfolds as Titanic Raised After 84 Years (1996).
26 Ibid., 43.
27 Ibid.
associated with it. These recovery ventures have provided the physical materials necessary to undertake the analyses that have provided not only a greater understanding of the role material failures played in the sinking, but have also yielded information that has been valuable in promoting the future preservation of the ship.27

Salvaging operations were without question beneficial to the historical conservation of the liner, yet these early missions conducted particularly by RMS Titanic INC. in the 1990s were evidently conceived with exploitative intentions in mind. Whether these expeditions are substantial in progressing deep sea archaeology or not, those behind the recoveries were inevitably disrupting the site in order to profit from the disaster and victims’ stories. Exhibits featuring artifacts such as preserved perfumes, pocket-watches, and porcelain dolls have been made standard for RMS Titanic INC., and as of 2008 Titanic’s Big Piece can be found on display in the Luxor casino in Las Vegas.28

For many people today, their personal memory of Titanic comes from the 1997 film Titanic. The film is the ultimate commercial expression of director James Cameron’s interest in the wreck. The blockbuster took home eleven Academy Awards including “best picture,”29 bringing the Titanic disaster into the limelight as it had become completely sensationalized. The entirety of the Titanic franchise has romanticized the tragedy, desensitizing audiences to the enormity of the catastrophe. Those who died in Titanic have taken a backseat to the numerous artifact exhibitions, costuming and jewelry sales, cookbooks and re-enactment dinners. Was this commercial frenzy simply profiteering, or did it contribute to the preservation of Titanic’s legacy? Certainly, James Cameron revitalized mass interest in Titanic. The film spared no expense in the recreation of the details and the visual themes which were able to capture the opulence and grandeur of the original ship. Twentieth Century Fox sponsored Cameron’s multiple expeditions to the wreck of Titanic, where the group of researchers were able to collect high definition images and videos of the wreck.30 These naturally were a major selling factor of the film’s release; however they also provided substantial historical value in video cataloguing the wreck in detail. It is apparent that the commercialism, as excessive as it was, did provide the means to understand and conserve the history and the site of the event. The success of the Titanic film endeavour paved the way for investments in deep sea technology and exploration.

In June 2006, the United States proposed legislation which addressed an agreement to have increased protection over the site of Titanic through Canada, the United Kingdom, and France.31 The legislation established the wreck as a place of international maritime commemoration, placing precise standards for the site

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27 Ibid., 48.
29 Howells, Titanic on Film, 74.
30 Ibid., 74-75.
providing its scientific, cultural, and historical importance.\textsuperscript{32} It was not until 2012 that the agreement on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage was made applicable to \textit{Titanic} through the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).\textsuperscript{33} The Convention highlights a complex legal framework for the preservation and security of underwater sites older than one hundred years, as cultural heritage sites.\textsuperscript{34} The final resting place of the liner and its victims would now be protected and given the proper honour associated with an archeological heritage site.

From the moment she set sail, \textit{Titanic} became a fascination to the world. The foundering of the unsinkable ship was a mystery and the loss of life from this one accident was unthinkable. The world wanted answers but thirteen thousand feet of water, extreme pressure and the frigid cold stood in the way. Underwater archeology has always been difficult because water naturally corrodes submerged artifacts and there are many other inherent risks associated with deep sea diving. It can also strangely serve as a method of preservation, protecting the site from human disturbance. The commercialism and exploitation surrounding \textit{Titanic} has served a purpose, providing considerable historic and scientific information. It was not until the nineteen eighties, that technology had progressed enough to find the wreck; and almost immediately controversy arose concerning the discovery. Those with the means to access the site claimed their work was for its conservation, but as with all great tragedies, the event was also exploited. Exploration on this scale is an expensive venture and requires investment, dedication and public interest to succeed. This was achieved by the hype generated via Hollywood and the one hundred year anniversary of the sinking. Many dives to the wreck were achieved, each providing more video recordings, evidence and artifacts. The unauthorized visits to \textit{Titanic} generated controversy and subsequent regulations to limit access to aquatic archeological sites. The explorations, while often controversial, provided scientists with the answers to its sinking and resting place. They provided a detailed survey of the remains and a mapping of the entire site, which can be studied for years to come. People now know more than ever before regarding this modern tragedy and archeological site. The stories and lessons learned from \textit{Titanic} have been passed on to a new generation of enthusiasts and students, also keeping alive the fascination with deep sea exploration. \textit{Titanic} represents wrongdoings and successes in underwater archaeology. \textit{Titanic}'s legacy continues to challenge explorers to provide better standards and methods for deep sea archeological research in the years to come.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Dromgoole, \textit{Protection of the Titanic}, 2.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
Bibliography


Ryan Harmina

Ryan Harmina is in his final year at Ryerson University. He was born in Toronto and raised in Oakville. He has an interest in Western popular culture history of the 19th and 20th centuries. He is also an enthusiast for nautical history and maritime disasters. Ryan is passionate about travelling and learning about different cultures and languages. He embraces every opportunity to visit museums and enjoys playing ragtime piano. In his spare time, Ryan likes to play video games and make people laugh.
At the beginning of Canadian colonization, British colonizers accepted the belief that First Nations tribes were biologically inferior to Europeans due to the fact that their societies were regarded as technologically, socially, and religiously inferior. White supremacy over the First Nations tribes created a cultural hegemony that placed First Nations tribes on the bottom of the Canadian social hierarchy. Robert Cox explains that idea of hegemony was created by Italian politician and philosopher, Antonio Gramsci; the concept explains that the dominant group in society makes their ideology the societal norm. Therefore, within Canada, white settlers maintained power by keeping First Nations people beneath them within the social hierarchy. This hegemony has persisted throughout Canadian history and is reflected in Canadian policy with regard to First Nations, with the likes of the Indian Act of 1876 and the 60's scoop, which was the large-scale removal of First Nations children from their homes and families, and the subsequent adoption into Euro-Canadian families. In a contemporary sense, Trigger argues that most Canadians have failed to accept First Nations people as being Canadian to the same extent that they recognize people of French, English or Japanese ancestry. David Darts argues that art has played a major role in exposing these issues within the dominant Canadian society. Kent Monkman’s 2017 painting *The Scream* and Benjamin West’s 1770 painting *The Death of General Wolfe* provide divergent images that challenge the long-standing Canadian hegemony. Ultimately, art can be used to challenge the existing hegemony within a nation.

From the beginning of North American colonization, the British never questioned their racial superiority over the First Nations people. Furthermore, the British argued that First Nations did not make adequate use of land and therefore had no moral right to hold it. Trigger explains that as prejudice increased against the First Nations people they began to be seen as inherently savage. Furthermore, Trigger asserts that the view of the British, as being culturally superior, and discriminatory views against First Nations people, created justification for their attempted assimilation of the First Nations people. The British policy of assimilation was that their superior race had the responsibility to save the inferior race by assimilating

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3 Trigger, 15.
4 Trigger 17.
them into British culture. Upton quotes the Colonial Secretary Sir George Murry in stating that the British had the responsibility to save the First Nations “from a state of barbarism and of introducing amongst them the industrious and peaceful habits of civilized life.” The view of assimilation carried on well passed Canadian confederacy with the introduction of the residential school system in 1880. The residential school system was developed to educate First Nations children in Euro-Canadian ways and Christian religious practices. Furthermore, Barnes, Josefowitz, and Cole explain that the main goal of residential schools was to eliminate the traditional languages of First Nations children, by forbidding them to use them in conversation. The practice of the residential school system was aimed to complete the British idea of assimilation. Thus, Britain has ultimately othered First Nations since the beginning of colonization by othering and attempting to assimilate them. These practices have created a cultural hegemony within Canada that has kept First Nations peoples beneath the European colonizers on the social power hierarchy.

Benjamin West’s 1770 painting The Death of General Wolfe depicts the death of British army general James Wolfe in the Seven Years War. Wolfe is positioned center of the frame surrounded by other British soldiers and a single First Nations soldier. The British soldiers are depicted to be dressed in British military uniforms signified by their traditional red coats. The First Nations soldier is depicted in a stereotypical fashion, as not wearing a shirt or shoes and having feathers in his hair. The stereotypical First Nations dress that West depicts is reflective of the view that British colonizers had imposed upon first Nations people. The iconography of the First Nations soldier being less dressed than the other European soldiers solidifies this belief within West’s painting. However, the inclusion of the First Nations soldier within the painting is more representative of the beliefs being reflected by West; as the inclusion of the First Nations soldier is juxtaposed to the stereotypical view that the soldier is presented in. The inclusion of the First Nations soldier directly counters the idea of othering and alienation that the British established during their time as colonizers. Furthermore, the painting reflects a belief of fellowship between First Nations people and the British due to their participation within the Seven Years war, ultimately challenging the existing hegemonic ideas of the British colonizers.

Kent Monkman’s 2017 painting The Scream shows church officials and Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers taking children from their parents in an attempt to assimilate them into Canadian culture. Monkman has depicted the women’s faces in horror in order to convey the suffering that First Nations families have faced following the colonization of Canada. Furthermore, Monkman has

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8 Upton, The Origins of Canadian Indian Policy, 51.
9 Upton, 57.
11 Barnes Josefowitz, and Cole, 23.
included an officer holding a rifle as a way of visually enforcing that the RCMP officers and church officials have power over them. The painting itself depicts the British policy of assimilation from the standpoint of the First Nations people. Monkman’s painting is counter hegemonic as it clearly depicts the injustices that the First Nations peoples faced as a byproduct of British colonization. The depiction of anguish amongst the women’s faces directly counters the Canadian hegemonic concepts that First Nations peoples are inferior and should assimilate into the rest of Canadian society.

Jules Prown explains that material culture is the study of artifacts that reflect cultural beliefs, ideas, and values of a given society. Furthermore, Prown argues that art as an artifact offers a direct and intentional expression of cultural beliefs. Moreover, Marshall McLuhan introduces the idea that the medium is the message. McLuhan explains that the medium itself produces a message that shapes and controls the scale of human action. For example, the railway did not as a medium introduce the idea of travel, however, it accelerated and enlarged the human ability and desire to travel. Relating Prown and McLuhan’s ideas, the painting as a medium produces a message that creates a visual representation that reflect the cultural beliefs of the painter. Prown argues that throughout history only a small percentage of people have been literate; therefore, paintings offer the possibility for a large cross section of the population to access the information being presented. Furthermore, the visual representation of the painter’s beliefs allow for the viewer to create a more personal attachment with the medium rather than if his beliefs were presented in the written word.

Personal attachment to the image is ultimately achieved through McLuhan’s idea of “hot media”. McLuhan explains that hot media allows for less user participation and presents its message in high definition to one sense. The painting presents its context as only a visual representation of the painters’ beliefs. Therefore, the users must rely solely on their sense of sight to interpret the context of the image. Due to the fact that paintings rely on solely the sense of sight, Prown argues that artists rely on iconography to transmit their beliefs. Iconography develops a narrative for the art piece through the use of symbols and imagery which when transmitted consciously and unconsciously affect the interpretation. As shown in West’s painting, the depiction of the First Nations warrior amongst the other British soldiers is a subtle use of iconography. The First Nation soldier represents the

13 Ibid., 2.
15 Ibid., 152.
fellowship of the First Nation and British soldiers within the context of the Seven Years War, which is contrary to and challenges the cultural hegemony of viewing First Nations people as lesser the Europeans. Monkman’s painting shows a much more explicit use of iconography. The depiction of church officials and RCMP officers stealing First Nations children directly from their families directly challenges the Canadian hegemony of viewing First Nations people as less than their white colonizers. The reliance on both explicit and subtle iconographies directly affect the viewer’s interpretation, ultimately allowing for the painters to challenge the existing hegemony through the images that they portray.

Cox explains that there are two ways to combat hegemony within an existing society, the war of movement and the war of position. The war of movement is physical attacks against the existing dominant party.\textsuperscript{19} Whereas the war of position slowly reinforces new social ideologies that counter the existing cultural ideology and subsequently the existing hegemony.\textsuperscript{20} Darts argues that since the 18th century artists have used their work to call upon existing social and political mechanisms and disrupt the prominent cultural ideologies.\textsuperscript{21} Therefore, by challenging existing social and political structures paintings create a form of resistance to the existing hegemony in an attempt to create social change.\textsuperscript{22} Paintings as a medium can be used as a war of position as artists attempt to challenge and change existing cultural ideologies through the images and iconography that they depict. Since, Prown argues that literacy through history has been low, paintings repeal barriers for the illiterate to view the beliefs and arguments of the literary elite.\textsuperscript{23} Thus, West’s inclusion of the First Nations soldier allows the larger public, which in 1770 would have been mostly illiterate, to see the inclusion and importance of First Nations people within the context of the Seven Years War. The painting itself is ultimately counter-hegemonic as it depicts the First Nations member as an important part of Britain’s military efforts in the Seven Years war. This is a form of the war of position as it challenges the standing cultural hegemony in Canada. West and Monkman’s paintings therefore utilize art as a war of position to challenge the existing hegemony with Canada.

Canada has held a cultural hegemony that has kept First Nations people at the bottom of the social power hierarchy. Benjamin West’s and Kent Monkman’s paintings have depicted forms of counter-hegemony to this long-standing ideology. The painting as a medium provides information in high definition through its appeal to the visual sense. An artist’s use of iconography helps to aid the interpretation of the image as well as provide an either an explicit or a subtle depiction of the person’s beliefs. By offering a visual representation, the artists have allowed for a much

\textsuperscript{19} Cox, Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method, 165.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} Darts, Visual Culture Jam: Art, Pedagogy, and Creative Resistance, 319.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid, 316.
\textsuperscript{23} Prown, Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method, 3.
broader consumption of the message, and more personal connection. Both West and Monkman use explicit and subtle iconography as a war of position to challenge the Canadian hegemony against First Nations people.
Bibliography


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Simon Raposo

Simon Raposo is a third-year history student at Ryerson University. He is a second generation Canadian as his family immigrated to Canada from Portugal sixty years ago. After his first year at Ryerson, his interests changed to explore how different media has shaped the view of minorities throughout history. Media plays an interesting role in society, being able to influence masses of people due to its ability to cross multiple social boundaries, which is something that Simon is passionate about. He is interested in how different types of media will continue to be remembered in the age of the internet and how they have affected our view of marginalized peoples.
Domestic service illustrates the exploitation of African American women, however, domestics proved successful in their day-to-day resistance. Black women of the Jim Crow South (1880-1920’s) were subject to various forms of discrimination through political, economic, physical and legal means. As Jim Crow laws curated the social and economic exploitation of African Americans, employment options among black women were based upon their gendered and racialized identities. Further, black women often occupied domestic service roles, which ultimately reinforced their racialized positions previous to the emancipation of slavery.

Domestic service in the nineteenth century can be understood as reproductive labor performed largely by racialized groups that are compelled to provide their service for minimal income. Reproductive work is performed through physical labor, which is often performed within the employer’s residence. Although physical labor is a component to other work types, domestic service has a unique characteristic due to its lack of regulated conditions and workload. While white women had occupied this type of employment in the nineteenth century, domestic service had been understood as inherently low status due to its submissive structure. Furthermore, black women were denied equal job opportunities to their white counterparts as a result of Jim Crow laws, which resulted in black women to become funnelled into the domestic service, and as result, this made African American domestics susceptible to sexual assault in the workplace by their white employers. Although this act may be experienced by women of various employments, it can be argued that sexual assault is intensified among black women in domestic service, specifically as a result of their proximity to their employer, and their sexualized identities that were formed through white constructions of a black woman’s sexual nature and assumptions of promiscuity,¹ which served to justify sexual harassment of African American domestics by white employers. Ultimately the lack of employment opportunity among African American women can be understood as a result of Jim Crow law in the deep South and racist assumptions towards black women in the North which served to undermine their status, forcing black women into domestic service.

Conditions of domestic service indicate worker exploitation through a

¹ Frances M. Beal, “Double Jeopardy: To be Black and Female,” Meridians (Middletown, Conn.) 8, no. 2 (2008), 168.
lack of sufficient pay, in relation to white counterparts. Physical aspects of domestic work denote exhaustion and malnourishment due to inadequate provisions from employers, which imparts the risk of sexual assault. As discussed, a domestic’s proximity to their employer places them in a vulnerable position to be sexually assaulted, which in turn, reinforces submissive assumptions of African American women. Psychological impacts serve to represent the structure of domestic employment, and by extension, dehumanizing qualities associated with reproductive labour. Further, conditions of reproductive labor can be understood through the lack of financial stability that placed economic insecurity upon domestics. The psychological effects of isolation and dehumanizing interactions were critical to establish dominant and submissive roles between domestics and their employers.

In reaction, black domestics utilized various forms of day-to-day resistance in an attempt to alleviate their degrading work conditions. It is understood that domestics stole items from an employer’s house to balance their wage gap; regulated the pace of labour to lessen workload; and utilized social performances that rejected racist ideals. Furthermore, domestics aimed to reduce economic impacts through stealing possessions and justified their actions through recognition of systemic poverty among African Americans. In addition, servants began to shift from live-in employment to daywork, which suggests a physical departure from their employer; domestics also separated their personal values from work, which served as a psychological barrier to exploitation.

Widespread domestic service can be explored among African American women employed in rural areas of the deep South, and urbanized spaces among Northern states during the late 19th century and early 20th century. It is understood that racialized women fulfilled domestic service in the South as a result of Jim Crow laws that rejected progressive movements implemented during Southern Reconstruction (1863-1877) and served to reinstate white supremacy. Domestic service in the South suggests a revival of legally-based discrimination, which is reflective of slavery. This can be attributed to the social structures of Jim Crow. Melissa Wooten and Enobong Branch suggest black women were systemically compelled to work as domestics since Southern whites argued black women have been “bred for servitude” during enslavement. It can be inferred that domestic service re-established submissive roles among African Americans as the characteristics of servitude are reflective of submissive roles associated with slavery. Further, domestic servitude has historically demonstrated the use of racialized women

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to fulfill the household duties of white domestic women. In addition, lack of education, due to unequal separate spaces, lack of employment opportunities among African Americans, and by effect, this portrayed an inferior status to white employers. Judith Rollins notes that domestic service was largely occupied by black women due to unequal access to education, and its subsequent restriction to upper-level employment. As domestic service in the South suggests a return to former roles, David Katzman argues domestic employment was a vital component to Southern tradition as it denotes a formal power structure between whites and African Americans. Katzman suggests, “Southern white pattern was to hire black servants, a custom that was an integral part of Southern white urban life and that served to define black-white relations and signify class and status within the community.”

Conversely, domestics in the North were subject to different ideals that limited employment opportunities. To reference, African Americans began to migrate from the Jim Crow South in pursuit of the North’s economic prosperity through rapid industrialization. The Great Migration (1916-1970) saw a geographical shift among black wage earners to Northern states. Jim Crow laws were not formalized in the North, although racist practices were prevalent through economic means such as unethical and racist employment methods. Rollins attributes the growth of industrialization, and the subsequent rise of the middle class, to the employment of black domestic servants, as feminized-industrial jobs were largely occupied by white women. As discussed, African American migrants from the South were denied equal education in their former states, and as result, this also translated to a lack of job opportunities in the North. Elizabeth Clark-Lewis notes that urban employers were reluctant to hire African Americans as black women were observed as “educationally inferior” to the Northern majority. This argument also indicates evidence of racialized discrimination in the North, which reflects arguments of the South towards educational status which served to disenfranchise African Americans.

Domestics in the North and South shared common experiences due to their gendered and racialized identity. This notion is understood through intersectionality and its relation to black womanhood. Kimberle Crenshaw defines intersectionality as, “the various ways in which race and gender intersect in shaping structural, political, and representational aspects of violence against women of colour.” Intersectionality in the context of domestic service can be interpreted

1 Judith Rollins, Between Women, 21.
2 Ibid, 108.
3 David M. Katzman, Seven Days a Week: Women and Domestic Service in Industrializing America (Oxford University Press, 1978), 62.
4 Judith Rollins, Between Women, 53.
as the employment of black women in low-status, feminized labor as a result of their racialized and sexualized identity. In addition, the role of servant suggests racial discrimination as white women were able to advance in employment beyond servitude. Wooten and Branch note that “the growth in white women’s occupational opportunities, which allowed them to escape domestic service, should theoretically have extended to black women as well.” \(^{11}\) Wooten and Branch continue, “But race prohibited their gender-based advancement and segregated black women into a secondary labor pool coerced by economic necessity to remain in domestic service”. \(^{12}\) This suggests African American women were susceptible to unique forms of discrimination that were not experienced by their white counterpart as a result of their racialized identities.

Further, black women were compelled to work as domestics due to feminized characteristics of household duties. Traditional white family structures were not applicable to African Americans since black men were systematically denied decent wage jobs, and as a result, women had to contribute to the family income. Evelyn Glenn suggests black women who worked as domestics were limited from their maternal roles as work hours tended to exceed beyond a traditional shift. \(^{13}\) The economic necessity of working as a domestic, coupled with racial discrimination serves to present the feminized experiences between domestics in the North and South. The condition of domestic service can be observed through economic, physical and psychological viewpoints, which contributed to a sense of insecurity, and subsequent exploitation among servants.

Domestic employment in the nineteenth century did not provide a stable income for workers, and by extension, their families. Rollins notes that the wage of a domestic worker was based upon a non-contractual agreement between servant and employer (or mistress) which did not specify work hours or pay. \(^{14}\) Further, black domestics recognized they were comparatively paid less than their white counterpart; an experienced black domestic could earn up to five dollars an hour, while an Anglo-American day worker may earn a starting wage of eight dollars an hour. \(^{15}\) This suggests African American women were financially deprived based upon systematic racism and unregulated wage labor. To support, Katzman reminds that domestic servants were excluded from protective labour legislation due to their racialized identity, and informal practice of employment. This denied domestics from regulated

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\(^{12}\) Ibid.


\(^{14}\) Judith Rollins, Between Women, 74.

\(^{15}\) Ibid, 75.
work hours that aimed to protect employed women.\textsuperscript{16} Furthermore, this phenomena contributes to the lack of stability provided to black domestics, which Rollins suggests, placed economic insecurity upon servants.\textsuperscript{17}

Rollins states that household equipment provided was often cheap, and poorly maintained. This placed a greater physical burden upon domestics as tasks required additional effort.\textsuperscript{18} Further, employers were reluctant to provide breaks to domestics, which resulted in servants “fighting sleep, ankles swollen, having lost the energy and sociability of the morning’s ride to work.”\textsuperscript{19} Katzman argues laundry work was the most physically taxing due to its time consumption and non-practical instructions given by employers.\textsuperscript{20} Further, exhaustion among live-in domestics was directly related to the conditions of their residency. Katzman suggests live-in domestics resided in spaces that were of a lower standard than their own home, and meals provided led to malnourishment, and as result, led to exhaustion while performing daily tasks.\textsuperscript{21} It may be inferred that domestic work results in perpetual exhaustion among workers due to poor living conditions, and taxing physical labor.

Proximity to an employer indicates a risk of sexual assault among domestics. This act is an explicit form of dominance among white employers which is disproportionately experienced by racialized domestics. To support, domestics faced sexual assault in the workplace due to racist and falsified assumptions of black women’s sexuality; which is understood through the Jezebel trope. Patricia Hill Collins argues this characterization served to dehumanize African American women, and by effect, justify their sexual exploitation as black women who were constructed as sexually promiscuous.\textsuperscript{22} From this viewpoint, sexual assault reflected racial power structures that serve to reinforce dominant and submissive roles, which originated during slavery. Sexual assault in the workplace can be also observed through testimony provided by a domestic nurse of the South named Georgia. Her account notes that sexual assault was an expected component to domestic service, whereas conforming to an employer’s advancements legitimizes the Jezebel trope, conversely, resistance may result in a domestic to be fired.\textsuperscript{23} From this, sexual assault demonstrates the vulnerability associated with domestic service and the way racial constructs directly impact black women.

Psychological impacts experienced by servants further exemplify the

\textsuperscript{16} David M. Katzman, \textit{Seven Days a Week}, 111.
\textsuperscript{17} Judith Rollins, \textit{Between Women}, 76.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, 69.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, 64.
\textsuperscript{20} David M. Katzman, \textit{Seven Days a Week}, 125.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid, 109-110.
\textsuperscript{22} Patricia Hill Collins, \textit{Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment}. Rev. 10th anniversary ed. (Routledge, 2000), 147.
dehumanizing aspects of domestic service. This can be examined through the relationship between domestics and their employer, and the isolation of working alone. Rollins understands this dynamic through the use of ‘differential language’ which is demonstrated by way of titles. To reference, mistresses referred to domestics as ‘girls’ or ‘help’, and they, in turn, expected to be addressed as ma’am.24 The use of titles demonstrates the power structure between a mistress and servant which serves to delineate authority and undermine the status of domestics. Furthermore, mistresses’ behaviour to their servants indicates a disrespectful attitude, as employers neglected the presence of servants. This in turn branded domestics as “non-persons.”25 This contributes to isolation experienced by domestics as household work denotes physical separation from the outside world. Domestics often worked alone with little supervision or co-workers, which by effect, diminished personal pride in their work, and left domestics vulnerable to punishment due to the lack of guidance.26 Ultimately, psychological conditions imposed upon domestics served to dehumanize their labor, and by extension, undermine their sense of class mobility.

Resistance among domestics can be examined through economic, physical, and psychological acts which enabled women in domestic service to decrease the negative impacts of reproductive labor. Primary accounts suggest domestics stole from their employer’s home in order to balance their lack of pay. This was justified in reference to the informal (verbal) agreement of domestic employment that did not outline specific conditions. Georgia notes that food was gathered from employers’ homes and disbursed within her community: “I indignantly deny that we are thieves. We don’t steal; we just “take” things— they are a part of the oral contract, [expressed] or implied. We understand it, and most of the white folks understand it.”27 Communal efforts to alleviate insufficient pay suggests inadequate wage was a systemic issue within the African American community.

Physical resistance can be interpreted through the gradual shift from live-in employment to daywork among domestic servants. As live-in employment diminishes a domestic’s personal autonomy, physical separation from an employer was key to mitigate the psychological and physical tolls of domestic service. Katzman states that live-in domestics experienced fatigue and malnourishment due to the physical conditions of their workspace. In reaction, Clark-Lewis notes domestic servants preferred daywork as it provided personal freedom to a domestic’s workload and pay.28 Furthermore, daywork enabled women to distance themselves from potential exploitations of their employer.29 Day work served to reduce the physical

24 Judith Rollins, Between Women, 158.
26 Ibid, 91.
28 Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, Living in, Living Out, 148.
29 Ibid, 168.
labour of domestic service as a result of standardized shifts, and by extension, reduced the risk of sexual assault. In addition, worker’s resistance can also be understood through the change of pace during household duties; Robin Kelly notes that “slowdowns” served to manage daily workloads and curate personal autonomy.30

Psychological resistance serves as a critical mediator between interactions with employers and domestic servants. Rollins argues that domestic women opposed psychological abuse through the “value system.” This rationalization is understood as the measurement of an “individual’s worth less by material success than by ‘the kind person you are’.”31 As domestics were aware of their employer’s personal lives and habits, this in turn, enabled servants to reject the perception of white authority, and as result, maintain self-respect.32 Further, black domestics consciously separated from their inferior roles through “Uncle Tom Performance” which displays a complacency to their status, although in actuality, domestics performed duties without accepting the work’s low status.33 Performance as a form of resistance reflects practices used by African American slaves that served to consciously separate one’s physical labor from their dignity.

Ultimately, domestic service reflected the economic, physical, and psychological exploitation of African American women, but also the opposition among servants. As discussed, domestics utilized ‘Uncle Tom’ performance as an ideological barrier from racist assumptions of black women, and their low-status employment. This in turn enabled black women to continue domestic service roles while self-dignity was maintained. Domestics also altered the pace of work in effort to place control over their workload. Further, domestics began to seek daywork employment, which served to distance servants from their employer, and by effect, reduce the likelihood of sexual assault. For example, domestic servants stole from the workplace, and redistributed to their community in an attempt to balance their insufficient pay. This was justified in reference to systemic poverty experienced by the black community.

Conditions of domestic service suggest exploitation based upon racialized and feminized characteristics. To reiterate, employers utilized “differential language” to undermine the status of domestic servants and reinforce racial power structures.34 Furthermore, the proximity of a domestic to their employer elevates the risk of sexual assault; whereas submission to an employer’s advancement further validates racist assumptions of a black women’s sexuality. In addition, black women were comparatively paid less than their white counterparts, which contributes to the lack

30 Robin D. G. Kelley, “‘We Are Not What We Seem’: Rethinking Black Working-Class Opposition in the Jim Crow South,” 89.
31 Judith Rollins, Between Women, 213.
32 Ibid, 213.
33 Ibid, 168.
of social advancement through employment opportunities.

In no uncertain fashion did African American women become passive to the economic, psychological, and physical tolls of reproductive labour, but rather, domestics utilized day-to-day resistance methods that were key in undermining institutional racism. It is evident that grassroots resistance, led by African American women proved successful in maintaining personal autonomy within the restrictive framework of intersectionality, and racist attitudes of employers. What is more, domestic servants were able to combat their exploitative work environments without the support of a formal labour union. While reproductive labor can be understood as a revival of dominant and submissive roles associated with slavery, African American domestics were exceptional in the methods of resistance, and ideological opposition to institutional racism.
Bibliography


Kyle Resendes

Kyle Resendes is a fourth-year History major who is also pursuing a minor in Criminology. His main area of focus is American history between Southern Reconstruction and the Civil Rights Movement. He is interested in the experiences of African Americans during the twentieth century and plans to write a thesis on the efforts of women in the Black Power Movement. Outside of academia, Kyle is passionate about music and has been an avid guitarist for the better part of ten years. Born and raised in Toronto, he can be found in local music shops or cycling around the city.
The Protection and Conservation of Quilts in Museums, 1850 to the Present

Serena Rice

A quilt is a form of textile art that consists of a quilt top, a layer of batting, and a backing, with stitches or ties used to hold together those three layers. Quilts can take the form of a bed covering (the most common form), wall hangings, table runners, and other examples, and have a large range of subject matter and style. Most quilts from the early modern period were made with wool or cotton clothing scraps and patches, as well as hand-made and store-bought fabric; however, modern quilts are now often made with a variety of interesting and unexpected materials. Quilts were often used as bed coverings during the eighteenth century onwards in the United States, Canada, Australia and England. Ruth McKendry, an expert in nineteenth century handmade textiles, mentions in her book, Quilts and Other Bed Coverings in the Canadian Tradition, that many families coming to Canada from the United States after 1780, and Scotland after 1800, would bring their family quilts, therefore bringing a bit of their family heritage and memories with them. The focus of this essay will be on the challenge of conserving quilts, especially in regards to older or damaged quilts. The museums I have chosen to focus on are the Victoria & Albert Museum’s exhibition Quilts 1700-2010, and the National Quilt Museum in Paducah, Kentucky. I will be looking into their preservation strategies for quilts, as well as other examples detailing the process of conserving quilts.

Firstly, I will be looking at different quilt collections and the ways in which these quilts have been displayed and preserved. The National Quilt Museum in Paducah, was opened in 1991, largely due to the efforts of Bill and Meredith Schroeder. It is home to over six hundred quilts, and has a main gallery of fifty to sixty works, as well as three other galleries with traveling exhibits. Part of their collection of quilts is available online, and can be viewed at quiltindex.org. It is interesting to note that they also have a part of their website dedicated to quilt care and provide tips for the general public on conservation of their own quilts. Although this museum does not publicize their conservation techniques, it is essential to include in this essay because it provides an incredible example of the variety of very significant American quilts. As stated previously, many American families came to Canada after 1780 with quilts and their other possessions. Ruth McKendry writes, they escaped

1 Ruth McKendry, Quilts and Other Bed Coverings in the Canadian Tradition. (Toronto: 1979), 19-27.
2 Ibid, 13-17.
to Canada because they were Loyalists escaping the American Revolution. These groups of people forced out of the United States of America were “remarkable for [their] cultural diversity,” as they included a great number of different nationalities not commonly seen together at the time. This diversity of nationalities resulted in a diversity of different techniques being used in quilts, and this same theme flows through the National Quilt Museum. In an article interviewing Frank Bennett, the Chief Executive Officer of the National Quilt Museum, he talks about the museum’s collections representing a diversity of quilters and quilts in today’s world. Different organizations such as the National Quilt Museum have continued to showcase and represent the diversity of groups after 1780.

The Victoria & Albert Museum in London, England, houses the world’s largest collection of decorative arts. It was created in 1851, after the Great Exhibition of 1851, and moved to its current location in 1857. The Victoria & Albert Museum’s Quilting and Patchwork Collection consists of one hundred and ninety-four pieces available to view in their online database; some of those quilts were in the “Quilts 1700-2010” Exhibition, curated by Sue Pritchard. This exhibition was on display at the Victoria & Albert Museum from March 20 to July 4, 2010 and featured 65 quilts from the Victoria & Albert Museum collection, temporary loans and new works by contemporary artists. Sue Pritchard, the curator of this exhibit and a project director at the Victoria & Albert Museum, created a blog series going through the different steps, processes and anecdotes associated with preparing for the exhibit. In a blog post from August 4, 2009, Pritchard writes about the exhibition of textiles, explaining “Textiles are, by their very nature, fragile objects which are susceptible to damage, particularly from excessive exposure to light and pests. For this very reason, access to textile collections generally is limited and the problematic issues of how to display historic objects is a very real impediment to mounting major displays and exhibitions.” She is able to identify some of the most common factors in the conservation of quilts, which is especially significant because the quilts in the exhibit range from the 1700’s to 2010. The conservation techniques Pritchard refers to were used for some of the quilts in the exhibition, which allowed some quilts to be on beds, the way many were meant to be used in everyday life, and other more stable quilts to be mounted on the wall. Overall, as a result of the blog series and the exhibition itself, Sue Pritchard was able to show the work and intent that goes into textile preservation and how to display fragile pieces.

Ruth McKendry, Quilts and Other Bed Coverings in the Canadian Tradition. (Toronto: 1979), 13.
Ibid.
Ibid.
Victoria & Albert Museum “Quilts 1700-2010 Videos.” Victoria & Albert Museum, http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/q/quilts-1700-2010-videos/
There are several factors that can lead to the degradation of quilts. Some of these factors include natural decay of cellulose, light, the environment it is in, insects and fungi, intrinsic degradation, soiling and stains, and most importantly, handling. These factors become very significant, as conservators need to identify the most obvious causes of damage to a quilt and focus on those factors in order to save the quilt from complete decay. In order to prevent the degrading of quilts, Fockje Boersma, the head of collection care at the National Library of the Netherlands, identifies some visual indicators that degradation is happening. She lists fading as a result of light, which can damage both the fibres and the dye used in the textile, yellowing of undyed fabric, loss of strength and flexibility seen in a loss of fibre or through feeling the fabric, and acidity usually identified through the smell of the textile being different. Textile conservation is a topic that is not mentioned in detail on either the National Quilt Museum or the Victoria & Albert Museum website. Despite this lack of information on their websites, in Textile Conservation: Advances in Practice, edited by textile experts Frances Lennard and Patricia Ewer, there is a case study by Marion Kite, the head of furniture, textiles and fashion conservation at the Victoria & Albert Museum, on how the Victoria & Albert Museum has changed their approach on conservation over time. It identifies the change in the human element of textile conservation and preservation: the evolution of staff doing conservation work. It first mentions the roots of conservation at the Victoria & Albert Museum starting in 1850 with their “repairers” who worked in the basement of the museum. Kite then jumps to the 1960’s and 1970’s, when the museum would hire people for the position of assistant curator, and the assistant curators would receive a significant amount of training to provide more familiarity with materials science and chemistry. From there, the museum developed a more collaborative relationship between conservators and curators, who would work together to present exhibitions. At this point, there was also a shift because textile conservators would be both conserving and mounting the pieces, whereas the curator mounted them previously. As well, the museum created a new exhibition strategy, which resulted in the work of conservators being more specialized, with different people focusing on different types of conservation in order for them to have a more defined role within the museum. Apart from this, the Victoria & Albert Museum has also collaborated with universities and other research partners to fund their conservation and research projects due to these institutions’ limited resources. Starting 2004, the conservation department also included “the new Furniture, Textiles and Fashion

14 Marion Kite, “Modern textile conservation at the Victoria and Albert Museum” (Amsterdam: 2010), 30.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid, 33.
18 Ibid, 34.
(FTF) conservation specialist area” which resulted in more knowledge to be shared and all areas of textile conservation to be covered.\(^{19}\) Kite ends the case study with a view at the future of the conservation department, which is hoping to go beyond conservation and focus on gaining a better understanding of the textiles in their collection by studying them in greater detail and doing more research.

Textile conservation is also discussed in detail in “An Heirloom Patchwork Quilt and Its Conservation Problems” by James W. Rice, a former conservation scientist at the Textile Museum in Washington, D.C., and in “The conservation of the E Dickens Quilt” by Christina Ritschel, a private textile conservator. These two are interesting to compare because Rice’s article was published in 1965, and Ritschel’s article was published in 2010. In comparing these, the reader can see the significant changes over time in the world of conservation. Rice’s article details a team working on a patchwork quilt with ink signatures in the middle of each quilt block. The team catalogues the damage, which includes soiling of the white areas on the quilt top and entire backing, yellow discolouration over the entire quilt, small stains, and seven patchwork pieces with holes and splits in the fabric as a result of the black dye used.\(^{20}\) Their first steps for conservation consisted of covering the ripped patchwork areas with fine silk net, then saturating the patchwork sections, the border, and the netted areas with melted paraffin wax.\(^{21}\) They then moved onto cleaning the quilt, which involved twelve steps, including washing it with an anionic detergent and a non-ionic detergent, and going through a series of folding and drying in machines. Next, the team completed a six-step dry-cleaning process, which included submerging it in “a large cylindrical dry cleaning machine and immersed in Stoddard solvent,”\(^{22}\) drying it and then treating it with steam to rehydrate it and keep it from being too dry. During the cleaning process, the last of the wax was taken off. After these final cleaning processes, the team finished their conservation efforts by replacing damaged parts of the quilt with new materials. In Ritschel’s article, conservators were preparing a quilt for exhibition. The team started with research on the quilt, through which they discovered it was made in the 1840s.\(^{23}\) It is also interesting to note that they have a much richer section on the background, description, and condition assessment than what is described in Rice’s article. The team working on this quilt separated the conservation into three stages: surface cleaning, stabilisation, and mounting. Ritschel then goes on to detail how they performed both a surface clean with a low suction vacuum to remove the majority of soiling and mould on the quilt,\(^{24}\) and from there they decided to do a wet cleaning with no detergent, as during the cleaning

\(^{19}\) Ibid.


\(^{21}\) Ibid, 1-4.

\(^{22}\) Ibid, 5.


\(^{24}\) Ibid, 205.
of a sample section detergent removed some of the detailing on the quilt’s fabric. The team then used nylon net over the fragile parts of the quilt, put a support in the centre, and stapled the quilt on a frame so it could be cleaned easily. From there, they submerged the quilt in deionized water and agitated it, rinsed twice, then left it to air dry with blotting paper and cotton fabric on top to “draw off discolouration products or dye and prevent bleeding during the final drying stage.”

Following this, the team moved onto the stabilization. They were only able to stabilize the front of the quilt because of timing constraints, and their first step was to dye tulle custom colours and sew them on top of the red and brown areas of the quilt to stabilize and protect it. They also used an identical cotton fabric to protect the backing of the quilt, and sewed it onto the backing material alone. Finally, they mounted the quilt onto a white linen-covered board with four hundred steel entomology pins, and mounted the board onto the wall of the gallery. Ritschel ends the article with a brief discussion on the storage of the quilt post-exhibition. The storage process for the quilt consisted of unpinning the quilt from the board, rolling it up with the face out with layers of polyester batting to pad it, and then covering it in Tyvek and putting it in a tube. Tyvek is used in conservation because it is water and dust resistant, does not shed, and is a smooth surface which allows for use as protection for objects that may catch on other fibres.

Throughout Rice’s and Ritschel’s articles, it is clear to see how much progress has been made in the world of textile conservation, yet how the key cleaning processes themselves have not changed all that much. The comparison between the articles shows how the use of detergents and many chemicals has diminished to prevent further damage being done to quilts, as well as the reduction in using machines to dry quilts, as that also damages them further. Overall, these articles show how the main focus in quilt conservation has shifted from cleaning a quilt as much as possible to get everything off of it, to keeping the quilt as intact as possible, while removing surface dirt and grime, and supporting the damaged areas with cloth to prevent it from degrading further.

In conclusion, through looking at the examples of the National Quilt Museum and the Victoria & Albert Museum, we can gain a better understanding of quilts and why they are significant, as well as the complex teams involved in conservation within museums. In terms of quilt conservation, we can see how many factors can be involved in quilt degradation, and how to prevent further damage through preventative care and detecting signs of degradation. Through Kite, Rice, and Ritschel’s articles, we can see how much textile conservation has changed throughout the years, and how there has been a shift to a gentler approach taken to conserve and retain as much original detailing as possible. Through their articles, we can also see how significant quilt and textile conservation is, as without them those quilts would not be presentable to view in museums or perhaps not even exist as artifacts. Overall, throughout this essay, it has been shown that textile conservation
is essential in order to exhibit quilts, and that quilts are an important component of cultural and national identity.

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Department stores were a significant part of Canada’s modernization; they drastically changed the ways in which Canadians shopped and their standards of living. This essay will discuss Eaton’s and Simpson’s, focusing on the material culture of their department stores while looking at their broader meaning and significance, specifically around the late 1800s to the 1930s. These two stores were chosen because they were the largest retailers in Canada and cross-street rivals. This essay will utilize Eaton’s and Simpson’s catalogues, window displays, interiors, location, and overall architecture as material culture examples. It is important to note the limited scope in this essay in its focus of Eaton’s and Simpson’s Toronto locations, thereby excluding the extended branches in different Canadian provinces.

The emergence of department stores is characterized by the gradual move from small general stores, which tended to carry specific merchandise, to multi-levelled department stores that offered a wide array of product. In Canada before Confederation, specialized shops existed.¹ People in North America during the early nineteenth century earned and traded what they had available, while immigrants from France and Britain already had items produced by industrial methods.² This demonstrates how more industrially advanced nations like France may have been in comparison to Canada at the time, which was also pronounced in their earlier department store emergences. In the last two decades of the late nineteenth century, department stores were just emerging in Britain, Germany, Switzerland, and Canada, while the world’s largest department stores were already in France and the United States.³

Before department stores could be made possible, there had to be developments made that would later be crucial to a department store’s identity. Frank McConnell Mayfield elucidates that these include “the growth of our cities, improvement in transportation systems, a rise in the standard of living, increased capital, the coming of the electric age, and the development of plate glass and retail advertising.”⁴ It is important to look at these changes in a Canadian context. In 1885, goods and people were easily transported between Canada’s coasts by train, and both

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¹ Donica Belisle, Retail Nation: Department Stores and the Making of Modern Canada (Vancouver, 2011), 16.
² Ibid, 17.
³ Ibid, 21.
⁴ Frank McConnell Mayfield, Department Store Story (New York, 1949), 28.
Canada’s industrial capacity and its population were continuously increasing. These factors inspired Eaton and Simpson to take advantage of the conditions and open their own dry goods stores.\(^5\)

Attitudes and lifestyles began to change with the developments of industrialization and population growth. Meredith L. Clausen states, “As standards of living rose, shorter working hours and larger salaries meant an increased number of people had extra leisure time and money.”\(^6\) This rise of standards in living corresponded with more materialistic attitudes. Donica Belisle elucidates the anonymity that rural people experienced once they moved downtown: they “left behind stable communities in which social status depended upon kinship, everyone had a clear place in the hierarchy” — buying luxury goods was what gave them “status” in the city.\(^7\) This highlights the cultural importance of goods; people were now shopping for luxury rather than need. In the early 1880s, Simpson and Eaton both moved to Yonge street in Toronto.\(^8\) Their close proximity allowed shoppers to travel to and from both easily, and may have provoked their rivalry further.

Catalogues were a significant piece of material culture for both Eaton’s and Simpson’s. They allowed people in remote areas to shop, attracted customers, and extended their client base.\(^9\) Timothy Eaton introduced his Eaton’s catalogue in 1884.\(^10\) In 1894, Simpson’s followed, and offered a mail order trade across the country.\(^11\) Mail-order catalogues also had highly detailed descriptions of product, which is different from shopping in-store.\(^12\)

An example from a page of one of Simpson’s catalogues can be seen in Figure 1. Notice the attractive women depicted; they have shiny hair, are skinny, and are posed interacting with objects and accessories. The environment around them is luxurious with colourful carpets, and arched window, and a light background. At the bottom, it reads “We Ship Your Parcel Within One Day of Receipt of Order,” assuring customers the efficacy of their post. Women’s dresses and their prices are marked, and the different luxury fabrics used are integrated into the names of the products, such as the “Silk Poplin” and “Satin Habituai.”

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\(^5\) Belisle, *Retail Nation*, 20
\(^7\) Belisle, *Retail Nation*, 29.
\(^8\) Ibid, 21.
\(^10\) Ibid.
The significance of catalogues is especially congruent in the lives of rural people. Mayfield explains that Eaton’s catalogues were regarded as the “Farmer’s Bible,” in that “women farmers became so dependent on Eaton’s that the store sometimes gets questions from them asking how to handle drunken husbands or how to treat children’s ailments.”

There were French versions sent out to Quebec that were supposedly utilized for teaching language in schools. Catalogues also entertained children, ultimately giving their parents a break. Belisle explains that children would use them to make dolls, as colouring books, and would figure out what they would do with products as a game. These are all indicative of the covert immersion of the concepts of shopping and luxury in children’s minds. With this, children started to admire Eaton’s and started to what they thought domestic life should involve. Catalogues were not always used for their intended purpose — people also integrated them into their daily lives and personally connected to them.

Eaton’s had an exchange system to take care of cases where a customer wanted to return a product; Samuel Herbert Ditchett notes that it stated, “give satisfaction to the customer or refund money, together with reimbursement for any transportation charges.” Women would frequently take advantage of this policy by returning clothes after being used; for instance, some women wore different hats to church on a weekly basis, constantly buying and returning. This is one way people utilized catalogues and in-store shopping, and reminiscent to the importance people put on material goods in relation to their status.

The architecture and location of the Eaton’s and Simpson’s stores are important to discuss because these factors are significant to their overall success. Clausen demonstrates the consideration that must be put into the creation of department stores: “they need to be large, multi-storied buildings with an internal structure slender enough to permit light, strong enough to hold the weights of large

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13 Mayfield, Department Store Story, 43.
14 Ibid.
15 Belisle, Retail Nation, 140.
16 Ibid, 141.
18 Belisle, Retail Nation, 142.
crowds and display counters, and have heat and ventilation for comfort.”19 These all ensure the layout of the building will address its functional needs.

The needs of a department store were constantly addressed through Eaton’s expansions during this period. Belisle outlines some of these changes: “In 1886, Eaton’s expanded, and brought the total floor space to more than 50,000; this made room for 35 merchandise departments, 300 employees, three-storey light wells, a basement section, electric lighting and elevators.”20 Some of these changes were being used as a marketing strategy. The elevators only went up; when customers had to go down, they had to walk and experience the displays on the way.21 T. Eaton Co. took up most of the city block between James, Queen and Yonge in Toronto.22 Toronto: Album of Views, a book commissioned by Eaton himself, includes an illustration of the two store fronts, and the factory behind them.23

In looking at the Eaton’s building, one could note its grandeur and large windows for display at the bottom. Hatfield emphasizes that there is an attempt to centralize Eaton’s in terms both of its closeness of city hall and the fact that it took up a whole city block.24 Depicted around the scene are street cars, and people crowded around the display windows. At the bottom of the image, one can read “Canada’s Greatest Store.”25 This demonstrates Eaton’s efforts in establishing the importance of his department store through geography.

Eaton’s factories were important because most of the operatives were women.26 Before department stores, retail work was usually a man’s job, and women were thought to belong at home.27 Department stores saved money by hiring females since it kept labour costs low.28 Reactions to these changes are worth noting. Donica Belisle explains, “moralists believed that women who left home to earn wages in department stores threatened the European patriarchal family. Middle-class feminists, meanwhile, believed department stores’ labour practices threatened white women’s respectability and reproductive health.”29 As Russell T. Johnston points out, department stores also recognized the ease and natural feeling that women salespersons brought; “Eaton’s even considered employing a woman copyrighter in 1900.”30 This is demonstrative of the economic opportunities that rose for women

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19 Clausen, “The Department Store”, 22.
20 Belisle, Retail Nation, 21.
21 Mayfield, Department Store Story, 43.
22 Hatfield, “Photographing Growth”, 41.
23 Ibid, 45.
24 Ibid, 42.
25 Ibid, 45.
26 Ditchett, Eaton’s of Canada, 32.
27 Belisle, Retail Nation, 159.
28 Ibid.
with the emergence of the department store, and some of the backlash against it.

The architecture of the 1894 Robert Simpson store is particularly important to discuss. It was designed by Edmund Burke, who was inspired by architects in Chicago who used a post-and-lintel system for shop fronts, making it one of the first buildings of that style in Canada. Among architects, debates about what was considered correct architecture and what was not arose. William R. Gregg, commented that “building thick-glass fronts on a ground floor with heavy buildings on top was common, but it was not pleasing and right.” Burke said that the arch is the only good way to fix Gregg’s problem, but has a disadvantage in its arches obstructing light on the upper floor. This discourse is significant because while architects wanted buildings to be functional and true to their purpose, there was still an intention to give them what was thought of as “right” architecture and beauty.

In Figure 2, one can see the architectural components of the Robert Simpson building. It is large and has six storeys, allowing the building to hold many different types of goods on different floors. It is steel-framed and has a lot of windows that surround the building and allow natural light to flood in. Burke built it before the Simpson’s Christmas rush, but time constraints and a low budget meant that fire-proofing was neglected; this had consequences in 1895 when an arsonist targeted it and it burnt down, but was later rebuilt and fire-proofed.

Window displays are significant in that they are an essential part of a store and are a consumer’s first impression when walking along a street. Elaine S. Abelson describes the innovation of glass material in a department store: “It moved merchandise from boxes to a controlled display. Glass was used on counters, cabinets, and display cases.” With this, windows allowed customers to directly see what is available to them; once this was realized, displays began to be taken quite seriously. As Anca I. Lasc elucidates, window displays often referenced familiar places and “became spaces that allowed an imaginary transposition into a world away from, yet within, the busy streets of commerce, entertainment and everyday life.”

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32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid, 115.
35 Ibid.
allowed a viewer to imagine themselves immersed in them, ultimately leading to desire.

Eaton’s put great effort into their window displays. Windows were coordinated with street sides in mind, and sometimes changed so often that there would always be something new when women walked past. Ditchett explains that “prestige-building windows” maintained Eaton’s tone — light backgrounds were a hallmark for this in its reduced reflection and heightened effectiveness. During Christmas time, Eaton’s and Simpson’s rivalry was especially pronounced and the event pushed them both to make their windows more and more appealing. This is important because looking at the windows and going to the parades were part of Christmas tradition for a lot of families. This demonstrates an integration between department stores and tradition; this material culture was becoming more important in the lives of Canadians. There was a lot of thought and time being put into display windows. Mayfield validates this magnitude of consideration and care: “some window display departments would get so proud of their work, that they would refuse to tear up the window by selling the items in it; it was common to ask a customer to wait a day or two for the product to come in.”

There was additionally a great amount of consideration being put into the interior of a store. Interiors showed what money could buy. This material culture had an interesting effect on the morals of a person, in that they often ignored them when their desire was too strong. Abelson points out that in the twentieth-century, one could begin to “see links between women’s apparently overpowering desires, the environment of the department stores, and the behaviour that was alternatively labelled ‘shopping’ or ‘kleptomania.’” Shoppers were surrounded by temptation, which is an overall theme and goal in the advertising and design of department stores. The interior is where one who falls into the trap of a window display is being led to. In department stores, impulse items would be at the entrance of a store, and demand items would be upstairs or in the back; this was so the customers would walk through as much of the store as possible. This strategy can be seen in Eaton’s Toronto store. Ditchett notes that the third floor of the department store held a free baby-weighing service and “infants goods of all kinds, including furniture, and where mothers can buy clothing and headwear for children up to six years of age.” Other

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38 Ditchett, Eaton’s of Canada, 58.
41 Belisle, Retail Nation, 146.
42 Mayfield, Department Store Story, 201.
43 Abelson, When Ladies Go A-Thieving. 46.
44 Clausen, “The Department Store”, 22.
45 Ditchett, Eaton’s of Canada, 22.
floors included toilet goods, cameras, office supplies, silverware, candy, a post office, telephones, furnishings, a self-service grocery, garden tools, toys, clothing, and other luxuries. With all the diverse services and goods offered, a person was able to go to a department store and buy almost anything; it was convenient.

Simpson’s image shifted once the Arcadian Court was introduced in 1929. According to Patricia Maitland from the *Toronto Life*, it was the world’s largest department store restaurant at the time. It quickly became a hub for the social scene; people supposedly started to say “Eaton’s for the masses, Simpson’s for the classes.” To visualize the environment, Maitland notes, “while gentlemen enjoyed the clubby environs of the Men’s Grill on the mezzanine, unescorted ladies stayed below, in plumed hats and elbow-length gloves, filling row upon row of white-linened tables.”

There is architectural beauty in it: arches, domes, chandeliers, which can be seen in Figure 3, a picture depicting an orchestra at the Court. Details can be seen in the intricate patterns of the railings, lamps, and skylights. It was able to seat one thousand three hundred people and had forty-foot ceilings. This luxurious space with decoration created a worthy environment for the “classes” that Maitland discussed. With the Arcadian Court, Simpson’s was giving their consumers a new reason to visit his store. This changes a consumer’s conception of shopping, which could begin to be thought of as an escape from one’s routine. This material culture has importance because it is indicative of how Simpson’s shifted from a store to a social hub; some of its floors became places for displaying one’s prestige and class, rather than just for shopping.

According to Belisle, chain stores, which grew rapidly in the 1930s, became serious threats to department stores’ business. Rural people bought cars and began to prefer to drive to stores closer to their homes. This is a factor in the decline of Eaton’s profits; to try and fix this, in the 1930s, scripts were made for sales transactions to improve sales, but this had negative effects in its removal of creativity, and addition of artificiality in salespeople.

46 Ibid, 21-22.
47 Patricia Maitland. “Holding Court: It’s a Testament to our Yearning for the Familiar that the Arcadian Court is Still Around.” *Toronto Life* 358, no. 3 (2001): 88.
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
50 Belisle, *Retail Nation*, 40.
52 Belisle, *Retail Nation*, 37.
53 Ibid.
This essay has attempted to use examples of discourses about Eaton’s and Simpson’s catalogues, window displays, interiors, location, and overall architecture as important aspects in the material culture of department stores and what they meant to Canadians. Department stores brought about a range of changes in people’s consumption practices. People started to desire for status through the goods sold and felt a temptation from the display window to the final purchase. Further, through hiring women, other social changes followed. Catalogues were successful in their outreach to Canadians and were utilized past their intended use. The architecture and locations of the stores had meaning and intention behind them, and fulfilled the basic needs of a department store. Display windows and interiors used marketing strategies which had effects on the way consumers shopped. The Arcadia Court epitomized the recreation that department stores had to offer. Department stores’ convenience seemed to be replaced by the convenience of local chain stores and automobiles in the 1930s, ultimately being huge contributors to their lower popularity. Nonetheless, the services offered by department stores had a lasting effect on the lives of Canadians through economic growth and constantly increasing standards for luxury.
Julia Tomasi graduated from Ryerson University in 2020 as a Psychology major. Both Psychology and History allow one to learn about people and their behaviours, which is something Julia is passionate about. She completed her essay for her Themes in Material Culture class, which focuses on artifacts through the beliefs and attitudes of a particular society at a given time. Julia plans to pursue a career in market or social research, which will allow her to contribute to a greater understanding of the world while also being able to constantly learn about new and different areas.

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