LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY

TO DIE A 'CANADIAN': HOW NINETEENTH-CENTURY EUROPEAN IMMIGRANTS
INFLUENCED THE CULTURE OF DEATH IN CANADA

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ARTS
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THUNDER BAY, ONTARIO

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To my Gram, that grand old girl from O'Connor

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Thinking outside the Coffin

In Claudian's *De Raptu Proserpinae*, Pluto tries to comfort his new bride after abducting her from above the ground. He tells Proserpine that as queen of the Underworld, she will encounter the souls of both the wealthy and the poor, as "death renders all equal."[1] The concept of social equality in death is a motif that has filtered down through the centuries. In the *Book of Ecclesiastes* there are frequent references to the sharing of a "common destiny," while in James Shirley's 1646 poem *Death the Leveller*, kings are "[in] the dust be equal made/With the poor crooked scythe and spade."[2] Death is a universal and inescapable experience, yet the social stigma surrounding open discussions of death remains a significant part of Canadian culture. To understand the mystery of why modern attitudes toward death assumed their current forms, it is necessary to explore their socio-historical roots. This thesis focuses specifically on the cultural interpretations of death shared by the Finns, the Ukrainians, and the Greeks, for each group represents a region in Europe affected by the developments of the Canadian immigration policy, and in turn influenced the cultural landscape of present-day Thunder Bay. The Judeo-Christian

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[1] In Latin, "*Sub tua purpurei venient vestigia reges deposito luxu turba cum paupere mixt (omnia mors aequat); tu damnatura nocentes,tu requiem latura piis; te iudice sontes improba cogentur vitae commissa fateri.*" Claudian, *De Raptu Proserpinae*, 2, 300-4. Bill P. Thayer, "LacusCurtius . de Raptu Proserpinae –Liber II," http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/L/Roman/Texts/Claudian/De_Raptu_Proserpinae/2*.html#302 (accessed August 6, 2014). In English, "To thy feet shall come purple-clothed kings, stripped of their pomp, and mingling with the unmoneyed throng; for death renders all equal. Thou shalt give doom to the guilty and rest to the virtuous. Before thy judgement-throne the wicked must confess the crimes of their evil lives." Claudian, *The Rape of Proserpine 2*.300-4. Bill P. Thayer, "LacusCurtius . Claudian –The Rape of Proserpine: Book II," http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Claudian/De_Raptu_Proserpinae/2*.html#Praef.1 (accessed August 6, 2014).

[2] Ecclesiastes 9:2-3, 12-3 English Standard Version of the Holy Bible (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), quoted in Bible Gateway, "Ecclesiastes 9 ESV – Death Comes to All," Bible Gateway, https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=ESV&search=Ecclesiastes%209 (accessed August 10, 2014) ; James Shirley, "Death the Leveller," in *The Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language*, ed. Francis Turner Palgrave (London: Macmillan, 1875), lines 7-8.

beliefs held by those groups demonstrate how death played an integral role in not only the settlement of Northwestern Ontario, but also how they contributed to the expansion of Canada as a unified nation. Within the larger context of history, they explain why death deserves to merit greater attention in studies of Canadian history not only as an important area of study, but also to emphasize the significance of death as an important piece of the quintessential Canadian "mosaic."

The study of death in Canada is integral to the well-rounded study of man, as a contributory angle to the expansive field of history as a whole. Harold J. Perkins noted that, as a separate discipline, social history should be the queen of historical studies. Michael B. Katz agreed, stating that the "predominance of ungrounded assumption over hard knowledge about past societies reflects partly the traditional concerns of historians, who have been more interested in politics, great men, governmental policy, and ideas than in the patterns made by the everyday lives of people."[3] In order to treat this unusual topic with proper respect, the discourse of social history provides the most academic flexibility for this venture.

The History of Life in History

In ancient societies, where time followed a cyclical path, life and death shared a mutual co-existence, and death held an equal sense of cultural importance.[4] According to Philippe Ariès,

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[3] Michael B. Katz, introduction to *The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth-Century City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 8; Harold Perkins, "Social History", *Approaches to History: A Symposium*, in "Social History," in *The Varieties of History: From Voltaire to the Present*, ed. Fritz Stern (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 431 and 455.

[4] In Book 6 of the *Aeneid*, the Sibyl explains to Aeneas that the group Charon pushed away from his ferry "are poor and unburied", meaning they did not have a coin placed in the mouth as per the custom. In addition, Charon is forbidden to transport the souls "if their bones have not found rest in proper burial". See Mark P.O. Morford, and

the cultural imbalance of valuing life over death resulted from the distortion of man's

relationship with nature (and death) to favour the advances of human progress, while the

emergence of individualism contributed to the breakdown of the collective identity of the

community. Medieval monastic Chroniclers, and later, other Western historians tipped the

proverbial scales in life's favour through their pursuit of 'objective' history and a unilinear path

of chronology. The romanticized version of history maintains that people looked forward to

death as a means of escaping their sordid existence, their yearning for entry into the Christian

Heaven encouraged their familiarity with death, to be aware of its presence and be accepting of

their time to die.[5]

    The exalting of life over death continued during the modern era. From 1750 to 1830, the

European spirit of individuality underwent a gradual transformation from the grand opulence of

the Baroque style, to the clean simplicity of Greek and Roman references in the Neoclassical

style, as reflected in the funerary monuments of the period. Death skeletons became largely

absent from Neoclassical memorials, a response to the revival of interest in ancient art, and to the

change in theology with less fear and dread towards the notions of a fiery Hell or infinitesimal

Purgatory.[6] During the nineteenth century, the intellectual rationality of life emerged with the

developments of medicine and Darwinian science, which competed with the popular belief of

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Robert J. Lenardon, "Views of the Afterlife: The Realm of Hades," in *Classical Mythology*, 8th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 363, 371. A variation on this tradition was also present in southern Ontario during the nineteenth century, when coppers were placed on the eyelids of the deceased to prevent them from re-opening. See [4] Susan Smart, *A Better Place: Death and Burial in the Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto: Ontario Genealogical Society/Dundurn, 2011).

[5] Peter Claus and John Marriott, *History: An introduction to theory, method and practice* (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited, 2012), 137-8.

[6] Philippe Ariès, *L'Homme devant la mort* [The Hour of Our Death] (Paris, 1977), 596-607, in Joachim Whaley, ed., introduction to *Mirrors of Mortality: Studies in the Social History of Death* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), 5; David Irwin, "Sentiment and Antiquity: European Tombs 1750 – 1830," in Whaley, *Mirrors of Mortality*, 132, 141-2.

Spiritualism. Darwin's theories challenged several of the important religious doctrines that were central to orthodox Christianity, including the belief in Original Sin, and the exile of Adam and Eve from Eden. In the process of creating "infidelity and doubt," science became the new religion as it "consolidated belief in the miraculous, the extraordinary, [and] the unexplainable."[7] Fuelled by the Romantic superiority of imagination over reason, the new order of Spiritualism encouraged irrational ways of knowing among the elite, including Queen Victoria, who used her manservant as a spiritual medium between her and her dead husband.[8] With his death and her severely prolonged grieving period, influencing the cultural landscape of Britain, the social preoccupation with death and dying flourished during what David Cannadine referred to as "the golden age of grief."[9]

During the period, parents taught children to anticipate their own deaths and the deaths of others, as though funerals were social events. After the two World Wars and the liberalization of sex and sexual mores in the second half of the twentieth century, the collective attitude toward death changed, and frowned upon the pomposity associated with the Victorian celebration of death, and interest in the subject became "almost a perversion."[10] In France, historians Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre established the *Annales* School of historical thought in response to what they perceived as the failure of the historical establishment. The type of history espoused

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[7] John Morley, *Death, Heaven, and the Victorians* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971), 102-3.

[8] Spiritualism is the belief that spirits in the afterlife want to continue communicating with the living, and have the ability to do so. A popular belief in English-speaking countries from the 1840s to the 1920s, Spiritualists held the idea that spirits are more advanced than humans, and are therefore more capable of providing useful knowledge about moral and ethical issues, including how to rule a country. Morley, *Death, Heaven, and the Victorians*, 105-6; Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), 296; Emma Hardinge Britten, *Nineteenth-Century Miracles: Spirits and their Work in Every Country of the Earth* (New York: William Britten, 1884), 1.

[9] David Cannadine, "War and Death, Grief and Mourning in Modern Britain," in Whaley, 188.

[10] James Stevens Curl, preface to *The Victorian Celebration of Death* (London: David & Charles Limited, 1972), xii-xiii; Geoffrey Gorer, "The Pornography of Death," *Encounter* 5, no. 4 (October 1955): 50.

by the *Annales* School presented an interdisciplinary approach, incorporating many scientific disciplines that happened to be relevant to any historical enquiries concerning death. Though Febvre found death to be "a fashionable subject," sociologists, doctors, and psychologists were monopolizing the trend; historians failed to "direct research into subjects which [would] throw light upon [the] human condition,' claiming there was too much tolerance towards studies in the traditional disciplines of politics and economics.[11]

The favouritism of such traditional disciplines led to the tarnishing of the "temple of Clio," and placing the Muse of History in a continuous tug-of-war between historians as the proponents of art or of science. According to George Macaulay Trevelyan, science does not belong within the purview of History and concluded, "the analogy of physical science has misled many historians […] right away from the truth about their profession."[12] John Bagnell Bury refuted the claim, stating that the influence of science in history allowed for Clio to mature into a 'responsible' Muse.[13] Yet Thomas Carlyle noted that death should be included into the purview of history, when he suggested that History, unlike other disciplines that are safe in the ideological shrines of guilds, is a "Free Emporium, where all these belligerents peaceably meet."[14] Though his observation resurrects the age-old question of whether history is an art or a science, the statement also implies that scholars need to treat thanatology as a valid historical field, though it is often not. In *Varieties of History*, the disciplines of man discussed, including

[11] John McManners, "Death and the French Historians," in Whaley, 115-6.

[12] George Macaulay Trevelyan, "Clio, A Muse," in *Clio, A Muse and Other Essays Literary and Pedestrian* (London: Longmans, Green & Company, Inc., 1913), quoted in "Clio Rediscovered," in Fritz Stern, ed., *Varieties of History: From Voltaire to the Present*, 233.

[13] John Bagnell Bury, "The Science of History," *Selected Essays of J.B. Bury*, ed. Harold Temperley (Cambridge: 1930), quoted in "History as a Science," in Stern, *The Varieties of History*, 210.

[14] Thomas Carlyle, "On History," in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, vol. 2 (New York: n.p., 1900), quoted in "History as Biography," in Stern, *The Varieties of History*, 92.

politics and economics, philosophy and science, were life-oriented areas of study that cornered a significant amount of the historical and historiographical discussion of the nineteenth century.

The Structuralists confirmed the inequity between life and death through their works. In their pairing of contrasting opposites, life was first in the arrangement, connoting objectivity, dominance, and rationality; conversely, death represented subjectivity, subordination, and irrationality.[15] Though the objective/subjective dichotomy remains strong in the study of history and the practice of historiography, death provides a more powerful challenge to the idea of human significance and destiny, and raises questions surrounding the concept of legacies, the perpetuation of memory with durable stones erected since earlier times.[16] In the conglomerate of disciplines that is academia, death appears to be an "academic accident," an anomaly that is frequently present in teachings, yet is persistently ignored, and pushed back onto the dusty shelf of ignorance and neglect. William Thomas Vincent lamented about the shunning of death as a potential topic of historical study during the Victorian era, with Britain's fascination of occultism. In the twentieth century, death expert Douglas Davies came to the same conclusion, as "the experience of insight that accompanies such shifts of knowledge is very largely ignored in the human and social sciences."[17] To Ariès, the collective silence of scholars in the human sciences is ironic, as they choose to be outspoken on many other topics. He admits that they are not entirely at fault, for "their silence is only a part of this great silence that has settled on the

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[15] Jacques Derrida found that in binary oppositions there are hierarchies where, in Western culture, the first term in the pair is the privileged term. See Lois Tyson, *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*. 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 254-5.

[16] Douglas Davies, *A Brief History of Death* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 12.

[17] William Thomas Vincent, *In Search of Gravestones: Old and Curious, with One Hundred and Two Illustrations* (London: Mitchell & Hughes, 1896), 8; Davies, *A Brief History of Death*, 11.

subject of death in the [twentieth] century."[18] The situation becomes more dismal with the

observation made by Ontario historians Bruce Bowden and Roger Hall: the importance of death

in Canadian history and historiography receives only "scant attention in biographies and local

histories."[19] Arthur Koestler described death as influential in the creation of cultural products

that have become iconic as symbols representing the progression of culture, an observation he

noted prior to his suicide.[20] Without death as a driving force, Rodin's "The Thinker" would

remain a mass of stone. Mozart would not have started to compose his Requiem Mass, nor

would Edgar Allan Poe famously write about the Raven saying "Nevermore."

     Life and Death: two universal opposites that no one dares to question, and yet historians

deserve to question them thoroughly. While Life incorporates an infinitesimal number of

activities that people often do without giving a second thought, death comes either too suddenly,

or it lingers for some time; either way, death reminds people of the vulnerabilities of Life. Death

is a great teacher, as it helps the living achieve a better understanding of life itself.[21] Dennis

Joseph Enright concurs, as "[to] talk at all interestingly about death is inevitably to talk about

life."[22] The recent revival of the interest in death, through academic research conducted by

historians and other professionals, and the inclusion of thanatology in traditional discourses, is a

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[18] Philippe Ariès, "The Reversal of Death: Changes in Attitudes Toward Death in Western Societies," trans. Valerie M. Stannard, in "Death in America," ed. David E. Stannard, special issue, *American Quarterly* 26, no.5 (Dec., 1974): 537.

[19] Bruce Bowden and Roger Hall, "The Impact of Death: An Historical and Archival Reconnaissance into Victorian Ontario," *Archivaria* 14 (1982): 96.

[20] Michael C. Kearl, "Kearl's Guide to the Sociology of Death: Quests for Longevity and Symbolic Immortality," Michael C. Kearl, http://www.trinity.edu/~mkearl/death-3.html#ce (accessed April 9, 2013).

[21] Leilah Wendell, *Encounters with Death: A Compendium of Anthropomorphic Personifications of Death from Historical to Present Day Phenomenon* (New Orleans, LA: Westgate Press, 1996), 2.

[22] Dennis Joseph Enright, *The Oxford Book of Death* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), xiii, in *The Gender of Death: A Cultural History in Art and Literature*, ed. Karl S. Guthke (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), v.

significant advancement in intellectual thought. Sarah Tarlow notes that specialists in archaeology and other related fields continue to rely on "information gleaned from burials and the treatment of the dead to recreate life in the past."[23] In disciplines where the connection between life and death is more evident than initially thought, the pervasiveness of thanatology in academia is becoming less of an accident, and more of an opportunity to alter conventional perspectives.

Immigration to Canada: The Revival of Death

When Sir Arthur Conan Doyle visited Northwestern Ontario in 1914, he was attracted to the history of the region, a region that, in his words, would not always be "ever on the edge of civilization."[24] His perception of the area as a peripheral hybrid between the industrial advancements of urban centres and the frontier lifestyle of the wilderness would eventually boost the region's status as a prominent outlet of national history. As made evident by the immense amount of material in the academic record, Doyle's prediction was inaccurate. Instead, historians choose to discuss topics in the western provinces or southern Ontario and Quebec to research early colonial history. As explained by local historians Elizabeth Arthur, Michel S. Beaulieu and Chris Southcott, and Thorold J. Tronrud, the omission of Northwestern Ontario from the historical record is a significant error in judgement. The region has not been, and is not, simply a "land between" the western and eastern halves of the country; rather, it is significant for its

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[23] Sarah Tarlow and Liv Nilsson Stutz, *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Death and Burial* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1.

[24] Michel S. Beaulieu and Chris Southcott, introduction to *North of Superior: An Illustrated History of Northwestern Ontario* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 2010), 7.

contributions to the geopolitical unification of Canada as a nation from coast to coast. Despite

being integral to the political and cultural expansion of Canada, the district remains what

Tronrud calls a historical "*terra incognita*."[25]

Though the region often does not exist according to the majority of Canadian historians,

Canada as a whole country is incomplete without the presence of Northwestern Ontario. Located

at the geographic centre of Canada, the region extends east from the Manitoba border, stretching

east to encompass numerous communities in a wide swath measuring five hundred twenty-six

thousand square kilometres. While the northern boundary extends to include the coastal

shorelines of Hudson's Bay and James Bay, the southern boundary reaches down to the

American border, along the north shore of Lake Superior west of the Pukaskwa River, while the

eastern border includes the communities of Manitouwadge and Caramat. Northwestern Ontario is

comprised of three districts: the Kenora, Rainy River, and the Thunder Bay District. For the

purpose of this thesis, the scope of the research focuses mainly on the Thunder Bay District,

specifically on the historical pioneer communities of Fort William and Port Arthur.[26]

From 1880 to 1935, during the period of this investigation, there were infusions of

European culture into the socio-cultural life of both communities; the mixture of diverse

immigrant groups that settled in the District, made significant contributions to the social history

of the region beyond the narrow context of forestry, fur trade, and the First Nations. Based on

observations in the 1881 Federal Census of settlement patterns in Northwestern Ontario, 1880 is

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[25] Elizabeth Arthur, *Thunder Bay District, 1821-1892: a collection of documents* (Toronto: Champlain Society for the Government of Ontario [by] University of Toronto Press, 1973), 1; Beaulieu and Southcott, *North of Superior*, 8-9; Thorold Tronrud and A. Ernest Epp, *Thunder Bay: From Rivalry to Unity* (Thunder Bay, ON: Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, 1995), 1.

[26] Michel S. Beaulieu, introduction to *Labour at the Lakehead: Ethnicity, Socialism, and Politics, 1900-35* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 2. See also Beaulieu and Southcott, *North of Superior*, 7-8.

an appropriate starting point for this overview, whereas 1935 appears to mark the end of rural

settlement by immigrants in the Lakehead. In addition to the socio-historical implications of the

immigrant groups that populated the region, the changing conditions of the Immigration Act

restricted the spectrum of nationalities allowed into Canada. In the context of the Great

Depression, immigration into the country in 1931 was open only to "American citizens, British

subjects, and agriculturalists with economic means" that could provide for themselves without

being a financial burden on the nation.[27]

Though most of the male Finnish immigrants worked in the bush camps as part of the

logging industry, historians agree that they played a significant role in the struggle for the

establishment of labour unions as 'radical' strikers whose promotions of socialism and worker

solidarity earned them notoriety among employers. The large number of Finns that comprised the

workforce in the forest industry illustrates what sociology professor Thomas Dunk refers to as

the characterization of the division of labour.[28]

While thousands of Ukrainians migrated to the western provinces as per the federal

government's agenda to populate the prairies, the Ukrainians that stayed in Northwestern Ontario

often laboured alongside the Finns in the bush, in the copper mines, or in the railway work gangs

laying track to connect the major railway lines. Though Paul Magocsi suggests that the

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[27] Canadian Council for Refugees, "A hundred years of immigration to Canada, 1900-1999, Part 1: 1900-1949," http://ccrweb.ca/en/hundred-years-immigration-canada-1900-1999 (accessed May 14, 2014); Government of Canada, Library and Archives Canada, "1881 Census Districts and Sub-districts: Ontario," under "District 182 – Algoma," under "Sub-districts DD – Prince Arthur, and EE – Fort William," http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/1881/Pages/on137-182.aspx#182 (accessed March 14, 2014). These sub-districts do not exist according to the 1871 Canada Census.

[28] Ian Radforth, "Finnish Radicalism and Labour Activism in the Northern Ontario Woods," in *A Nation of Immigrants: Women, Workers, and Communities in Canadian History, 1840s-1960s*, by Franca Iacovetta, Paula Draper and Robert Ventresca, eds. (1998; repr., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 293-4; Thomas William Dunk, *It's a Working-Man's Town: Male Working-Class Culture* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 103.

Ukrainian population in Port Arthur and Fort William was jittery and prone to frequent fluctuations during the early twentieth century, the combined two thousand one hundred eighty-one Ukrainian people counted for the federal census in 1921 further attests to the steadfastness of their character as hard workers.[29]

The Greeks arrived in the Thunder Bay District with few or no skills, and with little education. During the early twentieth century, they worked as freight handlers for the Canadian National Railway (CNR), or in the coal docks. Like the Finns and Ukrainians, Canadians stigmatized the Greeks, labelling them as anarchists and radicals for speaking out against working conditions that exploited the humanity of the foreigners. Though Greeks were only one of numerous minority groups that settled in Fort William and Port Arthur, they contributed to the cultural well-being of the communities through the metropolitan nature of their businesses, including restaurants and confectioneries, continually reminding Canadians of the Greek connection to Western civilization.[30] Despite the significance of these groups within the socio-historical context of the Thunder Bay District, their "inferior occupational positions and low social status" were important reminders of the social hierarchy that affected the European immigrants, as a means to keep foreigners out of the loop of Anglo-Saxon power.[31]

In addition to bringing their life-oriented forms of cultural expressions, including food (i.e. Finnish pancakes) and religion (i.e. Greek Orthodoxy), immigrants brought their funeral

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[29] Paul Robert Magocsi, ed., *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples* (University of Toronto Press, 1999), s.v. "Ukrainians," 1268; Jaroslav Petryshyn and Luba Dzubak, *Peasants in the Promised Land: Canada and the Ukrainians, 1891-1914* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1985), 68.

[30] John Powell, *Encyclopedia of North American Immigration* (New York: Infobase Publishing,2005), 112, s.v., "Greek immigration"; Efrosini Gavaki, "The Greeks in Canada: Immigration, Socio-Economic Mobility and Ethnic Identity," in *Women, Gender, and Diasporic Lives: Labor, Community, and Identity in Greek Migrations*, by Evangelina Tastsoglou, ed. (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), 118-21; Dunk, *Working Man's Town*, 106.

[31] Avery, European Immigrant Workers and Labour Protest," in Walker, *History of Immigration and Racism*, 125.

customs over from their homelands. According to Joachim Whaley, the rituals associated with death, including burial rites helped immigrants cope with the transition from their familiar homeland to a foreign frontier in Canada. With the concepts of "continuity, legitimacy, and status" symbolized by the presence of tombs and monuments, the "coexistence of the living and the dead" helped to ensure the establishment of human society in many pioneer communities, including Thunder Bay and the surrounding district.[32] The research of genealogical historian Susan Smart not only concurs with Whaley's findings, but also agrees with observations made by others, who also assert that the significance of death merits a central position in all historical interests, reflecting the impact of death on the community.[33]

Though Whaley claims that there is a revival in the study of death by academics, it largely focuses on the American perspective of death as a form of commercial industry.[34] Recent investigations into the nature of funerary customs and symbols located on the grave markers of European immigrants in southern Ontario, Nova Scotia, and British Columbia, indicate that there is much to learn from these historical sources, regardless of how rural the locality. In addition to their importance as memorials, gravestones also serve a significant purpose to teach future generations about the intertwining of historical and cultural studies "as historic and genealogical

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[32] Whaley, introduction to *Mirrors of Mortality*, 2.

[33] Susan Smart, *A Better Place: Death and Burial in the Nineteenth-Century Ontario*, 35; Bowden and Hall, "The Impact of Death," 96.

[34] For more on the American and international perspectives, see Helen Sheumaker and Shirley Teresa Wadja, *Material Culture in America: Understanding Everyday Life* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2008), "Burial Grounds, Cemeteries, and Grave Markers"; Richard E. Meyer, ed., *Cemeteries and Gravemarkers: Voices of American Culture* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1992); Terry G. Jordan, *Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1982); Janice Kohl Sarapin, *Old Burial Grounds of New Jersey: A Guide* (Rutgers University Press, 1994); Charles H. LeeDecker, "Preparing for an Afterlife on Earth: The Transformation of Mortuary Behaviour in Nineteenth-Century North America," in *International Handbook of Historical Archaeology*, ed. Teresita Majewski and David R.M. Gaimster (New York: Springer Science+ Business Media, 2009).

documents, as art objects, and as material expressions of cultural attitudes."[35] While gravestones promote an unwritten aura of silence and solemnity, their appearances speak volumes not just about the individual(s) they honour, but also about the local history of the area in which these people died. The connection of gravestones to national history is evident in the sagacious words of historian J.J. Talman, who said, "[All] history, no matter how local, is part of the national record."[36] This observation is true when historians, both public and professional, look at the local, social and cultural history of Thunder Bay proper and its surrounding district.

Speaking for the Dead

The types of information that reveal the socio-historical context in which a person lived and died are derivable from a variety of sources, including the materials used to make grave markers and the importance of gravestone symbolism. As Darrell A. Norris indicates, the gravestone is highly significant as an indicator of nineteenth-century material culture. As "a commercially sold object *and* as a vehicle of Victorian expression," the grave marker was important for denoting the social and familial status of the deceased, as well as the shifting trends in popular taste.[37] David B. Knight also observed the importance of gravestones as markers that reflect cultural change through the years.[38] Despite the historical importance of the grave

[35] Jessie Lie Farber, "Introduction," Association for Gravestone Studies, "Introduction," *Markers* 1 (1979/80): 9.

[36] Laura Suchan, "Memento Mori: Bringing to the Cemetery," *The History Teacher* 42, no. 1 (Nov. 2008): 41; Donald Wright, *The Professionalization of History in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 93.

[37] Darrell A. Norris, "Ontario Gravestones," *Markers* (The Association for Gravestone Studies) 5 (1988): 123-4, 126. The italics are Norris'.

[38] David B. Knight, *Cemeteries as Living Landscapes* (Ottawa: Ontario Genealogical Society, 1973), 18.

marker, there is a significant lack of literature on the subject, leading to questioning the priorities of society leading up to, and in the nineteenth century.[39]

While information reflecting the attitudes towards death in different periods are found in a variety of sources, nowhere is the reminder of human mortality most evident than in cemeteries and graveyards, through the presence of grave markers. According to William Thomas Vincent, the common gravestone still has much to offer as a historical source. While he recognizes that the historical contributions of the common gravestone are small in comparison to other types of primary sources, they are no less important to the discipline. He also acknowledges how the subject, as a potential branch of study, has been "quite neglected" by the academic and historical communities.[40] He suggests that the problem of priority lies with the numerous works that focus on the elite expressions of death overshadow the "simple gravestone of the churchyard" with feigned importance.[41]

The simple gravestone becomes an important resource in this thesis. Following the path of social history requires the use of sources that normally lay outside the scope of academic research, including death notices from Port Arthur and Fort William newspapers, sources that are accessible through the Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, the Lakehead University Archives, and the Thunder Bay Archives. Valuable data located in the Archives of Ontario, and the Library and Archives of Canada, such as immigration records, and provincial and national

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[39] See Norris, "Ontario Gravestones"; Enrico Carlson-Cumbo, "Contemporary Ukrainian-Canadian Grave Markers in Urban Southern Ontario," *Material Culture Review* 29 (Spring 1989); Patricia Stone and Lynn Russell, "Observations on Figures, Human and Divine, on Nineteenth-Century Ontario Gravestones," *Material Culture Review* 24 (Fall, 1986), 23; Lynn Russell and Patricia Stone, "Gravestone Carvers of Early Ontario," *Material Culture Review* 18 (Fall, 1983), 37; Richard V. Francaviglia, "The Cemetery as an Evolving Cultural Landscape," *Annals* (The Association of American Geographers) 61, no.3 (1971), 501.

[40] Vincent, *In Search of Gravestones*, 7-8.

[41] Ibid.

censuses, provide further support for the arguments. In addition to the examinations of the gravestones and symbolism on the markers of European immigrants who settled during the period of study, interviews with members of the clergy and funeral industry regarding funerary customs and the practices of minority groups supplement the research. The results provide another dimension to the social, cultural, urban, and historical landscapes of the Lakehead. The causes of death also further the importance of those immigrants within the historical context of Port Arthur and Fort William, as their actions contributed significantly to the evolution of the two cities. Despite the intention of visiting the cemeteries within the Thunder Bay District to photograph the wide assortment of grave markers, the constraints of time and physical distance impeded the goal. The result was the limited first-hand exposure to headstones in Riverside Cemetery, Mountain View Cemetery, the Ruthenian/Ukrainian Catholic Cemetery, and the Shaarey Shomayim Hebrew Cemetery. The other important source that allowed for the comparative analyses of the markers was the Canadian Gravemarker Gallery website, filling some of the gaps by providing pictures of gravestones located in other rural cemeteries throughout the various townships in the District. Through these venues of research sources, it is possible to observe the wide-ranging impact of death on the human history of the Lakehead region, which should merit an equal amount of attention as an area of academic research equal to the study of life. In this part of Northwestern Ontario, it is feasible to consider that death breathes life into history.

In the attempt to uncover the foundations of the social taboo surrounding death, **Chapter 1** discusses the socio-historical roots of death and its perceptions in European countries, specifically in the countries from which Thunder Bay immigrants came. Though most beliefs about death are superstitious in nature, this thesis focuses on the factual truth about death in

Canada. Depending upon the context of the situation, there are times when people treat death as a physical entity, while others treat death as a state of being. For the purpose of clarification throughout this study, references to the physical being are the capitalized form of Death, whereas references to the concept of death as a state will start with a lowercase "d." The analysis of these and other pre-established beliefs about the nature and social identity of death highlight the foundational groundwork for the cultural interpretations of death discussed in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2 examines the socio-cultural circumstances that led to the formations of the cultural interpretations of death held by the millions of migrants that left their homelands for the frontier landscape of North America.[42] To Perkins, "every institution [including death][...] has its social aspect. Its interest for the social historian is intensified if it throws light on the way in which the society maintains and renews itself, distributes prestige or status, and solves or frets at the recurring problem of adjustment to its environment and its neighbours."[43] Obstacles established by the dominant cultural group impeded immigrants' efforts to improve their socio-economic status through labour-intensive jobs, adding restrictions to the quality of their lives, contradicting the openness of Canada as a country of many freedoms. Working-class and ethnic populations encountered the most difficulties during community-wide epidemics in the early twentieth century, due to the limitations of available options, complications compounded by

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[42] Though the figures of the 1901 Federal Census state that only 684,671 people in Canada were immigrants, the number continually climbed over the years, surpassing one million people in the 1911 (1,585,461), 1921 (1,933,348), and 1931 (2,282,893) Federal censuses. Canadian Council for Refugees, http://ccrweb.ca/en/hundred-years-immigration-canada-1900-1999 (accessed March 28, 2015).

[43] Perkins, "Social History," in Stern, 436.

social, cultural, and linguistic barriers.[44] While she focuses mainly on the 1918 influenza epidemic in Winnipeg, her observation is also applicable to the treatment of immigrants in Fort William during the typhoid epidemic of 1906, when the press criticized them for their 'backwards' lifestyles that contributed to the spread of the disease.

Regardless of the cause of an immigrant's death, religion becomes the next outlet for the understanding of death. In **Chapter 3**, the treatments of the deceased in preparation for funerals revealed not only what religious faiths were prevalent in the communities, but also what groups of immigrants shared those faiths. Through an analysis of the impact of religion and immigrant culture in Port Arthur and Fort William, there is a clearer understanding of how religion shaped the socio-cultural landscape of a pioneer community. This chapter explores the historical development and evolution of the customs and traditions surrounding immigrant funerals. The information presented here also serves to emphasize how the religious cultures of European immigrants came together to create a specific multicultural character that defined the region.

Further definition of the region through the cultural consequences of death is the topic of discussion in **Chapter 4**. The development of faith- or culture-specific burial grounds in the Thunder Bay District contributed to the creation of a "Lakehead" tradition unique to the region. The heavy influence of the situation in Britain on life during the Victorian era highlights the death-related ideas and concepts that began in Europe in the nineteenth century, and made their way across the Atlantic to Northwestern Ontario in the early twentieth century. One integral feature of this chapter is the introduction of the "garden cemetery" movement; though it started

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[44] Esyllt Wynne Jones, introduction to *Influenza 1918: Disease, Death and Struggle in Winnipeg* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 4.

in England, proponents of the idea found inspiration in Paris, Egypt and Italy, where death and art intimately intertwine.[45]

Finally, **Chapter 5** investigates the degree of cultural influence reflected in the choice and expression of gravestone symbols and other grave markers. Norris and others noted that the choice of symbols on markers from the nineteenth century is significant as forms of cultural indicators.[46] According to Douglas Keister observed that the choice of gravestone symbolism on the gravestones of children who died during the nineteenth century, changed from those in the eighteenth century. He explains that the choice of engraving lambs and doves represented the altering of the social attitude that treated children purely as children, not as little adults as they were in the eighteenth century.[47] Death is evident in the artwork of the allegorical gravestone of the eighteenth century.[48] Vincent found the range of symbols to be of a grim nature, suggesting a preoccupation with mortality and the imminence of death. Icons including skulls, coffins, and spent hourglasses were reminders of the period, and of the remaining time left to pursue mortal life.[49] Evidence of this development in Port Arthur and Fort William was present in the designations of "Babylands", plots of land in the cemeteries allotted for the burial of infants and young children.

Despite the imbalance between life and death, some scholars claim that death should receive more attention within scholarly circles. What scholars seem to infer, is that death

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[45] John Strang, *Necropolis Glasguensis; with Observations on Ancient and Modern Tombs and Sepulture* (Glasgow: Atkinson and Company, 1831), 62-3.

[46] Norris, "Ontario Gravestones," 23.

[47] Richard E. Meyer, preface to Douglas Keister, *Stories in Stone: A Field Guide to Cemetery Symbolism and Iconography* (Layton, UT: Gibbs Smith, 2004), 8.

[48] Vincent, *In Search of Gravestones*, 7.

[49] Vincent, *Gravestones*, 20; Meyer, preface to Douglas Keister, *Stories in Stone*, 8.

connects these seemingly unrelated disciplines at one central point, yet there are no limits to its

numerous applications. Those various applications include the potential contributions of death to

the physical, social, and cultural development of Fort William and Port Arthur as two pioneer

communities that have influenced Canadian history.

Chapter 1:

The Socio-historical Perceptions of Death: Psychology, Personifications and People

The human imagination is a powerful tool, not only in personifying Death as a form of response to the end of life, but also in giving the entity credibility as a figure of fear. According to Timothy Taylor, death is a human invention, its rituals designed to appease deities released with the escape of the soul.[1] As a human invention, death is subject to the creativity of imagination, and therefore has no limitations as to the potential of its nature or appearance. To Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Karl S. Guthke, it is a natural reflex to imagine Death as a personified human being, as the ability to imagine helps humans to adapt to the complex and unnerving situations in the world by giving "shape to the shapeless [and] approximating it to the familiar" when creating symbols.[2] The personification of Death is a prevalent figure in European cultural media, including those countries from which migrants left for a different life in Canada.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the genesis of beliefs behind the establishment of the traditional perceptions of death held by European immigrants prior to their migration to Canada. In the process of studying the socio-historical foundations that lend credence to the taboo status, the findings reveal how the beliefs of European culture and the upheavals of immigration influenced their perceptions of death in preparation for their lives in the new country. The application of these developments to the social stigma of death in Canadian history

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[1] Timothy Taylor, *The Buried Soul: How Humans Invented Death* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 16.

[2] Johann Wolfgang van Goethe, *Maximen und Reflexionen* [Maxims and Reflections], trans. Bailey Saunders, in Project Gutenberg, http://www.gutenberg.org/files/33670/33670-h/33670-h.htm (accessed September 10, 2014). Quoted in *The Gender of Death: A Cultural History in Art and Literature*, ed. Karl S. Guthke (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 8-9.

has the potential to challenge the established convention of treating death solely as a private matter discussed behind closed doors.

The Psychology of Death

Harold J. Perkins described five components that are essential in the study of a society during a fixed time and location. In his essay, he identified psychology, as the fifth component to study that is necessary in the understanding of a society. His definition included some of the ways in which society "reacts upon itself," including "the aims [that] it consciously pursues, the moral criteria by which it judges its success, the public opinion [that] it applies to its own behaviour and concerns, and the ideals, which satisfy its aspirations."[3] Though the connection between death and a society's psychology may or may not be immediately clear, the purpose of touching on some psychological aspects in this thesis is to enhance the contribution of death to the history of Canada and its immigrant population.

Immigrants have contributed significantly to the development of Canada's national culture through food, music and dance, and customs that reflect on their life values. Death has its own customs and values that provide insight into the cultural traditions of a cultural group; death is the most ritualized crisis of human life in response to man's rejection of the finality of death. During the late 1800s, death was not just an individual loss; rather, it affected the totality of the traditional pioneer community.[4] Rituals to respect the deceased included wearing mourning

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[3] Harold Perkins, "Social History," *Approaches to History: A Symposium*, in "Social History," in *The Varieties of History: From Voltaire to the Present*, ed. Fritz Stern (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 447.

[4] Robert Nisbet, "Death in the West," *New York Times Book Review, New York Times*, February 27, 1883, 7. Quoted in Bruce Bowden and Roger Hall, "The Impact of Death: An Historical and Archival Reconnaissance into Victorian Ontario," *Archivaria* 14 (1982): 96.

clothes in the appropriate cultural colour, the cooking of a traditional meal for the grieving family, and communal support for the spouse or family during a transition period. The continuation of performing traditional funerary rituals in their new country of residence, helped immigrants maintain a link between the established cultures of the homeland, while defying the Anglo-conformity model espoused by historians in the early 1900s.[5] Folklorists that adhered to the survivalistic framework of folklore studies assumed that "Old World folklore is the pure reflection of ethnic tradition."[6] Yet Stephen Stern argues that it is possible to recreate folklore from the "golden age of folklore" in response to changing cultural circumstances,[7] including the adaptation of important death beliefs held by minority groups following their immigration to Northwestern Ontario.

A significant example of the type of "flexible" folklore advocated by Stern appears in the vernacular tradition of Finland. In rural parts of that country, there were beliefs about the *kirkonväki* (translated to churchyard-väki, väki meaning "crowd" or "power" in Finnish), "a crowd of supernatural beings, which is closely related to death and church, and which sometimes functions as an invisible force."[8] Narratives about beliefs in the churchyard-vaki describe the invisible agents as helpers to remind the local people about the importance of showing respect toward the deceased person and their family, as they "appear in graveyards, on the road or even in farmhouses after someone has died or when death-related objects have been brought to the

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[5] Stephen Stern, "Ethnic Folklore and the Folklore of Ethnicity," *Western Folklore* 36, no.1 (Jan., 1977): 7.

[6] Stern, "Ethnic Folklore and the Folklore of Ethnicity," 12.

[7] Stern, 12.

[8] Kaarina Koski, "Conceptual Analysis and Variation in Belief Tradition: A Case of Death-Related Beings," *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore* 38 (2008): 46, http://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol38/koski.pdf (accessed April 20, 2015).

house. Belief legends also tell about their nightly church services."[9] While there are an abundance of descriptions of the settings in which people meet the churchyard-väki, the most common description of the väki is that of decomposed corporeal bodies, sometimes with or without flesh.[10] The suggestion of humanity expressed by the solidness of the väki in Finland is a possible indication of the universality of Death and its aspects expressing some degree of uncanniness as part of their character.

Humankind often personifies Death as a human because it is the *uncanny*, the entity that is close to being human, but is not quite human, and feared because of its otherness. Chris Baldick describes the uncanny as "a kind of disturbing strangeness evoked in some kinds of horror story and related fiction [often attributed to the narrator's or protagonist's dream, hallucination, or delusion. [...] When] no such psychological explanation is offered, [then] strange events are taken to be truly supernatural."[11] The eerie otherness expounded by Baldick, is the quality of Death that has remained prevalent in European folklore in the form of superstition, and carried over to become an aspect of Western culture.

While his definition suggests that the idea of a personified Death belongs mainly in the realm of fiction as an uncanny character with supernatural qualities, there are other scholarly interpretations positing the argument that Death is more than solely a product of human imagination expressed through the liberal arts. According to Nicholas Royle, the uncanny is "not simply an experience of strangeness or alienation. More specifically, it is a peculiar commingling

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[9] Koski, "Conceptual Analysis and Variation in Belief Tradition," 53.

[10] Koski, 46 and 52. See also Nancy Arrowsmith, *A Field Guide to the Little People* (London: Pan, 1978).

[11] Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 267, s.v. "uncanny, the."

of the familiar and unfamiliar."[12] Philippe Ariès noted how the recognition of death in a physical form was important in ancient and medieval times as part of the warning prior to a person's own death, a notice that has grown obsolete with the favouring of human progress over nature.[13] In the eighteenth century, the Marquis de Sade perpetuated similar ideas. Death as a physical being did not exist; instead, it was "a notion cultivated by man that disappears in the overall plan of nature." Death was an imaginary concept concocted to protect "man's social power, the power that regulates society and produces order and work" from the destructive evil of Nature, who destroys to create.[14]

Contemporary scholars often debunk the works of Sigmund Freud for their lack of objective credibility, yet his essay on the uncanny is one of the seminal works on the subject. His interpretation of the nature of the uncanny, stemming from the diction used to describe it in several European languages, comprises part of the consensus about the entity:

> It undoubtedly belongs to all that is terrible –to all that arouses dread and creeping horror; it is equally certain, too, that the word is not always used in a clearly definable sense, so that it tends to coincide with whatever excites dread. Yet we may expect that it implies some intrinsic quality which justifies the use of a special name. One is curious to know what this peculiar quality is which allows us to distinguish as "uncanny" certain things within the boundaries of what is "fearful."[15]

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[12] Though the teachings of Freud are not scientifically credible, some of the terminology derived from Freudian psychoanalysis is applicable to interpretations of art and literature. Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2003), 1.

[13] Philippe Ariès, *L'Homme devant la mort* [The Hour of Our Death] (Paris, 1977), 298.

[14] Ariès, *Hour of Our Death*, 391-2.

[15] Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," *Imago* 5, nos. 5-6 (1919): 297. Quoted in "freud1.pdf," http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/freud1.pdf (accessed April 7, 2015).

The description suggests that Death is a fearful entity, and therefore humankind needs to push it past the margins of humanity and academia. Despite the uncanniness of Death often hinting at the assumption of being sinister, evil, merciless, not human, some scholars advocate the 'benefits' of imagining Death as a physical human being. Leilah Wendell states that the anthropomorphizing of death is "essential to the learning and understanding process, [as Death is often an adept and quick shape-shifter]."[16] Her position echoes that held by Dion Fortune, who observed the importance of studying Death outside of the sphere of occultism and other controversial arts. In her book *Through the Gates of Death*, Fortune noted that the prevalent mindset of society portrays Death, as the great enemy of humankind.[17] Though the connection between death as a historical topic and occultism is too distant to consider the fields relatable, there is the historical potential to understand how Death became a topic exclusive to occultism. The well-established ideology of marginalization towards Death, suggests that the psycho-cultural image of Death has not changed over time, that there is a universal component to the existence of Death as an uncanny character. Though the universality of death and the imagination suggests the existence of one dominant image in the global definition of death, Guthke disagrees with the claim, noting how the diversity of death reflects cultural influences:

> No single image can capture death in all its allure and horror. Not surprisingly, not one but *many* images come to mind spontaneously or with some reflexion [sic]. Mythologies, folklore, religions, turns of phrase, art and literature, and even our daily lives are full of such visually realized or realizable personifications of that which is largely taboo in industrialized societies today – unthinkable and therefore unimaginable.[18]

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[16] Leilah Wendell, *Encounters with Death: A Compendium of Anthropomorphic Personifications of Death from Historical to Present Day Phenomenon* (New Orleans, LA: Westgate Press, 1996), 5.

[17] Dion Fortune, *Through the Gates of Death* (York Beach, ME: Weiser Books, 2000), 21. Quoted on The Azrael Project: Personifications of Death, by Leilah Wendell, http://www.westgatenecromantic.com/historical.html (accessed April 7, 2015).

[18] Guthke, *Gender of Death*, 10-11.

The 'otherness' of death seems to suggest a hybridity, casting it within the dimensions of another culture, separate from those of the immigrants and the dominant group, yet belongs in both categories as a multicultural entity. Research conducted by Robert Kastenbaum concurs with Wendell's interpretation; he noted that the reshaping of death through the centuries has helped humankind learn to become comfortable with death.[19] In 1972, Kastenbaum and Ruth Aisenberg researched death personification, and asked two hundred forty adults how they would imagine death as a physical being. Their findings produced four types of personification, the Gentle Comforter identified by many of the respondents. Though they were allowed to perceive the Gentle Comforter as an adult of any age, he was frequently typified as an old bearded man, dressed in clean but shabby clothes, physically strong despite his age and appearance, and would be "kind and understanding yet be very firm and sure of his actions and attitudes."[20] In 1996, Maare E. Tamm interviewed forty-seven Swedish health care professionals to explore how they personified life and death, and what archetypal notions they associated with the entities. According to the findings, the majority personified death as an old man, and associated it with a rural location, with the seasons of autumn and winter, and with the time of evening or night. To Tamm, the results showed that "archetypal notions of life and death do exist and that these notions are culturally influenced."[21] The findings also suggest that other cultural factors influence the gender of death, including nationality, language, and folklore.

Though the pattern of the binary opposition established by the Structuralists suggests that Death ought to be female, the ambiguous nature of the entity seems to defy traditional

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[19] Robert Kastenbaum, preface to *The Psychology of Death*, 3rd ed. (New York: Springer Publishing, 2000), vii.

[20] The other types were the Macabre, the Gay Deceiver, and the Automaton. Kastenbaum, *Psychology of Death*, 143.

[21] Maare E. Tamm, "Personification of Life and Death among Swedish Health Care Professionals," abstract, *Death Studies* 20, no. 1(1996): 1.

boundaries and contradict convention. The pattern of exemplified Death personifications indicates that Death is a male figure in countries that speak Germanic languages (including England and Scandinavia), while death assumes a female appearance in nations that are home to Slavic and Romance languages (for example, Poland and Italy). Despite the clear-cut nature of the genders, the ambiguity of Death is evident in countries where the language has no grammatical gender, like Finland. In those countries, the Bible determined the gender of Death, believed to be the consequence of sin during the Middle Ages. The question to ask was whether Adam's or Eve's sin was responsible for bringing death into the world, while the answer "suggested that death had to be visualized as male or female," to reflect the gender of the sinner.[22] The prevalent position held by the Church blamed Eve for the Fall of Adam and Eve from Eden; therefore, death was female. The ambiguity of death allowed room to change, transforming to correspond to the theology of the Renaissance and Baroque periods, when Europeans learned to equate death with the gender of the devil, which was usually male. The gender identity of Death is significant to the study, as the beliefs that developed in the European countries, came to Canada as part of the traditional folklore brought over by the immigrants when they settled in Northwestern Ontario.

<div align="center">Personifications of Death</div>

Male or female, malevolent or benevolent, Death is a significant cultural figure in the traditional folklores of Europe. While some stories suggest that mortals are able to bribe, trick, or outwit Death as a mere *psychopomp*, other renditions exalt death as an archangel with almost

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[22] Guthke, introduction to *Gender of Death*, 4.

free reign over the collection of souls. At times, it is a winged figure, or as a withered person using some form of transportation. Wendell identifies Samael as the most important of the angels of death; the winged entity from Jewish lore, Samael's task is to separate the body of the deceased from its soul. In the *Talmud*, the Angel of Death uses a sword tipped with gall. In other cultures, death is equipped with other tools including a scythe.[23] The use of the scythe by the Angel of Death is another piece of evidence that points to the spread of cultural influences when personifying death, an observation most evident with the prevalence of the Grim Reaper, a male skeletal figure often wearing a black hooded robe and carrying a large scythe. Though the image originated in England circa the fifteenth century, it also exists in other European countries, including those in Scandinavia. The timing of when the concept was established is significant as it reflects the prevalence of farming as the principal occupation of the era. For death to use a harvesting tool, strongly suggests the collective perception of death as the harvester of souls, a title given to death in other European countries and cultures.[24]

Portrayals of Death in Art

The art from various European cultures throughout history have demonstrated how personification has allowed humankind to render some semblance of control over the invisibility and unpredictability of death. Based on the majority of art painted and printed over the past millennia, it is feasible to ascertain that death is a male figure, and is usually gaunt or skeletal in appearance. Wendell identifies a cave painting located in Anatolia (Turkey) as the oldest

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[23] Wendell, *Encounters with Death,* 9-10.

[24] Wendell, *Encounters with Death*, 8. See also Wendell, "Historical Personifications," under "The Azrael Project Online: Personifications," http://www.westgatenecromantic.com/historical.html (accessed April 7, 2015).

depiction of Death, of a black winged shadow dated c. 8000 BCE. Though Death had no proper name until much later, the significance of this image illustrates the early attempts of humankind "to literally separate [themselves] from the animal kingdom and begin thinking about the meaning of life."[25] Despite the suggestion of a life-oriented direction of human evolution, she notes that the inevitability of Death continued to permeate the developments of human culture, including those related to art.

The artistic portrayal of Death in ancient Greece attempted to familiarize the Greeks with the god Hades, and his kingdom of the Underworld, as death was unavoidable. The red-figure *krater* vase painted by the Underworld painter c. 320 BCE, is unique, as the details represent many of the myths of the Underworld. In the centre of the panel, Hades is a middle-aged bearded man; his dress and stature indicate he was a figure that commanded respect from mortals. The surrounding persons are some of the other important personalities in the Underworld, suggesting there are multiple aspects of death.[26] Though the ancient writers described many of the aspects in further detail and independently of the collective universe of the Underworld, the physical visualization of Hades on the vase, further corroborates Wendell's observation about the need to anthropomorphize Death for the purpose of reducing some of the fear associated with death and dying.

While other cultures in Europe also have their own figures of Death from earlier times, the expression of a skeletal Death figure did not exist until the Middle Ages, when it appeared in the *danse macabre* works. The genre stemmed from the widespread prevalence of frequent

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[25] Wendell, "Historical Personifications," http://www.westgatenecromantic.com/historical.html (accessed April 7, 2015).

[26] The Underworld painter, "The Underworld," ca 320 BCE, in Mark P.O. Morford, and Robert J. Lenardon, *Classical Mythology*, 8th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 353.

epidemics, which "brought before popular imagination the subject of death and its universal sway."[27] Similar to the English morality plays, the purpose of the *Dance of Death* was to teach about the inevitability of death and the importance of moral preparedness. In the "Dance of Death" plays, the skeleton figure would grab a "victim" representing each of the various classes of society, while a monk would read a passage in a way similar to delivering a sermon, trying to heighten in listeners, the urgency of repentance and the avoidance of sin. Death was not characterized as the destroyer; rather, he was the messenger of God who "naturally took the attitude and movement of the day, namely the fiddlers and other musicians, and the dance of death was the result."[28] Death the messenger used beguiling language to lure his victims beyond the grave, a type of personification Kastenbaum identified as the Gay Deceiver.[29]

Figure 1:   A part of the preserved fragment of Bernt Notke's *Danse Macabre*, painted in Tallinn, Estonia, circa late fifteenth century.

The dances became a subject in visual art during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, by artists in the humanist movement who used their art as a form of protest for church reforms. The extortion of funds from villagers for the purchase of indulgences, not only funded the clergy, but also maintained their allegiance with Rome. Forms of protest included the *Danse Macabre*

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[27] Charles Herbermann and George Williamson, *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Dance of Death," http://newadvent.org/cathen/04617a.htm (accessed September 18, 2014).

[28] Herbermann, and Williamson, *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Dance of Death."

[29] Kastenbaum, 144.

painted by Bernt Notke circa late fifteenth century (Figure 1). The skeletal Death figure became an important tool of protest for moral and political reform in feudal society, used with the purposeful intention of striking fear in the corrupt classes, specifically in the nobility and the clergy.

The shift from traditional to reformed religion is observable in the *Danse Macabre* woodcuts by Hans Holbein the Younger. Completed circa 1526, the series of woodcut designs show the skeleton of Death physically leading his victims from their daily activities, emphasizing the fact that death was inescapable. In the 1538 edition of Holbein's published woodcuts, each picture accompanies a quotation from the Bible written in Latin; below is a French quatrain. The commingling of the sacred and vernacular languages with life and death are "the particular exemplifications of the way death works, the individual scenes in which the lessons of mortality are brought home to people of every station."[30] The printing of the two languages, along with each picture, contributed to the idea of religious impartiality, as the overall theme promoted the idea of preparing for death in a wholly Christian way. Historian Natalie Zemon Davis notes that the painted *danse macabre* held more influence after "escaping the confines of the church and the friar's spoken interpretation, [as it] could suggest ideas that lacked religious and even ethical content," and was therefore openly interpretable by both Catholics and Protestants.[31] In addition to promoting the inclusivity of Christianity, the use of both sacred and profane iconography also furthered the shift from paganism to religious ideology, including the idea of equating Death with the devil.

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[30] Werner L. Gundersheimer, introduction to *The Dance of Death by Hans Holbein the Younger: A Complete Facsimile of the Original 1538 Edition of "Les simulachres et histoirees faces de la Mort"* (New York: Dover Publications, 1971), xi.

[31] Natalie Zemon Davis, "Holbein's Pictures of Death and the Reformation at Lyons," *Studies in the Renaissance* 3 (1956): 97, and 126.

Though the church perceived Death as a minion of the devil during the Renaissance and Baroque periods, Death continued to influence art during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through the *vanitas* genre of painting, a symbolic type of still-life painting. Originating in Flanders and the Netherlands, the objects of choice emphasize the seeming futility of mortal life. The skull was the principal symbol to represent death and decay, along with flickering candles, rotting fruit, and bubbles for the brevity of life and the suddenness of death. In the *Vanitas Stilleben mit Selbstbildnis anagoria* [Vanitas Still Life with Self-Portrait], painted in 1628 by Pieter Claesz, the painting of his self-portrait on the curvature of the glass ball further strengthens the emphasis on death and his own mortality (Figure 2).

Figure 2: *Vanitas Stilleben mit Selbstbildnis anagoria* [Vanitas Still Life with Self-Portrait], by Pieter Claesz, 1628.

After the eighteenth century, the use of skeletons in funerary art waned, in response to the changes in theology at the time. The portrayal of Death changed during the nineteenth century

and into the twentieth century, frequently appearing in social commentaries, such as the skeletal

man in John Hogarth's *Gin Lane* (1832) (Figure 3). The use of the skeletal figure in the satirical

print is suggestive of not only the negative effects of gin consumption, but also of the

disappearance of the male Death from popular culture.
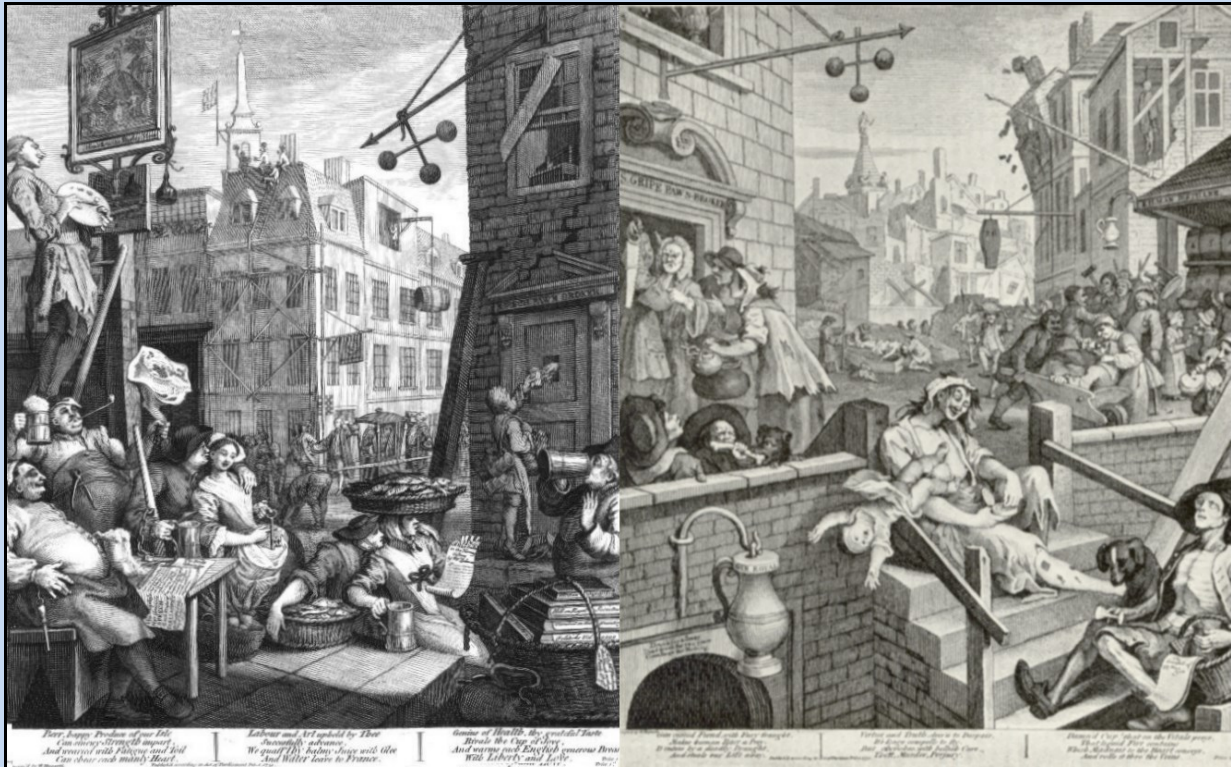
Figure 3: *Beer Street* **(left), and** *Gin Lane* **(right), satirical cartoons by John Hogarth (1832). Note the figure in the bottom right corner illustrating the deadly consequences of gin consumption and addiction.**

The late nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of Symbolism, an artistic style that

focussed on "a single emotion or idea rather than represent the natural world in the objective,

quasi-scientific manner embodied by Realism and Impressionism." Unified in their pessimism

towards the materialism that dominated Western culture, painters in the genre often featured

mysterious and fantastical creatures from mythology, and used them to convey their most

pervasive themes in their works, especially death.[32] Women were the favoured symbol of choice, as they became "staples of Symbolist imagery, appearing frequently in both visual and literary sources from the 1880s through the first decade of the twentieth century."[33] The appeal of expressing Death through Symbolism flourished "in several national cultures and hence also in languages in which [Death's] grammatical gender is not feminine,"[34] as in *Death Listens* by Finnish Symbolist Hugo Simberg (Figure 4a). The preference of women to personify Death is evident in Carlos Schwabe's *Death of the Gravedigger*, painted between 1895 and 1900 (Figure 4b). Unlike the traditional portrayal of Death, Schwabe painted the angel in a form-fitting black dress. His work focussed mainly on the creative spirit of women, which he represented as death and suffering.[35]

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[32] Nicole Myers, "Symbolism," in "Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/symb/hd_symb.htm (accessed April 21, 2015).

[33] Myers, "Symbolism"; Guthke, *Gender to Death*, 173.

[34] Guthke, 173.

[35] Joanna Wojtkowiak, "Personifications of Death," in *Encyclopedia of Death and the Human Experience*, ed. Clifton D. Bryant and Dennis L. Pack (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2009), 804-6.

(4b)

Figure 4a (previous page): *Death Listens*, **by Hugo Simberg (1897); 4b:** *Death of the Gravedigger*, **by Carlos Schwabe (1895-1900).**

After the First World War, the skeleton symbolized the threat of death in public service announcements against the spread of venereal disease and infant mortality (Figures 5a and 5b). The nature of the death skeletons changed with the creation of the "Skeleton Dance," the first of the *Silly Symphonies* cartoons produced by Walt Disney in 1929, the feature is also a modern rendition of the *Danse Macabre* genre. Despite the skeletons dancing with each other, instead of with members of all levels of the social hierarchy, their manipulations of bony parts for the purpose of amusement is a sharp contrast to the significance of skeletons as grim reminders of the transience of life in earlier times.

(5a)

(5b)

Figure 5a (previous page): Campaign to reduce infant mortality, poster c. 1918. Issued by the American Red Cross, the poster shows a group of healthy babies threatened by the figure of death, who slips in unnoticed through a window. The text reads: "Save your baby! (One in eight die before they are one year old.) Death is waiting for his chance. Mothers! By your intelligent care you can snatch him from Death's hands." The message served to remind mother that Death was an ever-present danger in industrial cities, where diseases were rampant. Wellcome Library, London, in Deborah Brunton, ed., *Medicine Transformed: Health, Disease and Society in Europe, 1800-1930* (Machester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 250. 5b: Young suitor kneeling before death disguised as a young girl. A satire on syphilis. In Rob Porter, *Blood & Guts: A Short History of Medicine* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), 14.

Personifications of Death in Literature

In addition to the impact of visual representations when describing death, it is also necessary to consider the importance of language in the development and transmission of ideas relating to death. According to Taylor, the concept of death is prehistoric, formed when early hominids developed early speech and enough intellectual capacity to formulate the idea of the soul, "of something that was 'us' continued after death, signalled only by its patent absence from each corpse."[36] While he suggests that, the linguistic expression of death happened at some moment after the advent of speech but before the existence of writing, he also acknowledges the debate among scholars regarding when to date the power of speech, at two million years, or around forty thousand years ago. Taylor infers that the evolution of speech also allowed for the propagation of ideas about the soul, and the importance of controlling the soul's malevolence,

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[36] Taylor, *The Buried Soul,* 3.

either by re-absorption of the soul when released through ritual funerary cannibalism, or by physical isolation of the corpse from normal life.[37] Though his inferences into the socio-historical genesis of death and funerary rituals are speculative at best, he admits that archaeology is not an exact science, and can draw much controversy when inferring ideas from objects, including grave markers.[38]

Unlike the portrayals of death in art, death often performed various human roles to further his anthropomorphic uncanniness in literature throughout the centuries. In the Hebrew Bible, Death is a reaper in the fields of souls, where "[the] corpses of people are scattered [...] like sheaves left behind by the reaper with no one to gather them."[39] In other religious scriptures, death is sometimes a malevolent spirit; Death is a fisher that catches the souls of men "with an evil net" in Ecclesiastes.[40] A personified Death rides a pale horse in Revelations, with the intent "to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death […]."[41] Later on, God throws Death into a lake of fire and sulphur as punishment for tormenting the world; the chapter refers to the event as the second death.[42] Though there are frequent references to death as a sentence for punishment in the Old Testament, there are fewer in the New Testament, and the references to a personified

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[37] Taylor, 3 and 14.

[38] Ibid., 3.

[39] Jeremiah 9:21 [Complete Jewish Bible], in Bible Gateway, https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=CJB&search=Jeremiah%209 (accessed September 25, 2014).

[40] Eccl. 9:12 [King James Version], in Bible Gateway, in Bible Gateway, https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=KJV&search=Ecclesiastes%209 (accessed September 25, 2014).

[41] Revelation 6:8 [21st Century King James Version]. In Bible Gateway, https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=KJ21&search=Revelation%206 (accessed September 25, 2014).

[42] Rev. 20:13-4 [KJ21], in Bible Gateway, https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=KJ21&search=Revelation%2020 (accessed September 25, 2014).

Death are far fewer in number, suggesting a transition from the prevalence of pagan interpretations of death, to the spread of Christianity and its influences on death in Europe.

Death in ancient times was neither unthinkable nor unimaginable. In the mythology of ancient Greece and Rome, for example, Hades was king, yet there is no physical description of him in literature; ancient writers describe him solely as the host or lord of many guests, a reference to his kingdom as the receiving-place for all mortal souls.[43] Thanatos was the angel of death, yet he was a minor character in the landscape of the Underworld. At times ancient mythographers described him as being skeletal and pitiless, much like the god Hades.[44] In the Romantic Age of modern history, Thanatos became a young boy who held an inverted torch in one hand, and an hourglass or a butterfly in the other hand. His youthful portrayal, along with that of his twin brother Hypnos (Sleep), promoted the gentleness of the innocent and peaceful death. Though the name Thanatos means Death, he was not the single entity identified as death. Instead, he was one of the various beings that ran the Underworld. The most important of the aspects in the Underworld was Charon the ferryman, whose journey across the river Styx was the most important step in ancient times:

> A ferryman guards these waters, Charon, horrifying in his terrible squalor; a mass of white beard lies unkempt on his chin, his eyes glow with a steady flame, and a dirty cloak hangs from his shoulders by a knot. He pushes his boat himself by a pole, tends to the sails, and conveys the bodies across in his rusty craft; he is now older, but for a god old age is vigorous and green.[45]

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[43] Hesiod *Theogony* 773-4; Homeric Hymns *Hymn to Demeter* 2a.1-89.

[44] *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 5th ed*., s.v. "mythographer," http://www.thefreedictionary.com/mythographer (accessed April 2, 2015).

[45] Vergil *Aeneid* 6.47-50. For another reference to the role of Charon, refer to note 4. See Mark P.O. Morford and Robert J. Lenardon, "Views of the Afterlife: The Realm of Hades," in *Classical Mythology*, 8th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 364.

While the personification of death as an old man is only one form of interpretation, it is recognizably familiar in the Western imagination. Though some poets portray Death as a hunter, others describe him as a 'king of kings' with power to rule the entire world. The poem "Flowers of Sion" by the seventeenth-century Scottish poet William Drummond of Hawthornden describes Death as the king of kings:

> More oft than once, Death whiſper'd in mine Ear,
> Grave what thou hears in Diamond and Gold,
> I am that Monarch whom all Monarchs fear,
> Who have in Duſt their far-ſtretch'd Pride uproll'd.
> All all is mine beneath Moon's Silver Sphere,
> And nought, ſave Virtue, can my Power with-hold. [sic][46]

In this brief stanza, the behaviour of Death hints at that of Kastenbaum's Gay Deceiver persona, encountered earlier in the chapter. Despite the promises of wealth "in Diamond and Gold," he warns the poet of his subtly veiled power, and the inability of escaping that power, as his domain encompasses all under the light of the moon during the evening or night, times that the participants of Tamm's study more frequently associated with Death.[47] Yet Death is not always a malevolent character; there are also examples of poetry where Death is benevolent and merciful. In Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's "The Reaper and the Flowers," Death's actions and dialogue hint at compassion towards the mother, as he reaps the souls of her young children, the "flowers" in the poem. Though Longfellow describes Death as having "a sickle keen," the ability of Death

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[46] William Drummond of Hawthornden, "Flowers of Sion," in *The Poetical Works of William Drummond of Hawthornden*, ed. L.E. Kastner (London: Blackwell Publishing, 1913), 2:28, in Guthke, 11; William Drummond of Hawthornden, "Flowers of Sion," in *The Works of William Drummond of Hawthornden*, eds. John Sage, and Thomas Ruddiman [1711], 29, stanza 32.

[47] Maare E. Tamm, "Personification of Life and Death among Swedish Health Care Professionals," abstract, 1.

to reap the flowers with a tearful eye suggests that the task was not done out of cruelty or spite, an important contrast to the ancient perceptions of death as a pitiless being.[48]

Death expert Douglas Davies agreed with Taylor, noting how understanding the significance of language in relation to human culture is integral to understanding the cultural impact of death. He claimed that death is not only a transformative entity, but is also a state of transformation that affects the identity of both the deceased and the living. The expression of grief marks the rupturing of relationships, and the loss of the deceased's identity upon death. As Davies explains, because the corpse's absence from society is also an absence of identity, a strong sense of self-awareness is present among the living.[49] He considers the self-awareness and self-consciousness of people combined with the power of language, to be the defining features of humanity, and is important to the social understanding of death. Davies suggests that because "funerary rites and the language of death thus mark the divide between the paradox of social eternity, and physical mortality, […] funerals symbolize society."[50] Though he mentioned how people use verbal language to defy death, he does not specifically mention any other use.

Conclusion

Observations made by the late folklorist and ethnologist Linda Dégh acknowledge the importance of recognizing the contributions made by European immigrants to the improvement

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[48] Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "The Reaper and the Flowers," lines 9-20, in The Literature Network, http://www.online-literature.com/henry_longfellow/940/ (accessed September 13, 2014).

[49] Davies, *Death, Ritual and Belief: The Rhetoric of Funerary Rites* (London: Continuum, 2002), 5.

[50] Davies, *Death, Ritual and Belief*, 4-7.

of life in Canada as a "continuous and essential part of human history."[51] An expansion of her

observation intimates that their influences also apply to the culture of death in Canada. She found

that the movements of immigrant populations through New World nations "determine the

existence of languages" in the attempt to retain their cultural identity. Languages also play a

significant role in the transmission of ideas about death.[52] Ariès agreed with the idea, noting how

Romance languages played a significant role in influencing the culture of death in Canada:

> Death may be tamed, divested of the blind violence of natural forces, and
> ritualized, but it is never experienced as a neutral phenomenon. It always remains
> a misfortune, a *mal-heur*. It is remarkable that in the old Romance languages
> physical pain, psychological suffering, grief, crime, punishment, and the reverses
> of fortune were all expressed by the same word, derived from *malum*, either alone
> or in combination with other words: in French, *malheur, maladie, malchance, le
> malin* (misfortune, illness, mishap, the devil).[53]

Death as an entity and a concept infiltrated human history. As an uncanny male figure,

his personifications ranged from being a winged servant of God, or a pedestrian wanderer that at

times rode a horse, to being a king that ruled the world. When Christian dogma dominated

European medieval culture, death became part of the original sin, an ideology that "expressed a

universal sense of the constant presence of evil. Resignation was not, therefore, submission to a

benevolent nature [...]; rather it [was] the recognition of an evil inseparable from man."[54] The

idea of the universality of death among humankind intertwined with art and literature, expressing

and promoting the virtues of life, a form of ideological camouflage that has allowed Death to

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[51] Linda Dégh, "The Study of Ethnicity in Modern European Ethnology," *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 12, no. 2/3 (1975): 113.

[52] Dégh, "The Study of Ethnicity in Modern European Ethnology," 113.

[53] Ariès, *Hour of our Death*, 605.

[54] Ariès, 605.

begin "concealing itself under the mask of beauty."[55] In the process of investigating the socio-historical roots of Death and the death taboo, evidence found in art and literature supports the theory that the figure of Death was a political symbol, representing one of the higher powers that were inescapable for all. In all European cultures, Death as a figure commanded respect, which at times reflected in the circumstances of a person's death. The peak of his intimidation appears during the Middle Ages, when the anthropomorphized persona of Death became the threatening being that was able to interrupt the reigns of monarchical power, and usurp the financial bleeding of feudal society by members of the clergy for the purchasing of indulgences to shorten the time a soul spent in Purgatory. The fear conveyed by the appearance of Death, combined with the inescapability of death, created an entity that humankind has grown to recognize; it is the numerous expressions of Death in art and literature through human history, that have contributed to the collective *desensitization* of the fear of Death. Despite being desensitized to the image of Death as a withered or skeletal figure, what has not changed is the feeling of dread associated with Death, a feeling that endangered the lives of many immigrants that migrated to Canada during the late nineteenth century, and into the early twentieth century.

In the early twentieth century, open discussions about death and dying became taboo, and "[what] used to be appreciated is now hidden; what used to be solemn is now avoided."[56] Is there the remotest of possibilities that, based on the socio-historical treatment of death, the public and academics could accept such an anomaly without question, without judgement? Based on observations made by William Abel Caudill, the free acceptance of death is a utopian idea at

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[55] Ariès, 473.

[56] Philippe Ariès, "The Reversal of Death: Changes in Attitudes Toward Death in Western Societies," trans. Valerie M. Stannard, in "Death in America," ed. David E. Stannard, special issue, *American Quarterly* 26, no.5 (Dec., 1974): 540.

best. Death is a very stressful situation to handle, a problem that requires each immigrant culture to resolve individually. Various factors come into play when dealing with the stress of death, including the perceptions of "man's relation to nature, [...] and the modality of man's relations to other men [...]."[57] Samuel Scheffler notes, "[a] country's unity is both expressed and sustained by its citizens' shared sense of history [...] and by their participation in a range of informal customs [...] covering virtually every aspect of life [...]."[58] Though he does not specifically mention any funerary practices, it is feasible to include them as types of customs that affected European immigrants in Canada during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They established their own socio-cultural beliefs about Death; as immigrants, they brought those well-established ideas with them to Northwestern Ontario, to the Thunder Bay District.

While American anthropologists and sociologists predicted the creation of a "melting-pot" in which minority groups would adjust to share common aims and ideas, Death wore a common mask to respect the ideal of acculturation through assimilation.[59] In Canada, the "mosaic" of multiculturalism reflects the individuality of immigrant diversity, and leads Death to wear many diverse masks, representing not only the religious faith and culture of the deceased, but also the strength of the person's character in life. Ariès, Davies, and others suggest that it is well past time for the mask to come off, and for Death to hide no longer from the condemning ideologies of the past. Death is an integral part of Canadian immigration history.

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[57] W.A. Caudill, *Pamphlet 14: Effects of Social and Cultural Systems in Reaction to Stress* (Brooklyn, NY: Social Science Research Council, 1958), 14-6, in Barbara Gallatin Anderson, "Bereavement as Subject of Cross-Cultural Inquiry: An American Sample," *Anthropological Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (Oct., 1965): 181.

[58] Samuel Scheffler, "Immigration and the Significance of Culture," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 35, no.2 (Spring, 2007): 93-4.

[59] Stephen Stern, "Ethnic Folklore and the Folklore of Ethnicity," *Western Folklore* 36, no.1 (Jan., 1977): 7.

Chapter 2:

The Role of European Immigration in the Thunder Bay District

Canada is probably the most free country in the world where a man still has room to breathe, to spread out, to move forward, to move out, an open country with an open frontier. Canada has created harmony and cooperation among ethnic groups, and it must take this experience to the world because there is yet to be such an example of harmony and cooperation among ethnic groups.
--Ukrainian historian and political dissident Valentyn Moroz

Though Moroz suggests that Canada is a land of great freedom and opportunity, history demonstrates that his statement is contradictory at best, for there were many hardships for the immigrants to overcome. In the pursuit of improving their socio-economic status, "they were systematically underpaid ... tortured by physical labour, torn by nostalgia for the old country, crushed by loneliness in a strange land, and by the fear of death which [they] often looked in the face."[1] The frequent exposure to risky situations in Canada suggests that death was already a regular occurrence in their lives. A significant part of their socio-cultural existence, death followed the immigrants to the Thunder Bay District, where they learned through exposure about the value of their lives in comparison to the dominant cultural group.

This chapter examines how death played a significant role in the challenges faced by the immigrants in their daily lives, with a particular focus on those faced by the Finns, Ukrainians, and the Greeks of Fort William and Port Arthur. In addition to the hazards of the landscape and climate of Northwestern Ontario, minorities had to contend with the rules and regulations imposed upon them regarding health and sanitation, an issue highlighted during the early years of the twentieth century. While there were outbreaks of other diseases during the same time, the

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[1] Vera Lysenko, *Men in Sheepskin Coats: A Study in Assimilation* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1947), 104, in Donald Avery, "European Immigrant Workers and Labour Protest in Peace and War, 1896-1919," in *The History of Immigration and Racism in Canada: Essential Readings*, ed. Barrington Walker (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2008), 125.

typhoid epidemic of 1906 illustrated the most difficulty of any community-wide epidemic in the Lakehead. The event not only negatively stigmatized the immigrant population as harbingers of death, but also showed how immigrants became victims due to the attitudes shared by members of the dominant cultural group. In order to understand the implications of European immigration on the Thunder Bay District, a socio-historical examination of the evolution of Canada's immigration policy is necessary.

<div align="center">The Developments of Canada's Immigration Policy</div>

The late nineteenth century was a period of transition for the young nation of Canada. While Confederation united the country in spirit, the *British North America Act* expanded the national border to prevent American expansion into the Prairies, their policy driven by the attitude of Manifest Destiny.[2] To Ninette Kelley and Michael J. Trebilcock, the challenge to create a harmonious nation unified from coast to coast was far from complete by 1880:

> The beginnings of a geographically far-flung, physically daunting, thinly populated, economically fragile, and culturally conflicted nation had been tenuously stitched together without great enthusiasm and in singularly unromantic and unexalted circumstances. The battle to carve a nation out of a wilderness had been won, but the battle to sustain a nation through the physical, economic, and cultural tribulations that lay ahead had only just begun.[3]

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[2] Though the Treaty of Ghent identified the forty-ninth parallel as the demarcation line between Canada and the United States following the War of 1812, there was no other documentation at the time to declare it as an official national border. At the time of Confederation, the western length of the established border between Canada and the United States stopped after encompassing Northwestern Ontario. The enactment of the *British North America* Act to expand the border westward was necessary as the establishment of the Prairie provinces occurred in subsequent years. See Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-2007* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2007), 68.

[3] Ninette Kelley and Michael J. Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 61.

Despite the need for immigrants to increase vastly the volume of population in the West, there were cautious reservations about who could enter the fledgling country. The *Immigration Act* of 1869, focussed primarily on the need to ensure the safety of passengers while travelling, and to prevent their exploitation upon their arrival. Though there were few restrictions in the document, there was a penalty against the captain of three hundred dollars for every passenger listed as a "Lunatic, Idiotic, Deaf and Dumb, Blind, or Infirm Person,"[4] emphasizing the importance of preserving the nation's health. While some amendments furthered the prohibition of the criminal and destitute, there were no total revisions made during the nineteenth century.

The Prime Minister at the time, Sir John A. Macdonald, demonstrated the desirability of racial barriers to discourage free entry into Canada. His eagerness to avoid the degeneration of Canada's "racial pedigree" came on the heels of his political exposure to Chinese immigrants who had worked on the western leg of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). Concerns over the potential of the Chinese threat, and how they would harm "the physical health and economic well-being of the white race," resulted in the immediate enactment of the *Chinese Immigration Act* following the completion of the railway in 1885.[5] He also deplored the influx of millions of Slavs and Italians into the United States in 1890, that "mass of foreign ignorance and vice which has flooded that country with socialism, atheism and all other isms," resulting from their 'open door' immigration policy.[6] To avoid the recurrence of that type of 'cultural calamity,' Macdonald promoted a selective policy that preferred immigrants from Great Britain and

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[4] Library and Archives Canada*,* Statutes of Canada, "An Act Respecting Immigration and Immigrants," 1869. Ottawa: SC 32-33 Victoria, c. 10, s. 11, ss. 2, in "Canadian Acts and Legislation," under "Immigration Act, 1869," Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 http://www.pier21.ca/research/immigration-history/immigration-act-1869 (accessed April 24, 2015).

[5] Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, 111.

[6] Kelley and Trebilcock, 111; Toronto *Empire*, 2 October 1890, in Donald Avery, "European Immigrant Workers and Labour Protest in Peace and War, 1896-1919," in *The History of Immigration and Racism in Canada*, 126.

northwestern Europe to populate the Prairies. While Kelley and Trebilcock claim that Germans were the most desirous of immigrants, Donald Avery found that immigrants from the Scandinavian countries were preferred as members of "vigorous northern races who were culturally sound and who could quickly conform to the norms of Anglo-Canadian life."[7] Their agricultural skills, work ethic, and linguistic proximity to English, became great advantages for those groups, including the Finns.

The records of Canadian immigration history often accredit Sir Clifford Sifton with amendments that allowed for such favouritism in the 1869 *Immigration Act*. As Minister of the Interior from 1896 to 1905, Sifton oversaw efforts to attract immigrants for peopling the prairies, particularly with farmers to harvest grain and other raw materials to sustain the growing population and economy. He believed the ideal immigrant was "a stalwart peasant in a sheepskin coat, born to the soil, whose forefathers have been farmers for ten generations, with a stout wife and a half dozen children, is good quality."[8] The stereotypical image of Sifton's desirable immigrant as a hard-working individual well accustomed to manual labour was familiar to Anglo-Saxon owners of the bush camps, who employed many immigrants to produce wood pulp to appease the local demand for newsprint, or to fell logs for the lumber used in the construction of homes and commercial buildings.[9]

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[7] See for example John Dyke's comments in "Annual Report of the Liverpool (Eng.) Agent," ARDA for 1884, *Sessional Papers, 1885*, no. 8, 167. Quoted in Kelley and Trebilcock, 100; Avery, "European Labour Protest in Peace and War," 126.

[8] Canadian Council for Refugees, "A hundred years of immigration to Canada, 1900-1999, Part 1: 1900-1949," Canadian Council for Refugees http://ccrweb.ca/en/hundred-years-immigration-canada-1900-1999 (accessed April 30, 2015).

[9] James Stafford, "A Century of Growth at the Lakehead," in *Thunder Bay: From Rivalry to Unity*, by Thorold J. Tronrud and A. Ernest Epp (Thunder Bay, ON: Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, 1995), 46 and 48.

Though there were immigrants from other nationalities that worked in the lumber camps, the workers were more than likely to be Finn. With their temporary occupations in the lumber camps, he inferred that their ultimate objective was to save enough funds for the purchase of a farm, "where both the terrain and the climate resemble those of their native land."[10] Finland during the late nineteenth century was a country of turmoil, simultaneously undergoing "a major economic transformation as well as being in the throes of an explosive political crisis vis-â-vis her 'Russifying' sovereign, Nicholas II, who ruled as Tsar of All the Russias and Grand Duke of Finland."[11] Forcing up to twenty percent of landless workers to seek a new life abroad, many initially chose to immigrate to the United States, to farm and work the land, in the meantime saving up to cross the border into Canada and settle there.[12]

Despite the government's preference of Scandinavian immigrants as desirable people to enter and populate Canada, other populations from continental Europe immigrated to Canada and settled in the Thunder Bay District. The first two waves of Ukrainian immigration to Canada occurred from 1877 to 1914 and from 1922 to 1939. During these periods the Ukrainian portion of European immigrants were comprised mostly of individuals from the regions of Galicia, Bukovina, and Transcarpathia, which were annexed by Poland, Romania, and Czechoslovakia, respectively following the events of the First World War.[13] The same conflict also changed the

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[10] Eugene Van Cleef, "Finnish Settlement in Canada," *Geographical Review* 42, no. 2 (Apr., 1952): 253-6.

[11] Edward W. Laine, excerpts from *Archival Sources for the Study of Finnish Canadians* (Ottawa: National Archives of Canada, 1989), in Bill Martin, "Excerpts from Archival Sources for the Study of Finnish Canadians," under "First Wave of Finnish Immigration, 1900-1914" http://my.tbaytel.net/bmartin/nac-finn.htm (accessed September 26, 2014).

[12] Ibid.

[13] Leo Iwasykiw, "The Ukrainian Community," in "Thunder Bay's People," ed. Robert F. Harney, special issue, *Polyphony* 9, no. 2 (1987): 71.

mindset of the early Ukrainian immigrants. To Leo Iwasykiw, travelling to Canada was only a temporary venture outside of their traditional homeland:

> But going away of one's own volition, abandoning forever one's own village or town, leaving tightly intertwined kinship relations and the graves of ancestors was not in the Ukrainian character. So when immigration to Canada was opened for Ukrainians in the last decade of the nineteenth century, many considered it only as an extended but temporary absence from home. They planned to return with a small bag of good dollars to improve their social standing in the village and live happily thereafter. The comforting farewell to family and friends "I will be back" was a refrain often repeated in letters to loved ones.[14]

Their plans changed as they learned to enjoy the social and economic freedoms that Canada had to offer. It was an advantageous benefit to Ukrainians incorporated into the ethno-cultural region of Ruthenia. Ruthenia was, and continues to be, an ethno-cultural region in Eastern Europe populated by the Eastern Slavs. The region was comprised historically of the northern part of the Ukraine, the northwestern part of Russia, Belarus, and some neighbouring sections of Finland, the Baltic States, Poland, and Slovenia. In a report submitted by J.J. Wells in 1910, there was great difficulty in identifying true Ruthenians, as the official designation also incorporated Galicians, a minority itself divided between Galician Poles and Galician Ukrainians. While the Fort William native population considered the Galicians to be "simply a Slavic people who were numerous enough to be recognizable as part of [the] Coal Dock district," there were differences in language and religion that distinguished the two sub-groups.[15] The Commissioner's inability to distinguish the 'true' Ruthenians from those who belonged to other

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[14] Iwasykiw, "The Ukrainian Community," 71.

[15] City of Thunder Bay Archives 207, file 1-31, 9 December 1910; Fort William *Daily Times Journal*, 14 January 1904, p.1; Paul Robert Magosci, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 113, in Roy Piovesana, *Italians of Fort William's East End, 1907-1969* (Thunder Bay, ON: Institute of Italian Studies – Lakehead University, 2011), 14-6.

minorities further illustrated the pressures of cultural conformity as defined by the dominance of the Anglo-Saxon culture.

While some minorities came to the Thunder Bay District during the time of cultural laxness defined by the *Immigration Act* of 1869, many other immigrants migrated to the region under the rules and regulations of a new policy drafted by a new Minister of the Interior. In contrast to the unregulated immigration of farmers promoted by Sifton, the new *Immigration Act* of 1906 contained more restrictions regarding which immigrants could enter Canada. Drafted by Frank Oliver, the revised policy "[focused] more attention on their cultural and ethnic origins rather than their economic potential."[16] Despite Canada having a relatively open immigration policy, there was an unwritten hierarchy of preferred minorities, with those races from northern Europe being the most desirous. Newcomers from countries in Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and Southern Europe, were among the less desirable according to Oliver's ideology, yet the federal government considered the continued acceptance of those immigrants into Canada essential. According to the Minister of Labour William Lyon Mackenzie King, Oliver was "strong is his opposition to labour being brought into the country to work on the railways that ultimately is not going to be of service for settlement and favours making restrictions on virtually all but northern people of Europe. I agree with him, but we are about alone in this, others preferring to see the railway work hurried."[17] Oliver capitulated to the needs of big business,

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[16] K. Tony Hollihan, "'A brake upon the wheel': Frank Oliver and the Creation of the Immigration Act of 1906," *Past Imperfect* 1 (1992): 96.

[17] William Lyon Mackenzie King, *The Mackenzie King Diaries (1893-1931)* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 10 January 1911, 10, in Kelley and Trebilcock, 119-20.

which required the use of immigrants from 'inferior races' as a source of cheap foreign labour to aid in railway construction work.[18]

The need for an available source of cheap unskilled labour opened the gates of immigration to undesirable people, including the Greeks, who left their homeland to escape growing poverty and political persecution during conflicts with Ottoman Turkey. Aside from Greece's physical and cultural distance from Britain, the Canadian government deemed Greece to be a "non-preferred" country for the Greeks' collective rejection of farming, a "depressed way of life in Greece," where the lack of arable land provided little food for subsistence, and even less for export to international markets.[19] Paul Magosci mentioned how Canada's immigration policy of hiring cheap labour for development attracted many Greeks for employment opportunities relating to transportation. While many Greeks were more likely to populate the major urban centres in Canada, some Greeks chose to immigrate to the cities in the Thunder Bay District. Observations made by local historians Roy Piovesana and John Potestio intimate that Greeks, as foreign immigrants, settled in the "Coal Docks" section of Fort William, and worked in the railway yards. In addition to working as labourers, the Greeks also opened and operated small businesses, including restaurants, pastry shops, and confectioneries, another form of opposition to the farming profession and isolation in the Prairies.[20]

Another group that objected to farming as a profession was the Jewish population. One hundred thirty-eight thousand Russian Jews also arrived in Canada, after migrating to escape

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[18] Kelley and Trebilcock, 119.

[19] Sarah B. Pomeroy, Stanley M. Burstein, Walter Donlan and Jennifer Tolbert Roberts, *Ancient Greece: A Political Social, and Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1-20; Magocsi, , ed., *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), s.v. "Greeks," 616-8.

[20] Magocsi, *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples* "Greeks," 618; Piovesana, *Italians of Fort William's East End*, 52-4; and John Potestio, *The Italians of Thunder Bay* (Thunder Bay, ON: The Chair of Italian Studies, Lakehead University, 2005), 44.

from pogroms and other restrictions placed on them in the Pale of Settlement, an area that

extended from the eastern *pale,* or demarcation line, to the western border between Imperial

Russia and Prussia, and with Austria-Hungary.[21] The collection of Jews in the area provided the

opportunities for non-Jewish Russians to commit violent pogroms against the Jewry, especially

from 1881 to 1883, and from 1903 to 1906, a continuation of the Russification process that had

also affected Finland, the assimilation of "all peoples of the Russian Empire by forcing non-

Russians to give up their own cultures, languages, and traditions, and adopt Russian language

and culture."[22] To European immigrants that left the socio-political instabilities of their

homeland, Canada became a land of perceived open tolerance of ethno-cultural differences.[23]

While these types of disruptions appear to have been a common driving force behind the need for

Finns, Ukrainians, and Greeks to immigrate to Canada, the evidence of ethno-cultural

discrimination prior to immigration strongly indicates that the racial stereotyping of minorities

by the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture originated from decisions made in Ottawa. The pro-British

attitudes conveyed by the government's decisions hinted not only at the status of immigrants as

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[21] Canadian Council for Refugees, under "1900-1921."; American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, "Pale of Settlement| Jewish Virtual Library," American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/pale.html (accessed November 12, 2014); Government of Canada, "Canada: A History of Refuge," Government of Canada, http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/timeline.asp (accessed November 11, 2014).

[22] Erica Gagnon, "Settling the West," Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21.

[23] "Swedes," in *Encyclopedia of Canada's People*, 1220; M. Eric Gershwin, J. Bruce German and Carl L. Keen, *Nutrition and Immunology: Principles and Practices* (New York: Humana Press, 2000), 34; Eric Einhorn and John Logue, *Modern Welfare States: Politics and Policies in Social Democratic Scandinavia* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 9; Steven Koblik, *Sweden's Development from Poverty to Affluence 1750-1970* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press,1975), 8-9; [23] K. Tony Hollihan, " 'A brake upon the wheel': Frank Oliver and the Creation of the Immigration Act of 1906," *Past Imperfect* 1 (1992): 106-7; Magocsi, "Germans," 589; Library and Archives Canada, "Russian – Library and Archives Canada," Library and Archives Canada, http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/immigration/history-ethnic-cultural/Pages/russian.aspx (accessed November 11, 2014); Canadian Council for Refugees, under "1900-1921."; American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, "Pale of Settlement| Jewish Virtual Library," American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/pale.html (accessed November 12, 2014); Government of Canada, "Canada: A History of Refuge," Government of Canada, http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/timeline.asp (accessed November 11, 2014).

'others,' but also at the rank of Northwestern Ontario as a geographic hinterland. In the communities of Fort William and Port Arthur, the immigrants laboured and fought (politically and physically) to transform their pioneer towns into cultural metropolises.

The Immigrant Establishment in Fort William

When Lucy Maud Montgomery passed through Fort William in 1891, she described the town as "a pretty place with beautiful mountain scenery and some nice houses," but how some of the wilderness had encroached on the town: "But it is all as yet pretty rough; the streets are full of charred unsightly stumps among which promenade numerous pigs!"[24] The suggestion that the population of Northwestern Ontario in the late nineteenth century was crude and rough, comprised of foreign workers from the bush camps, mines, and coal docks, came from the local newspapers, whose writers were often of British origin. Their biased slant about the unfamiliar and 'uncivilized' is a prevalent flaw in studies about the social structure of Canada during the nineteenth century. While most work focuses on larger, more established cities, smaller communities, frontier towns and villages receive far less attention, scant at best. Despite the state of disproportion in this socio-historical field, Thorold Tronrud observed how the frontier of Northwestern Ontario exerted special influences on the development of small communities, including "geographical isolation, racial mixing of indigenous and immigrant populations, economic dependence on distant powers, and high mobility," areas that remain largely

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[24] Mary Rubio, and Elizabeth Waterston, eds., *The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery*, vol. 1: *1889-1910* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1985), 64, in Tronrud, and Epp, *From Rivalry to Unity*, 42.

unexplored.[25] Though Fort William was a pioneer town, the co-existence of immigrants with the Anglo-Saxon cultural group, not only contributed to the multicultural atmosphere of the Thunder Bay District, but also highlighted the cultural diversity of death in Canada.

The Influence of Cultural Stereotypes in the Community

Stella Ting-Toomey noted that first-generation immigrants from many minorities experience an internal conflict, a "struggle between an individual's perception of being 'different' coupled with the inability to blend in with either the dominant cultural group or her or his ethnic heritage group."[26] The struggle of attempting to co-exist in a multicultural region of a new country was a challenge faced by many of the minority groups of the era. In addition to the social and linguistic barriers faced by immigrants, they also lived with the burden of cultural stereotypes.

Many Canadians expressed concern about the new elements in the Canadian population, perceiving them as threats to Anglo-Saxon norms. In 1899 the Toronto *Mail and Empire* set the tone of Canada's public attitude towards the European immigration policy created by Sifton, branding it as "an attempt to make of the North-West a sort of anthropological garden … to pick up the waifs and strays of Europe, the lost tribes of mankind, and the freaks of creation."[27] Sir Arthur G. Doughty perpetuated the opinions held by Canadian society; in his writing, he praised

[25] Thorold J. Tronrud, "Frontier Social Structure: The Canadian Lakehead, 1871 and 1881," *Ontario History* 79, no.2 (June 1987): 145.

[26] Stella Ting-Toomey, "Identity Negotiation Theory: Crossing Cultural Boundaries," in *Theorizing about Intercultural Communication*, by W.B. Gudykunst, ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2005), 211, in Katrina Jurva and Peruvemba S. Jaya, "Ethnic Identity among Second-Generation Finnish Immigrant Youth in Canada: Some Voices and Perspectives," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 40, no. 2 (2008): 119.

[27] Toronto *Mail and Empire*, 10 April 1899, in Avery, "European Immigrant Workers," 126.

the Scandinavians as "hard-working, honest, thrifty and intelligent settlers of whom any country might be proud."[28] Despite his praise for the Norwegians, Swedes and Danes as Scandinavians, there are no references to Finland, either as part of Scandinavia, or as part of the Russian Empire. Equally important is the complete absence of Russians from Doughty's list of minorities that immigrated to Canada. Political tensions with the Church encouraged "hundreds of thousands of Russians [to seek] admission into Canada as industrial and agricultural labourers" from 1899 to 1914, and after the First World War.[29]

In contrast to the positive opinion of Scandinavians, Doughty described the Galician Ukrainians as mentally slow, yet with some optimism for those individuals who settled on farms. For the Galicians that settled in the cities, they were 'othered' as immoral, criminal, and "a danger to national life," in addition to being "animalized" persons "addicted to drunken sprees."[30] Other immigrant cultures in the Thunder Bay District experienced their own stereotypes. The Lakehead became a new home to a substantial number of Greeks encouraged to work on the railways. Though they were good workers on railway construction, or in the confectionery business, he downplayed their positive industriousness, calling them liars. When operating small stores that sell the necessaries of life, they were swindlers, "as it [gave] them a better opportunity to prey upon their countrymen."[31] Further condemnation of the immigrants

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[28] Sir Arthur G. Doughty and Adam Shortt, eds., *The Dominion [and] Political Evolution*, vol. 7 of *Canada and its Provinces: a History of the Canadian People and their Institutions by One Hundred Associates* (Toronto: T. & A. Constable, 1914), 565.

[29] Library and Archives Canada, "Russian – Library and Archives Canada," Library and Archives Canada, http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/immigration/history-ethnic-cultural/Pages/russian.aspx (accessed November 11, 2014).

[30] Doughty and Shortt, 560; J.S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates*, The Social History of Canada Series, Michael Bliss, ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), in Angus McLaren, "Stemming the Flood of Defective Aliens," in Walker, 190.

[31] Doughty and Shortt, 566, in McLaren, "Defective Aliens," in Walker, 190.

came from J.S. Woodsworth, who told his Methodist parishioners in 1898 that "the possibility of influencing for good the coming millions, and helping to lay the foundation of empire in righteousness, appeals alike to the ambition of our citizenship and the holy instincts and principles of our Christianity."[32] Messengers from other Protestant faiths preached a similar message to their Christian parishioners, emphasizing the need for them to help the immigrants integrate through assimilation.[33] The application of cultural stereotypes to those populations in the Thunder Bay District was a clear indicator of the lack of national desire to welcome Finns, Ukrainians, Greeks and other European minorities legally into Canada.

The social pressure put on the immigrants to assimilate to the rigidity of Canadian culture defined by Anglo-Saxon norms, compelled them to adapt to the dominant culture, and project "an image of themselves that would dispel the negative stereotypes that were prevalent not only in their homeland but also in their adopted country."[34] According to Woodsworth, education through public school was the key to helping immigrants integrate through the assimilation of language, and to ensure the preservation of Protestant ideals of national well-being. He wrote that, "Too great emphasis cannot be placed upon the work that has been accomplished and may – yes, must be accomplished by our National Schools."[35] Though the promotion of the English language, customs, Protestant religion and ethics were, according to the General Assembly of the

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[32] Marvin MacDonald, "An Examination of Protestant Reaction toward the non-English speaking immigrant in Port Arthur and Fort William, 1903-1914" (master's thesis, Lakehead University, 1976), 37-9. The quotations are from the *Report of the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1898*, 132; the *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, 1900*, 10; and the *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, 1903*, 5, in A. Ernest Epp, "The Achievement of Community," in Tronrud and Epp, *Rivalry to Unity*, 187.

[33] Ibid., 187.

[34] Potestio, *The Italians of Thunder Bay*, 29.

[35] J.S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates*,, 234, in Knowles, *Strangers at our Gates*, 125.

Presbyterian Church, "characteristic features of our national life," clearly they were not the only features that defined the polyglot culture of the Lakehead.[36] It is interesting to note that the majority of propaganda that shunned immigrants in Fort William and Port Arthur was Protestant in nature, with messages of assimilation espoused by members of the Protestant clergy from both communities.

Protestant churches also perpetuated the negative attitude of mainstream society toward European immigrants. The Methodist and Presbyterian churches of both Port Arthur and Fort William commissioned reports on the social, economic and political conditions of the two cities in 1913. One report described a class structure divided by the veiled intolerance of foreigners and their sole benefit as a plentiful source of cheap labour. There were "three distinct grades of society: the English-speaking well-to-do, the English-speaking artisan class, and the immigrant population, 'the ever-increasing horde of unskilled workers: Ruthenians, Russians, Italians, and many others who do the railway construction work and the rough labour and freight-handling about the factories and docks."[37] As Potestio explains, the immigrants' lack of English and lack of formal education stigmatized them into a pariah class, living on the "periphery of mainstream society," preventing and discouraging many from becoming "Canadianized," regrettably curbing foreigners from contributing to any written literature about death and their beliefs about death at the time.[38]

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[36] Marvin MacDonald, "An Examination of Protestant Reaction toward the non-English speaking immigrant," 37-9; *Report of the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Canada*, 132; *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, 1903*, 5, in Epp, "Achievement of Community," in *Rivalry to Unity*, 187.

[37] "Report of a Preliminary and General Survey of Port Arthur," 10. See note 39 in Potestio, 47.

[38] Potestio, 47-9.

Protestantism was thriving in a variety of social initiatives, including the Sailors Institute for employees on lake vessels, and the Wesley Institute, a social service agency that dealt with "poor housing, poor sanitary conditions and poor remunerations for labour."[39] While they deliberately avoided the evangelization of the burgeoning Catholic population, the agency also offered English classes that assisted in integrating the immigrant population by overcoming the language barrier that was very evident in the communities. Historian A. Ernest Epp notes that the neglect and increased physical distance of the churches encouraged the evangelization of immigrant groups, expressed through the formation of organizations that catered to each individual minority. The various mutual aid societies that developed in the District assisted with both the welfare of the living immigrant, and ensuring the respect of the culturally diverse customs of death when overseeing the funerals of deceased immigrants. Possibly inspired by their Finnish neighbours, the Swedes that emigrated from Finland and settled in Port Arthur, created the *Norrskenet* ("Northern Light") Sick Benefit and Funeral Aid Society in 1905, a significant institution that not only ensured the care and effort of the Swedish community to provide a proper funeral for its members, but also emphasized the importance of retaining their language by printing the Society's constitution in both Swedish and English.[40] The only other reference in the same book to any ethno-cultural funerary organizations is to the *Societá Italiana di Benevolenza - Principe di Piemonte* ("Italian Benevolent Society, Prince of Piedmont").

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[39] MacDonald, "An Examination of Protestant Reaction toward the non-English speaking immigrant," 111-3 and 119-26; *The History of Our Church: Seventy Years of Christian Service* (Fort William, ON: Wesley United Church, 1961), 16-8. The quotation is drawn from J.M. Shaver's "Appendix" to J.S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates* (Toronto: Methodist Church of Canada, 1909), 350, and referred to Shaver's work in the slums of Toronto. In *Rivalry to Unity*, 188.

[40] Elinor Barr, "Swedes at the Lakehead, 1900-1930," Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, *Papers and Records* 20 (1992): 57, in A. Ernest Epp, "The Achievement of Community," in *Rivalry to Unity*, 191; Elinor Baan, "Swedish Language Retention," in "Thunder Bay's People," ed. Robert F. Harney, special issue, *Polyphony* 9, no. 2 (1987): 84.

Established in April 1909 by the Italians of Fort William, the organization "provide[d] financial assistance to those who were ill or injured and [assured] its members that they would be buried properly if they were unfortunate enough to die in Canada," including the conducting of their religious rites.[41] A member of the Society suggested the formation of a band in January 1919, with R. Colosimo as the Maestro. In addition to performing on feast days, the musicians performed in the funeral processions of deceased members of the Society.[42] Though it is feasible to assume that the other organizations provided the same level of support for members, there is no other reference to funerary aspects in Epp's chapter, nor in the entire book, suggesting that death does not deserve to become a respected historical topic treated by academic scholars.

Though the negativity of the stereotypes contributed significantly to the discouragement of European immigration during the interwar years, it was minor in comparison to the wartime consequences they faced in their homelands, where the deaths of soldiers and civilians was a daily, if not hourly, occurrence. The physical and emotional toll experienced by Europeans, many of whom were agriculturalists attempting to rebuild their farms, compelled them to revive their interests in immigration to 'America.' As one immigrant from Hungary noted, "It was generally believed that there wasn't much likelihood that we could improve our lives if we stayed home. Whoever could, should try America."[43] While most Europeans initially chose to immigrate to the United States, many redirected their routes to Canada, after learning of the

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[41] Antonio (Tony) Pucci, "Community in the Making: A Case Study of a Benevolent Society in Fort William's 'Little Italy'," Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, *Papers and Records* 6 (1978): 16-27, in Epp, 191.

[42] Antonio Pucci, "Fraternal Organizations and Local Ethnic Communities: Societá Italiana Di Benevolenza – Principe di Piemonte," in "Benevolent and mutual aid societies in Ontario," ed. Robert F. Harney, special issue *Polyphony* 2, no. 1(Winter 1979): 20.

[43] Carmela Patrias, *Patriots and Proletarians: Politicizing Hungarian Immigrants in Interwar Canada* Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 22.

American government's severe quotas on interwar migration from east-central Europe.[44] As suggested by authors that have contributed to the records of European immigration history, the immigrants exhibited high determination to stay and improve their lives. Potestio observed the character of tenacity when researching the cultural adversities encountered by the Italian immigrants living in Fort William prior to its amalgamation with Port Arthur:

> In the context of Canadian history an understanding of ethnicity, nationality, and cultural identity is essential because the settlement and integration of the myriad ethnic groups who came to this land was contingent upon the "cultural baggage" these groups brought with them. Newcomer history may have common themes of adaptation, but in the end each ethnic group dealt with the challenges of the new land on its own terms. The Italians of Thunder Bay are no exception to this rule.[45]

Tenacity, perseverance and determination were qualities that many immigrants exhibited following their arrival in the Thunder Bay District. Immigrants tried to integrate into society through the workplace, often in the coal docks and freight sheds of the major railways. Tronrud notes that immigrants contributed to the economic development of Fort William and Port Arthur, for the dependence of the local economy rested mainly on the control of outside concerns, including "the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), and mining syndicates based mostly in the United States and eastern Canada."[46] Despite the willingness of immigrants to perform such labour-intensive work for a meagre wage, the job conditions were often intolerable.

Protests for the improvements of such conditions resulted in the labeling of immigrant workers as militants, whose national identities made them responsible for inciting violence with the company's own police on the picket lines, resulting in "a sharp ethnic edge to industrial

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[44] Daniel Černý, "From Unknown People to a Separate Diocese: Slovak Greek Catholics in Canada," in *Transatlantic Migrations*, vol. 1 of *East Central Europe in Exile*, by Anna Mazurkiewicz, ed. (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 253-69;

[45] Potestio, 9.

[46] In the growing township of Oliver, sixty-one farmers comprised over ninety-six percent of the total labour force in 1881. Tronrud, "Frontier Social Structure," 147.

relations at the Lakehead."[47] Their labour unrest, demonstrated through six railway strikes between 1902 and 1912, illustrated the observation of how "the history of local labour is largely a history of conflict."[48] There was evidence of much discrimination against the immigrants recorded in the meeting minutes of the Port Arthur Coal Handlers' Union, including the discharge of employees affiliated with the union, and their replacement with British "scab" labourers who received "easier and better jobs than men who have been in the Company employs for years."[49] The continental Europeans participated in the strikes in the attempt to "abolish the big bear that caused the men to strike namely Capitalism […] under one flag to demand their rights […] [to Live] under Free Conditions and [look to the] Future for the [Minorities] of this district […]."[50] The Italians and Greeks returned to work when their British replacements went on strike, ironically over the same grievances that triggered the initial strike.

Though the freight handlers shared some semblance of victory, the victory was often illusionary, as the companies punished the workers by reneging on the negotiations made in the previous year. Tensions escalated in 1912 when the company refused to re-negotiate the terms from the previous strike, and threatened to discharge the union president for stating a grievance about working the men on Sunday, the traditional day of rest.[51] The culmination of the seething anger and escalations of violence peaked with the arrest and trial of Italian brothers Dominic and Nicola Deprenzo, for attempting to murder the Port Arthur Chief of Police and assaulting a constable. The British community turned the case into an example of why foreigners were

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[47] Epp, "The Achievement of Community," in *Rivalry to Unity*, 186.

[48] Jean Morrison, "The Organization of Labour at Thunder Bay," in *Rivalry to Unity*, 120.

[49] Port Arthur Coal Handlers' Union, August 6, 1911, p. 12.

[50] Piovesana, *Italians of Fort William's East End*, 51; Coal Handlers' Union, c. 1912, p. 38.

[51] Port Arthur Coal Handlers' Union, August 6, 1911, p.12-3.

'dangerous,' a view that resonated with Anglo-Saxon opinion. The judge claimed that the Deprenzo brothers and other strikers had pursued vigilantism, a 'barbarian' form of justice that may be tolerable in their homeland, but not in Canada.[52] His sentencing of the brothers to ten years in Stoney Mountain Penitentiary resonated deeply throughout the communities, reinforcing the ultimate cultural stereotype that all foreigners – not just the Finns, Ukrainians, Greeks, Italians, or Slavs – had a propensity for violence that could prove to be a significant danger to the national way of life for Anglo-Saxon Canadians, but also be a potential risk to the health of individuals in the Thunder Bay District.

The 'Immigrant Effect' on Health in the Thunder Bay District

During the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century, the medical practices of Britain espoused the theory of environmental factors as influential in the predisposition of individuals to catch diseases. The communities of Port Arthur and Fort William experienced a significant increase in the population, specifically in the number of immigrants that settled there. To Epp, the growth of population "tested the ability of both communities to maintain order as immigration, especially from Europe, diversified the population."[53] In an 1897 editorial from the *Fort William Daily Journal*, the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture stereotyped immigrants as dehumanized 'subalterns' whose behaviours and lifestyles conveyed the impression of a total disregard for civility and the health of the local population:

> In that part of Fort William known as the coal dock may be seen a settlement of

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[52] Judy Fudge and Eric Tucker, *Labour Before the Law: The Regulation of Workers' Collective Action in Canada, 1900-1948* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2004), 67.

[53] Epp, "The Achievement of Community," 186.

foreigners who work in the CPR's employ, and who live in dwellings of the "shack" order. They are composed mainly of Finlanders and Italians. They pay the CPR Co. and the Hudson's Bay Co., a trifling sum in the way of rental. Their homes remind one of the big slums in a big city. They live in squatting fashion, each little human coop built very close to its neighbour. They know nothing about the grand rules of hygiene and sanitation and care less. They live cramped and barren lives, and demonstrate a marvellous vitality under the circumstances...Fort William is disgraced with a pest and a menace. The Finlander with the iron-clad stomach, boils his greasy soup and bakes his black bread and drinks the dirty water of the Kam at his door... He may be too tough to sicken himself, but he has more civilized neighbours who are not quite so tough.[54]

As illustrated in the editorial, the standards of health in Western medicine adhered to by the Anglo-Saxon culture became an important aspect in dividing the minorities from the dominant cultural group. Esyllt Wynne Jones also made that observation, noting how community-wide epidemics were "historical actor[s] that played powerful role[s] in articulating and redefining boundaries, particularly of ethnicity and class."[55] In Fort William, minority and class were inseparable from the social health of the community. There was a division of nationality and class, defined by the physical boundary line of the CPR tracks. The 'elitist' or 'protestant' portion of the community, comprised of residents of British, Finnish, and Ukrainian ancestry, lived on the west side of the tracks. On the east side of the railway, in an area historically referred to as the "Coal Docks," the diversity of the immigrant population represented a 'catholic' enclave, "where primarily Roman Catholic Italian, Slovak, Czech, Pole, and [other] Ukrainian immigrants lived and worked at the CPR freight sheds and coal handling facilities."[56] The settling of immigrants in a city where multiple cultural groups contaminated the physical environment, fuelled the notion that the immigrants and the questionable standards of their

[54] *Fort William Daily Journal*, December 11, 1897, in Piovesana, 16-7.

[55] Esyllt Wynne Jones, introduction to *Influenza 1918: Disease, Death and Struggle in Winnipeg*, 7.

[56] Piovesana, introduction to *Italians*, 1.

lifestyle were responsible for the spread of contagious diseases, making them the 'harbingers of death' in the community.

Though efforts of local government to improve the health of their populations through sanitary reforms was not a new practice in Europe,[57] the building of a functional sewer system to drain standing water was unique to the people of the Thunder Bay District. Physical improvements made to the community, including the removal of tree stumps from the streets that greatly offended Montgomery in 1891, as well as the establishment of isolation hospitals during the early twentieth century, were some of the sanitary reforms that "aimed to reduce overall mortality by making the whole urban environment a healthier place."[58] J.N. Hays suggested that the 'triumph' of Western medicine over disease became "a justification for the expansion of Western imperial power and an illustration of the superiority of Western culture,"[59] as the men that presided over meetings for the Board of Health were British, representing the Anglo-Saxon culture of rationality and reason. Despite the significance of the developments in sanitary reforms throughout the city, they did not improve the human aspect of disease control. While knowledge and education were important tools in the confinement and eradication of disease, not all immigrants were able to read or speak the English language, the linguistic barrier further complicating local efforts to prevent further spread of communicable diseases.

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[57] See J.C. Riley, *The Eighteenth-Century Campaign to Avoid Disease* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987); G. Rosen, *From Medical Police to Social Medicine: Essays on the History of Health Care* (New York: Science History Publications, 1974); S. Szreter, "The importance of social intervention in Britain's mortality decline c. 1850-1914: a reinterpretation of the role of public health," *Social History of Medicine* 1 (1988): 1-37, in *Medicine Transformed: Health, Disease and Society in Europe, 1800-1930*, by Deborah Brunton, ed. (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2004), 196.

[58] Brunton, *Medicine Transformed*, 196.

[59] J.N. Hays, *The Burdens of Disease: Epidemics and Human Response in Western History*, rev. ed (Pictaway, NJ: Rutgers Press, 2009), 182.

Potestio states, "[Port Arthur] City administrators seemed to be unconcerned about the health problem and the living conditions of these immigrant groups,"[60] and the observation was similar in Fort William. Meeting minutes for the Fort William Board of Health, beginning in 1903, reveal the reluctant inclusion of the Coal Dock area in the enactment of sanitary reforms throughout the city. The delayed incorporation of the enclave in the array of sanitary reforms for the City of Fort William was a clear indicator of the exclusionary attitudes held by the Anglo-Saxon members of the council during the early twentieth century. The result of the xenophobia toward the immigrants, subjected the minorities to socio-economic circumstances that created a dividing line, segregating the area of immigrants that were more vulnerable in the wake of disease outbreaks, an observation made evident during the typhoid epidemic of 1906.

Typhus is a waterborne disease, often caused by the contamination of water supplies for domestic purposes. Hays also notes that the influx of immigrants during the early twentieth century, the "rapid growth of cities in the early age of industrialization concentrated people around water supplies that could quickly become infected, especially when breaches connected water supplies to sewage."[61] There were problems with access to pure drinking water in both communities. In the city of Port Arthur, the Immigrant District was in low and swampy ground, without sewer service or easy access to water. Immigrants usually obtained water from a single tap at the corner of Fort William Street and Second Street; when the tap froze in the winter, many immigrants fetched water from the roundhouse, or drank surface water accumulated in hand-dug holes. The shortage of drinking water and sewer service in the area, as suggested in the

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[60] Potestio, 48.

[61] J.N. Hays, "Typhoid Fever in Cities, 1850-1920," in *Epidemics and Pandemics: Their Impacts on Human History* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 249.

Report, "[made] the district a menace to the health of the whole community."[62] While comments

from Potestio and the Report suggest that the priority of promoting industrial growth of the city

was more important than the well-being of the immigrant settlers in Port Arthur, Piovesana

concurs with the observation, noting how the negligible treatment of settlers by local council,

was also present in Fort William.

In the city of Fort William, there were also negative consequences of the manipulation of

water, the result of negligence in favour of industrial progress. The quality of water from the

Kaministiqua River was frequently an issue, the intake pipe often contaminated with the

dumping of raw sewage into the outtake pipe, located near the intake pipe. Reports from officials

repeatedly addressed the impurity of the water, with sample results rated as "suspicious,"

"unsatisfactory," or "suspiciously impure."[63] The results convinced Medical Health Officer Dr.

R.J. Manion "it was only the remarkable constitution of the denizens of that district that kept

them alive."[64] Members of the clergy that led services for the English and the elite were harshly

critical of the situation, arguing instead that the "slovenly lifestyle" of the immigrants was the

true source of the outbreak. Reverend M.C. Flatt blamed the foreigners who lived in "unsanitary,

poorly ventilated and badly [lit] shack[s supposedly craved] no pleasures beyond those to be

derived from eating and sleeping. […] the dreaded disease, in that part of town at least, is a long

way from total eradication, and that in many languages spoken in that suburb there is no

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[62] City of Port Arthur, "Report of a Preliminary and General Social Survey of Port Arthur," March 1913, 5, in Potestio, 48.

[63] Thunder Bay Archives 207, file 1-8, Medical Health Officer Report to Council, 14 November 1902; 1 November 1905, in Piovesana, *Italians of Fort William's East End*, 26.

[64] Thorold J. Tronrud, *Guardians of Progress: Boosters & Boosterism in Thunder Bay, 1870-1914* (Thunder Bay, ON: Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, 1993), 44, in Piovesana, 25.

equivalent for the word 'cleanliness.'[65] Though all the citizens of Fort William were at risk for contracting typhoid fever, the residents of the Coal Docks were more vulnerable as the conditions that encouraged the spread of the bacteria were more prevalent in that section of the city. The report submitted by Dr. E.B. Oliver confirmed the suggestion, noting that of the eight hundred thirty-two cases of typhoid confirmed by Dr. Manion and other doctors, three-quarters of the patients afflicted with the disease were from the Coal Docks.[66]

Though the epidemic began in January 1906, the Board of Health did not respond until mid-February with the conversion of the CPR Boarding House, a two-room building with a capacity of one hundred sixty men only, and the purchase of cots for the Coal Dock hospital, insinuating that the "hospital" was solely for the immigrants in that district. The delayed response of the council to address the potential spread of the disease is highly indicative of the racialist attitude of the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture and the idea that "they could master the diseases of the world," an observation re-enforced by the conveyance of 'triumph' in the minutes for the Board of Health meeting on 4 June 1906.[67]

Conclusion

According to Johann Gottfried von Herder, "'human beings are always situated in a particular linguistic and cultural space,' and cannot be understood unless this reality is taken into

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[65] *Fort William Daily Times-Journal*, March 19, 1906, in Piovesana, 27.

[66] Dr. E.B. Oliver, "Department of Health," in Thunder Bay Historical Society, *Papers*, 1914, 31, in Piovesana, 28.

[67] Thunder Bay Archives 4099, City of Fort William, Board of Health, *Board of Health Meeting Minutes 1903-1912*, June 4, 1906, p. 58-9; Hays, *Burdens of Disease: Epidemics and Human Response in Western History*, 182; Piovesana, 28.

consideration."[68] Their habitation of distinct cultural landscapes also reflects on their abilities to overcome obstacles. The interweaving of death into life further substantiates the idea that death as a historical topic is not as distant as previously thought when considered within the context of immigration. André Malraux presented a more assuming position on the role of death, "[no] doubt every civilization is haunted, visibly or invisibly, by what it thinks about death."[69] Canadian historians have entertained many interpretations of how immigrants lived during those times. The idea of Canada having a long history of "being available to the proverbial huddled masses yearning to breathe free," is one of the most pervasive myths in Canadian history.[70] The truth is that they experienced discrimination and cultural prejudice in the new country for being different and 'othered' throughout Canada, including immigrants who settled in the Lakehead region of Northwestern Ontario. Despite the prejudice towards the immigrants and the 'limitations' of their languages, the foreigners that settled throughout the Thunder Bay District knew how to express their understandings of death within their cultures, as well as the emotions associated with death. While the establishment of mutual aid societies and cultural organizations to accommodate the various minority groups helped to maintain their integrity, it was the adversities and difficulties experienced by the immigrants in their homelands, that contributed to the enrichment of the region's ethno-cultural history.

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[68] Allan Smith, "Canadian Identity," in *Encyclopedia of Canada's People*, 316, in Potestio, 9.

[69] "Sans doute, toute civilization est-elle hantée, visiblement ou invisiblement, par ce qu'elle pense de la mort." André Malraux, *Antimémoires* [Anti-Memoirs] (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), 266, in *The Gender of Death: A Cultural History in Art and Literature*, ed. Karl S. Guthke (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 10.

[70] Kelley, and Trebilcock, 466.

Chapter 3:

How Religion and Immigrant Culture Shaped Funerary Traditions

> Death is our eternal companion. It is always to our left, an arm's length behind us. Death is the only wise adviser that a warrior has. Whenever he feels that everything is going wrong and he's about to be annihilated, he can turn to his death and ask if that is so. His death will tell him he is wrong, that nothing really matters outside its touch. His death will tell him, I haven't touched you yet.

> --Carlos Castañeda, *Journey to Ixtlan: The Lessons of Don Juan*

To the European immigrants who migrated to Canada during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, death was indeed a constant companion. In addition to the opinion from Castañeda, Susan Smart concurred with the historical observation, noting how death "was always close at hand,"[1] particularly for those who migrated to and settled in the frontier of Northwestern Ontario. She found that fatalities caused by fires, drowning, farm animals or equipment, disease, infant mortality, vehicular or industrial accidents, or suicides, were common during that era.[2] Research into the death records of deceased individuals buried in cemeteries throughout the Thunder Bay District further corroborates with her finding.

Despite the prevalent perception of Death as a constant companion in the lives of immigrants, religion and its teachings played a significant role in the stripping of some of Death's omnipotent power, rendering it less authorial in their lives. This chapter explores the historical development and evolution of the customs and traditions surrounding immigrant funerals. The analysis of the impact of religion and immigrant culture in Fort William and Port Arthur not only provides a clearer understanding of how they shaped the cultural landscape of a

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[1] Susan Smart, *A Better Place: Death and Burial in the Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto: Ontario Genealogical Society/Dundurn, 2011), 19.

[2] Smart, *A Better Place*, 19-21.

pioneer community, but also emphasizes how European religion and national culture contributed to the multicultural character of the Thunder Bay District.

The Importance of Religion in Pioneer Communities

Michel S. Beaulieu and Chris Southcott observed that Northwestern Ontario "experienced a unique historical journey" beginning at the end of the nineteenth century.[3] Though culture and cultural identity played an important role as pillars in the development of any Euro-Canadian community, so too did religion. The need to understand how religion affects the daily lives of people is an important angle for historians to investigate within the larger context of immigration, specifically when exploring the cultural contributions of European immigrants to the Canadian interpretation and treatment of death. In order to understand the significance of religion within the historical context of European immigration to Canada, it is important to know what religion is, and why humankind perceived religion as a necessity during the nineteenth and twentieth century.

What is Religion?

The singular consensus among experts is the root word *religio/religare*, a Latin term meaning "to tie back."[4] The tying back of humankind's connection with God or an Infinite Being is a goal shared by all faiths, past and present. The result of having a great variety of religious

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[3] Michel S. Beaulieu and Chris Southcott, introduction to *North of Superior: An Illustrated History of Northwestern Ontario* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 2010), 10.

[4] Free Merriam-Webster Dictionary, s.v. "religion," http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/religion (accessed October 8, 2014).

theories and interpretations in existence is the lack of a "universally accepted definition of

religion, and quite possibly there never will be."[5] The diversity of religious denominations in the

lives of Anglo-Saxons and immigrants in the Thunder Bay District during the nineteenth century

and the twentieth century illustrated how religion played a significant role in the sociology of a

society according to Professor W. W. Rostow. He suggested that religion was possible to shape,

to reflect the culture of those who practiced it, an all-encompassing entity that "rationalize[d]

their relationship to the community."[6] The local historian must draw attention to the potential of

religion as a tool that highlights its significance within the historical context of cultural

development in the District. Despite leaving their homelands for fear of persecutory danger, or

for the chance to improve their socio-economic status in a new country, religion helped to tie the

European immigrants of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century back to their cultural

roots, as a source of moral strength for dealing with such adversities in Canada.[7]

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[5] Francis Clark, *Introduction to the Study of Religion* (n.p.: Open University, Milton Keynes, 1981), A101 units 19/20, pp. 12ff, in *What is Religion?*, by Robert Crawford (New York: Routledge, 2002), 3.

[6] Walt Whitman Rostow, *British Economy of the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: n.p., 1948), 134, in Perkin, in Stern, *Varieties of History*, 433-4.

[7] Smart, 19; William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989); June Granatir Alexander, *The Immigrant Church and Community: Pittsburgh's Slovak Catholics and Lutherans, 1880-1915* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987); John E. Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985); Jay P. Dolan, *The Immigrant Church: New York's Irish and German Catholics, 1815-1865* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1975); and *The American Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985); Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1960); Robert E. Park and Herbert A. Miller, *Old World Traits Transplanted* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1921); George E. Pozzetta, ed., *American Immigration and Ethnicity: A 20 Volume Series of Distinguished Essays,* vol. 19 of *The Immigrant Religious Experience* (New York: Garland, 1991); Timothy L. Smith, "Religion and Ethnicity in America," *American Historical Review* 83, no.5 (Dec., 1978); William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1918-1920); James P. Wind and James W. Lewis, eds., *American Congregations*, 2 vols. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994), in Fenggang Yang and Helen Rose Ebaugh, "Transformations in New Immigrant Religions and Their Global Implications," *American Sociological Review* 66, no.2 (Apr., 2001): 269.

Though most dictionaries describe religion in terms of its parts, references are often incomplete without the human aspect. Leo Tolstoy observed how, in response to society's transition from religion to science in order to understand the environment around them, religion was essential for distinguishing the rational man from the animal.[8] The provision of man's "destination in the world" was a significant cornerstone in Charles Long's definition of religion. He defined religion as "the orientation [of] how one comes to terms with the ultimate significance of one's place in the world."[9] In regards to the European immigrants who left their homelands for life in the Thunder Bay District during the late nineteenth century, the absence of Catholic churches and synagogues tested not only their religious orientations, but also their cultural orientations as the outsiders in a largely Anglo-Saxon and Protestant province, an observation corroborated by historian William Westfall.[10] While he mentioned the existence of a Catholic population, the purpose was to highlight their minority status in contrast to the larger percentage of the population following the Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian faiths during the nineteenth century.[11]

Minority Churches in the Thunder Bay District

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[8] Leo Tolstoy, "What is Religion, and Wherein Lies its Essence? (1902)," in *Life and Essays on Religion*, trans. Aylmer Maude (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 229-31, in Internet Archive, https://archive.org/stream/onlifeandessayso035184mbp#page/n3/mode/2up (accessed May 15, 2015).

[9] Charles H. Long, *Significations* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 7, in Clayton Crockett, "On the Disorientation of the Study of Religion," in *What is Religion?: Origins, Definitions, and Explanations*, by Thomas A. Idinopulos and Brian C. Wilson, eds. (Leiden, NL: Koninklijke Brill, 1998), 1.

[10] See William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989).

[11] Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 10-1.

While there are infinite qualities that comprise social identity, cultural identity is an important element to consider in conjunction with religion when studying the ethno-cultural history of a pioneer town. In the words of Christopher Hitchens, religion "is an important part of the human make-up. [It is] also part of our cultural and intellectual history."[12] One area of increasing interest among scholars of religion, "has been the ways in which the cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds of immigrants affect processes of integration into particular local and national societies."[13] Their establishment of religious communities in both Port Arthur and Fort William not only encouraged positive cultural integration, but also ensured the building of good relations between the immigrants and the Anglo-Saxon host society through their respect of the "culture of order" addressed in Westfall's research.[14] He noted that churches and synagogues not only attested to the permanence of the connection between history and religion as important socio-historical icons, but they also served an essential role in ensuring stability during the nineteenth century.[15]

The reciprocal alliance between church and state was illustrative of the notion of a 'vicarious religion,' a concept in which "the notion of religion performed by an active minority but on behalf of a much larger number, who (implicitly at least) not only understand, but, quite clearly, approve of what the minority is doing."[16] Helena Vilaça et al. further described the

[12] BrainyQuote.com, "Religion Quotes – BrainyQuote," BrainyQuote.com, http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/topics/topic_religion.html (accessed May 18, 2015).

[13] Tuomas Martikainen, *Religion, Migration, Settlement: Reflections on Post-1990 Immigration to Finland* (Leiden, NL: Koninklijke Brill, 2013), 34.

[14] Martikainen, *Religion, Migration, Settlement: Reflections on Post-1990 Immigration to Finland*, 37.

[15] Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 23 and 119.

[16] Peter L. Berger, Grace Davie and Effie Fokas, *Religious America, Secular Europe? : A Theme and Variations* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 39-40.

concept as "a state church or major historical church as a public utility available to the population as a whole and based on a territorial and local community criteria,' or the 'long-term established and institutionalized Christian minorities in a country, which became routinized and not competing."[17] While the stereotypes associated with the 'behaviour' of immigrants in the Thunder Bay District suggested they were immoral individuals who would conflict with the "culture of order" rooted in the Protestant teachings of Ontario, the various minorities from Europe proved the Anglo-Saxon cultural group wrong. The immigrants also respected the culture of order, demonstrated with the establishment of several churches[18] to address the cultural and religious diversity of the population.

While several Protestant churches were already open to parishioners in the cities and the District, many ministered primarily to the Anglo-Saxon population, whose history of using Christianity to ensure the compliance of the population had existed for almost a century prior to the establishment of the district. In addition to the fiery rhetoric from James Woodsworth, clergy from other Protestant denominations voiced their concerns about the immigrants and their heretic way of life.[19] Historian A. Ernest Epp noted how there was less of a challenge to minister to the immigrants from Northern Europe, including Finns escaping from the forced assimilation of the Russian Empire. In their churches located in the various townships throughout the District, they continued to practice Lutheranism, a form of Protestantism that was also the official religion in

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[17] Helena Vilaça et al., introduction to *The Changing Soul of Europe: Religions and Migrations in Northern and Southern Europe* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2014), 1.

[18] "Since society must have order, there must be an established church." Westfall, 119.

[19] Marvin MacDonald, "An Examination of Protestant Reaction toward the non-English speaking immigrant in Port Arthur and Fort William, 1903-1914" (master's thesis, Lakehead University, 1976), 37-9. The quotations are from the *Report of the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1898*, 132; the *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, 1900*, 10; and the *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, 1903*, 5, in A. Ernest Epp, "The Achievement of Community," in Tronrud and Epp, *Rivalry to Unity*, 187.

the Scandinavian countries. The main doctrine of justification "by grace alone by faith alone by Scripture alone" advocated the use of scripture alone as the final authority on all matters of faith, in sharp contrast to the interpretation defined by the Catholic Council of Trent.[20] In the process of adhering to both religious and local authorities, they appealed to the Anglo-Saxon culture of needing to relax in a "clean, orderly, neat, virtuous world […]"[21] that emphasized their closeness to God and godliness through cleanliness.

The simplicity of the Lutheran faith was also evident in the architectural style of their churches. The Lutheran architectural design was reflective of the Nordic consciousness, a characteristic

described as "orderly, clean, pure, enlightened, progressive, masterful, restrained, cool, and aloof. [They envisioned their God] as a clean, rational, aloof and distant God, a monitor-in-the-sky observing [their] actions."[22] While the majority of the Lutheran churches accommodated either the Finns or the Swedes, Epp mentioned the sale of the St. Ansgarius Swedish Lutheran Church to a Norwegian Lutheran congregation in 1912.[23]

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[20] *Canons and Decrees of the Council of* Trent, Fourth Session, Decree on Sacred Scripture, recorded in *Echiridion symbolarum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum* [Handbook of Creeds and Definitions and Declarations in Matters of Faith and Morals] by Heinrich Joseph Dominicus Denzinger [1854], on Catechetics Online.com, "Denzinger: English translation, older numbering," Catechetics Online.com, http://patristica.net/denzinger/ (accessed May 24, 2015), esp. 783 and 1501. For a history of the discussion of various interpretations of the Tridentine decree, see *The Relationship between Scripture and Tradition according to the Council of Trent*, by Matthew L. Selby (master's thesis, University of St. Thomas, July 2013).

[21] Michael Novak, *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics: Politics and Culture in American Life*, rev. ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1996), 122-3.

[22] Michael Novak, Chapter 3 of *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics* (New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1973), 122-3. See also Wayne Elzey, "The Most Unforgettable Magazine I've Ever Read: Religion and Hygiene in the Reader's Digest," *Journal of Popular Culture* 10, no. 1 (Summer 1976): 181-90; Catherina Albanese, "Technological Religion: Life-Orientation and *The Mechanical Bride*," *Journal of Popular Culture* 10, no. 1 (Summer 1976): 14, in Richard Wolniewicz, "Comparative Ethnic Church Architecture," *Polish American Studies* 54, no. 1 (Spring, 1997): 54.

[23] See Elinor Barr, "Swedes at the Lakehead 1900-1930," Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, *Papers and Records* 20 (1992): 52-3, regarding the confusing history of this church, in Epp, 189.

In contrast to the religious unification of the Lutherans from Scandinavia and the physical uniformity of their places of worship, there were more complexities to address when ministering to the minorities from Central and Southern Europe, and the varied strands of Catholicism. Immigrants from the two regions brought with them the largest religious plurality in both cities, a troubling concern to the Protestant clergy.[24] Of the twenty-one thousand forty-eight Catholic residents in the District, three-quarters were originally from continental Europe, including Ukrainians, Italians, French, Poles, Czechs, Slovakians, Austrians, Germans, Roumanians, Russians, and Hungarians.[25] Another obstacle involved the religious designations of 'Ruthenians,' for the label encompassed Galicians, another ethno-cultural region in Eastern Europe. Though the Fort William native population considered the Galicians to be "simply a Slavic people who were numerous enough to be recognizable as part of [the] Coal Dock district," there were differences in language and religion that distinguished the two sub-groups: while the Galician Poles were Roman Catholic, Galician Ukrainians practiced Greek Catholicism.[26]

The branch of Catholicism fell under the domain of the Eastern Orthodox Church, which oversees what was the eastern section of the Roman Empire, while continental Europeans practiced Western Catholicism. The origins of the division, or 'great schism' between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church, stemmed from the centralization of religious power in the Roman pope versus the division of authority among a number of *sees*,

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[24] Epp, "The Achievement of Community," 187.

[25] Ibid., 195.

[26] City of Thunder Bay Archives 207, file 1-31, 9 December 1910; Fort William *Daily Times Journal*, 14 January 1904, p.1; Paul Magosci, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 113, in Roy Piovesana, *Italians of Fort William's East End, 1907-1969* (Thunder Bay, ON: Institute of Italian Studies – Lakehead University, 2011), 14-6.

each being "an area of authority under a Christian bishop or archbishop."[27] Though they were around the eastern Mediterranean, the realm of the Russian Orthodox Church incorporated the Slavic countries in Eastern Europe.

The adherents of the Russian Orthodox Church came under religious persecution in the years following the 1917 Russian Revolution, when revolutionary political leader Lenin repressed the faith, and viewed the institutionalized religion as "a divisive, backward force in society, an apology for oppression, which should wither away in the socialist state."[28] As the domed churches represented the old culture of order, the state authority seized all church property, closed many monasteries and churches, and killed approximately forty thousand priests, nuns, bishops, and lay Christians in the Solovky labour camp between 1918 and 1940. Under his authority churches were no longer the holy places of worship they were in the past; instead they became museums or warehouses.[29]

In contrast to the Nordic tradition of Lutheran simplicity and orderliness, the Catholics followed the teachings of a chthonic religion; their God dwelt in the fields, forests, mountains, and streams.[30] While their ceremonies were "more passionate and appealed to the senses," they sought guidance through their adherence to a code of unwritten Sacred Traditions, as well as Scripture, to decide on matters of faith, as defined by the Council of Trent in 1548.[31] Though Richard Wolniewicz described the Catholic faith as 'pagan,' he did it not in the context of

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[27] Fisher, *Living Religions*, 310-1 and 513.

[28] Fisher, *Living Religions*, 311.

[29] Fisher, 311-3.

[30] Novak, *Unmeltable Ethnics*, Chapter 3, in Wolniewicz, "Comparative Ethnic Church Architecture," 54.

[31] Denzinger, Decree on Sacred Scripture, in *Echiridion symbolarum*, http://patristica.net/denzinger/ (accessed May 24, 2015).

Druids, but rather he interpreted the Latin term *pagus*, which referred to the rural remoteness from the city and the urban character of early Christianity. The interpretation has more of the contextual 'flavour' illustrated in the article by Father Dennis L. Kolinski on the importance of Polish shrines and crosses in rural Wisconsin: "That traditional Slavic consciousness saw the realm of the sacred in the whole world around [them]. The sacred permeated the entire landscape, finding expression in a multitude of sites."[32] In the churches erected by the immigrants, wisdom conveyed through the holy sacraments, or "mysteries" in the Eastern Rite tradition, helped to guide immigrants through their lives in the rustic pioneer town of Fort William.

The uniqueness of the Eastern Orthodox churches was evident in the incorporation of onion-shaped cupolas as part of the exterior design. Domes used in the architecture of Greek Orthodox churches held the same religious purpose; to represent "the heavenly vault and heavenly perfection," while the square base symbolized earthly perfection.[33] Epp referred to an Orthodox Church established by Russian monks, and St. Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church that ministered to the Ruthenian community during the 1910s.[34] Though establishment of the original

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[32] Dennis L. Kolinski, "Shrines and Crosses in Rural Central Wisconsin," *Polish American Studies* 51, no. 2 (Autumn 1994): 33, in Wolniewicz, 54. For a historical analysis of the architecture of the Roman Catholic Church in comparison to that of the Church of England, see Maarten Delbeke and Anne-Françoise Morel, "Metaphors in Action: Early Modern Church Buildings as Spaces of Knowledge," *Architectural History* 53 (2010): 99-122.

[33] Walter Daschko, "Tservky: A Survey of Ukrainian-Canadian Church Architecture in Ontario, Its Major Roots and Trends," *Polyphony: The Bulletin of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario* 10 (1988): 191-2. On the Ukrainian landscape of the northern Great Plains, see John C. Lehr, "The Landscape of Ukrainian Settlement in the Canadian West," *Great Plains Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (1982): 94-105; John C. Lehr, "The Ukrainian Sacred Landscape: A Metaphor of Survival and Acculturation," *Material History Bulletin* 29 (Spring 1989): 3-11; James W. Darlington, "The Ukrainian Impress on the Canadian West," in *Canada's Ukrainians: Negotiating an Identity*, by Lubomyr Luciuk and Stella Hryniuk, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 53-80; Theodore Pedeliski, "Ukrainians on the Prairies: Old World Cultural Values and Demands of a New Land," *North Dakota History: Journal of Northern Great Plains* 53, no. 4 (Fall 1986): 17-25, in Wolniewicz, 55.

[34] Elaine Lynch, "Andrew Potocky: An Elder in the Slovak Community," in "Thunder Bay's People," John Potestio and Antonio Pucci, eds., special issue *Polyphony: The Bulletin of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario* 9, no.2(1987: 35. See also Joseph M. Kirschbaum, *Slovaks in Canada* (n.p.: Canadian Ethnic Press Association of

Greek Orthodox Church occurred in 1918, the federal government did not collect the census

numbers for the denomination until 1921, which counted over two thousand members then; the

number plummeted to seven hundred fifty by 1931.[35] The Church closed in 1935 for twenty

years, during which the faithful attended services at the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.[36]

Regardless of the architectural differences of the places of worship established

throughout the Thunder Bay District, their physical presence and historical significance

illustrated the importance of the organized social structure[37] that religion provided for the

immigrants. To Piovesana, the five national parish churches in the East End (Italian, Pole,

Slovak, Ukrainian Catholic and Ukrainian Greek Orthodox), "with their bell-towers and onion-

shaped cupolas, all within blocks of one another, gave the area a visible rustic and cosmopolitan

appearance."[38] The impact of local churches on the aesthetics of the physical landscape, and their

social significance as 'civilizing' icons on the cultural landscape in Fort William and Port

Arthur, emphasize the importance of places of worship in the lives of the immigrants as the sites

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Ontario, 1967), 225-7; Ol'ha Woycenko, *The Ukrainians in Canada* (Ottawa and Winnipeg: Centennial Commission and Canada Ethnic Press Federation, 1967), 76-80; Michael H. Maranchuk, *The Ukrainian Canadians: A History* (Winnipeg and Ottawa: Ukrainian Free Academy of Sciences, 1970),98, 102 and 1111-2; Jaroslav Petryshyn, and L. Dzubak, *Peasants in the Promised Land: Canada and the Ukrainians 1891-1914* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1985), 129-35; and Orest T. Martynowych, *Ukrainians in Canada: The Formative Years, 1891-1924* (Edmonton, AB: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1991), 182-9, and 193-206; Roy and Diane Piovesana, *St. Dominic Parish: A History 1912-1987* (Thunder Bay: St. Dominic Parish, 1987), 4-5, in Epp, "The Achievement of Community," 188.

[35] Census of Canada, 1921, vol. 1, Table 38, 700-1; 1931, vol. 2, Table 42, 634-5. For the background to this temporary shift, see Maranchuk, *The Ukrainian Canadians: A* History, 465-7; Mark G. McGowan, "'A Portion for the Vanquished': Roman Catholics and the Ukrainian Catholic Church," in *Canada's Ukrainians: Negotiationg an* Identity eds. Lubomyr Luciuk, and Stella Hryniuk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press for the Ukrainian Canadian Centennial Committee, 1991), 218-37; Martynowych, 486-96, in Epp, 195.

[36] Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church of Thunder Bay, "Community History," Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church of Thunder Bay, http://www.gothunderbay.org/community_history.htm (accessed November 12, 2014).

[37] Fisher, *Living Religions*, 23.

[38] Piovesana, *Italians of Fort William's East End*, 2-4.

of moral stability. Wolniewicz noted that the physical shape of the church building revealed much more about the people who prayed inside it:

> Modes of architecture, decoration, and spatial arrangement are indicative of more than differences of line and color. They reflect basic differences in the value systems of the believers. After comparing ethnic churches, one might conclude that man's image of man and man's image of God have much in common and are at times difficult to differentiate. […] Perhaps no reasonable answer to this question exists. Religion, after all, is not a test of reason. It is a test of faith.[39]

Though the Anglo-Saxon culture instilled rules that tested the faiths of many immigrants in the Thunder Bay District, there were often other obstacles that presented a greater challenge. One of the greatest tests of faith they faced in the Lakehead involved the death(s) of children, parents, and breadwinners. In addition to the "[deep degree] of suffering and vulnerability emphasized by their poverty,"[40] death compounded the intensity of their trauma, transforming from a force that was eagerly anticipated in medieval times, to one that people hated and feared in modern times.

<center>The Role of Religion in the Treatment of the Dead</center>

William A. Faunce and Robert L. Fulton argued that death was "the nucleus of a particular culture complex involving a group of interrelated cultural traits which function together in a more or less consistent and meaningful way," where the involvement of religion in death rites and practices was a significant facet of the larger configuration of death.[41] Bronislaw Malinowski once wrote that "death, which of all human events is the most upsetting and

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[39] Wolniewicz, 73.

[40] Esyllt Wynne Jones, *Influenza 1918: Disease, Death and Struggle in Winnipeg* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 118.

[41] William A. Faunce, and Robert L. Fulton, "The Sociology of Death: A Neglected Area of Research," *Social Forces* 36, no.3 (Mar., 1958): 205.

disorganizing to man's calculation, is perhaps the main source of religious belief."[42] Tony Walter

concurred with the observation and noted how the concept of the traditional death had changed

historically with the arrival of the nineteenth century: "Traditional death was based in

community and discussed in the language of religion, but in the West this was progressively

undermined by increasing individualism. This resulted in a more modern way of death—

communal rituals were replaced with privacy for the dying or bereaved person, and the authority

of the church was replaced by the authority of the doctor."[43] The common link between the three

quotations is the use of religion as part of organized funerary customs, and its significance as a

tool to perpetuate the 'traditional' practices of an immigrant funeral.

Though the traditions of immigrants created a sense of moral stability in the

unpredictable environment of the Thunder Bay District, Tamás Hofer noted there was nothing

traditional about tradition in the last decades of the nineteenth century:

> In this period, the concept of tradition in the Nordic countries as well as in Hungary and central Europe was loaded with emotions and sentiments. It had definite positive connotations. It was not used to mean that which was handed down from ancestors. Instead, tradition was viewed as a kind of repertoire of the customs and habits, ceremonies and trades being endangered by industrialization, a repertoire looked upon by folklorists and ethnographers as valuable and as needing to be perpetuated and rescued for posterity.[44]

Timothy Taylor noted in his analysis of death rituals that since the rise of humankind,

people "have used communal rituals to channel and focus the otherwise inexpressible emotions

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[42] Bronislaw Malinowski, "The Role of Magic and Religion," in *Reader in Comparative Religion* by W.H. Lessa and E.Z. Vogt, eds. (Evanston: Row Peterson, 1962), 97, in Tony Walter, *The Revival of Death* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 187.

[43] Walter, *The Revival of Death*, 185.

[44] Tamás Hofer, "The Perception of Tradition in European Ethnology," in "Culture, Tradition, and Identity Conference, March 26-28, 1984," special issue, *Journal of Folklore Research* 21, no.2/3 (May – Dec., 1984): 133.

of the bereaved," including their belief in a disembodied entity or soul.[45] Yet he also mentioned

that, because souls were malevolent upon death of the body, the recitation of prayers as part of

the funerary rites served a twofold purpose:

> the primary rites zoned off the freshly dead and instantiated the delicate ritual powers designed to keep the unquiet soul at bay; the secondary rites, occurring after weeks or months [...], firmly and finally incorporated the deceased into the world of the ancestors. [...]
> It is now clear that all the traditional funeral rites studied by anthropologists the world over, whether they involve burial or not, have a shared logic –a common funeral choreography of hidden depth designed to protect the living from the dead.[46]

Despite the prevalence of the concept of the dangerous disembodied soul for most of human

history, Taylor acknowledged that "for an increasing number of communities, [the idea has]

simply evaporated."[47] Though modern society has forgotten the fear behind the idea of

malevolent human spirits, belief in the spirit of the deceased travelling from one world to another

was a belief held by many European immigrants.

Some immigrant cultures also believed in spirits who guided the souls of the dead

between the worlds of the living and the dead. The Finn *kirkonväki* (churchyard-väki) usually

accompanied the deceased to the graveyard. While folk narratives and beliefs about the *väki*

were still a part of Finnish rural culture in the first half of the twentieth century, rapid changes in

rural life led to the disappearance of the tradition.[48] Though the god Hermes was the *psychopomp*

of the ancient Greek Underworld, no deities filled that role at the start of the twentieth century.

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[45] Timothy Taylor, *The Buried Soul: How Humans Invented Death* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 2-3.

[46] Taylor, *The Buried Soul*, 27-8.

[47] Taylor, 27-8.

[48] Kaarina Koski, "Conceptual Analysis and Variation in Belief Tradition: A Case of Death-Related Beings," *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore* 38 (2008): 46 and 53, http://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol38/koski.pdf (accessed April 20, 2015).

According to one source, the myths and epics that were iconic of their cultural heritage "aggravate[d] the fear of death and impose[d] the ideas of suffering if one died. [As a result] death became an equal term to "pain," "suffering," and "emotional and psychological disaster."[49] While there were spirits that represented the various aspects of the afterlife in Slavic mythology, no psychopomp existed in Ukrainian folklore, yet the idea of the transitional journey was still prevalent among the perceptions of death held by Ukrainian peasants.[50] The presence of the psychopomp in their cultural heritages, suggests that like religion, national identity is another artificial construct that historians need to consider in their analyses of social identity within the larger context of Canadian history.

Harold C. Mytum noted that because national culture is constructed rather than inherited, "many aspects of mortuary behavior in a group's homeland will not necessarily carry an overt cultural association. Funerary customs, burial and commemoration will be part of normative culture, but when immigration or emigration highlights differences between groups, and then such behaviors may become powerfully overt."[51] The establishment and altering of traditions

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[49] See Mark P.O. Morford and Robert J. Lenardon, "Views of the Afterlife: The Realm of Hades," in *Classical Mythology*, 8th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 364; Robert Graves, *Greek Myths* (New York: Penguin, 1970), in Panagiotis Pentaris, "Death in the Modern Greek Culture." *Hawaii Pacific Journal of Social Work Practice* 5, no.1 (2013): 127, http://www.academia.edu/3419147/Death_in_the_modern_Greek_Culture (accessed May 23, 2015).

[50] Pavlo Chubinskyi, ed., *Trudy etnografichesko-statisticheskoi ekspeditsii v zapadno-Russkii krai*, 7 vols.(St. Petersburg: n.p., 1872-8); Borys Hrinchenko, *Ethnograficheskie materialy* [Ethnographic materials], 3 vols. (Chernihiv, UA: n.p., 1895-99); Volodymyr Kubijovyc, ed., *Ukraine: A Concise Encyclopedia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), 208-429; Dmytro Zelenin, *Russische (ostslavische) Volskunde* (Russian [East Slavic] folklore) (Berlin, DE: n.p., 1927), in "Religion and expressive culture – Ukrainian Peasants," http://www.everyculture.com/Russia-Eurasia-China/Ukrainian-Peasants-Religion-and-Expressive-Culture.html (accessed May 29, 2015).

[51] Harold C. Mytum, *Mortuary Monuments and Burial Grounds of the Historic Period: Manuals in Archaeological Method, Theory, and Technique* (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2004), 145, in Verna Elinor Gallén, "In Silence We Remember: The Historical Archaeology of Finnish Cemeteries in Saskatchewan" (master's thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2012), 6.

during the late nineteenth century, including funeral customs, reflected both positive and negative changes in the socio-economic situations in the homelands of European immigrants. Kodo Matsunami concurred with Hofer, noting that before the institutionalization of religions, funeral rites varied "according to the geographical and social environment of the deceased."[52] The combination of indigenous and theoretical elements resulted in funeral customs that were often repetitive in action, words, and gestures. Though the repetitions were "important means for channeling emotion, guiding cognition and organizing social groups and community," W. Richard Comstock wrote of the dire need for studying the significance of rituals before they fade into historical obscurity.[53]

The same sense of urgency also applies to the influence European immigrants had in the establishment of funerary customs in the Lakehead region during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Joachim Whaley noted that while the decline of religion has played a central part in the social problem of accepting mortality, "modern societies have [had] little need for the complex social rituals which previously surrounded death. The decline of the elaborate funeral and the fact that most people now die in institutions rather than at home in the midst of the family has meant that the means whereby grief and mourning were formerly socialized within a supportive community are now no longer available to modern man."[54] In observing the perceptions of death in the modern Greek culture, there is a "paramount importance" behind the learning about "traditional customs and rituals among different cultures," and how awareness of

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[52] Kodo Matsunami, introduction to *International Handbook of Funeral Customs* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), xv.

[53] W. Richard Comstock, *Religion and Man* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 66, in Matsunami,

[54] Joachim Whaley, ed., introduction to *Mirrors of Mortality: Studies in the Social History of Death* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), 2.

the "cultural differences on death and grief" provided unique expertise to practitioners, social workers, and health care professionals who work in the fields of death and dying.[55]

Historians also need to take into consideration the changing of mental attitudes towards death when analyzing the impact of religion and culture on funerary customs. According to the stages of death in history that reflect on the attitudes as described by Philippe Ariès, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries witnessed the fifth stage, "*la mort inversée*" or the "Forbidden Death" in which modern man "attempted to suppress the frightening and scandalizing knowledge of his own mortality." As Walter noted, with backing from leading anthropologists, social scientists and historians, without religion or tradition, death was an untamed beast that terrified the living rather than the dead.[56]

Like the polyglot nature of the Lakehead, immigrants expressed the language of religion through different "dialects" providing different interpretations of death and their treatment of the dead. Evidence provided primarily through the death registries of European immigrants that died in Fort William and Port Arthur between 1880 and 1935 indicate that they practiced a variety of Christian faiths, as well as Judaism. On the page of death registries for the Division of Port Arthur from 27 September to 8 November 1904, the registrar listed Frederick Williams' religion as the Church of England, another name for the Anglican faith. Additional entries that included Lutheran, Presbyterian and Methodist, suggested a predominantly Protestant nature in Port Arthur. While the page listed one Roman Catholic person, the prevalence of Protestant faiths in Port Arthur suggests how the affiliations to religion and immigrant culture, in addition to the location of the CPR train tracks, dissected Fort William into a dichotomous community. While

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[55] Panagiotis Pentaris, "Death in Modern Greek Culture," 130.

[56] Walter, *Revival of Death*, 187.

the documents did not always reveal the church with which the deceased person was affiliated, they often listed the name of the person's religion, census datum that was an important part of their social identity.

There is a significant level of difficulty when attempting to summarize the Protestant treatment of the soul, as the number of interpretations of its fate was equal or greater than the number of denominations under the umbrella of Christianity. There are multiple debates between and within sects about whether it is possible for souls to enter an afterlife in heaven or hell. Whereas Baptists followed the literal word of Jesus that "no one comes to the Father than through me," some conservative Protestant groups suggest that Jews can enter heaven, since they entered into the first covenant with God. Aside from the consensus of no purgatory, Protestants agreed that Hell was a place "of pain and sorrow."[57] Most of the Protestant services are similar in nature and practice; the only particulars mentioned in the Anglican funeral service were the following of the funeral service in *The Book of Common Prayer,* and the specific words uttered by the priest at the gravesite during the Committal of the coffin.[58]

Though Catholicism also falls under the umbrella of Christianity like Protestantism, there are key differences that distinguish it from Protestantism when respecting the customs of death. According to Douglas Davies, the death of Jesus of Nazareth is the main event that underpins the principles of the religion, with the idea of the last rite helping the dying to prepare for the journey to God upon their death.[59] A journey of the soul, the ritual of the *viaticum* occurred in

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[57] Charles Lews, and Jonathan Rivait, "You've Died: Now What?", in "How We Die Now," special issue of *National Post*, October 25, 2013.

[58] Smart, 131-2.

[59] Douglas Davies, "Christianity," in *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Vizedom and Caffee (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), 54, in Matsunami, *Handbook of Funeral Customs*, xvii-xviii.

three parts, with the intention of giving "spiritual strength and comfort to the dying and enable them to make the journey into eternity with greater confidence, an ongoing communication with [Him]."[60] In true fashion of the Catholic faith, there is substantial scriptural documentation to explain the reason for the bond.[61]

After the person's death, the immediate family and the community would follow in the three stages of Catholic funeral rites. The first stage was the time for reflection on the life of the deceased. The tolling of church bells accompanied the coffin to the church during the funeral procession, except if the deceased person was a child younger than seven years of age, considered by Catholics as the "age of discretion," when they were capable of assuming moral responsibility. In those instances, the clergy rang the bells in a joyous peal.[62] Davies observes how the resurrection of Jesus played a heavily influential role in the format of the funeral Mass, the second stage of the Catholic funeral:

> the dead are buried or cremated in the hope of a future life brought about through a divine act of resurrection. Just as Jesus was raised from the dead, so the dead Christian will be brought to a new existence through the creative power of God. God is thanked for the life that the person led, the congregation is reminded of the mortal nature of human life, and all are encouraged to lead their own earthly lives in light of this knowledge.[63]

After several more sprinklings of holy water, members of the community took the coffin to the gravesite for the rite of committal, the third and final stage. Based on Smart's research, the

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[60] Smart, 139; Fisher, *Living Religions*, 299.

[61] All passages are from the English Standard Version on Bible Gateway, "Matthew 26:26-29," on Bible Gateway, https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=ESV&search=Matthew%2026 (accessed December 14, 2014); "Mark 14:22-25," on Bible Gateway, https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=ESV&search=Mark%2014 (accessed December 14, 2014); "Luke 22:14-23," on Bible Gateway, https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=ESV&search=Luke%2022 (accessed December 14, 2014).

[62] Smart, 142.

[63] Davies, in Matsunami, xviii.

service was most likely brief, with the recitation of a short verse from the Scriptures, a blessing, and the prayer of committal. The service was complete when the priest uttered the final request to God and all heavenly spirits on behalf of the deceased, that "[may] his [or her] soul and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace."[64] Other changes in the service included the wearing of white as the colour of mourning, as well as the substituting of one or two psalms of joy in lieu of the funeral Mass. The changes illustrate the true nature of the Catholic faith, and the teaching of "the acceptance and the overcoming of death as exemplified by the cross of Jesus himself."[65] The result is the development of a culture that was not only comfortable with the inevitability of death, but also aware that the threat of death was much closer, in a new and strange country that held fatal risks to those unfamiliar with the climate or terrain.

Familiarity with death is also common in the faiths of Eastern and Orthodox Christianity, which stress the idea of Death being responsible for bringing sin into the world. Though the Bible of Western Christianity portrays Death as a creature that cannot experience redemption, there is redemption for Death, and even the possibility of the deification of the deceased:

> This is not a simple return to the primordial status of consciousness in which innocence is recovered –a restoration of the state before the Fall, before sin entered the world. On the contrary, it is an initiation through death, and through identification with the death of Christ, to a life in which death itself is transfigured. Death's power to destroy, to "trample down," has been redeemed, and human beings are freed to experience even their dying in the light of Christ. […]Death, the curse, is transfigured when the devotee is taken up into the universality of Christ's action in the passion. Once his circumstances are

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[64] Smart, 142.

[65] Ibid., 142-3; Hiroshi Obayashi, "Death and Eternal Life in Christianity," in *Death and Afterlife* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1992), 110-1, in Kodo Matsunami, *International Handbook of Funeral Customs* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), xviii.

identified with Christ's passion, the devotee can give himself to the expedience of dying.[66]

Despite the freedom that comes with the devotee's identification with the passion, the service began at the point when the living recognized "the trauma, the horror of death."[67] Though the faith is Christian in principle, there is evidence that suggests the mixing of religious culture through the blending of Jewish practices, including the recitation of Psalm Ninety-One during the funeral procession, and the hosting of a memorial meal. The "village feast" held in many Slavic and Romanian communities in Canada brought friends and relatives to the graveyard not only to bless the grave, but also to share their memories of the deceased, a tradition present among other religious cultures.[68]

Sometimes it is difficult to determine what particulars are distinguishable as "articles of [individual] faith," as opposed to collective "pious practices" shared by two or more religious denominations.[69] An example of the sharing of a pious practice in the Lakehead was the washing of the body, a Christian task adopted from Jewish customs, with the idea of purifying the dead and freeing them from the stain of sin. While the Christian variation left the task to women, the rules in the Jewish faith decreed men to wash the bodies of deceased males, while women washed deceased females, during which the body was never, face down.[70] After the washing of the body, the similarities between the faiths ended.

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[66] David J. Goa, "Dying and Rising in the Kingdom of God: The Ritual Incarnation of the 'Ultimate' in Eastern Christian Culture," *Material Culture Review* 23 (Spring 1986): 2.

[67] Goa, "Rising and Dying," 3.

[68] Goa, "Rising and Dying," 9-11.

[69] Smart, 34.

[70] Though Smart does not state the reason why the face of the deceased is never face down during the washing, neither does the Jewish Federations of North America. While the Jewish Funeral Guide does not state the reason either, the limited description of the purification process suggests the intention is to preserve the physical dignity of

Several key rituals distinguished Judaism from the other faiths in the Thunder Bay District. The Jewish of the late nineteenth century believed in equality in death, a value reflected in the simplicity of their white burial shrouds. In addition to the shrouds, dead Jewish men were dressed in their prayer shawls, rendered ineffective by the removal of a fringe.[71] After the preparation of the body and placing it in a simple pine box for the coffin, carved by a local carpenter, a relative held vigil over the body, a process called *shimera*. Based on the principle of honouring the dead, the guarding of the body was also to prevent infestations of rats or other pests that could desecrate the dead body, as embalming was a forbidden practice in the nineteenth century.[72] According to Robert Goldenberg, the need to protect the dead body from destruction also lent credence to the traditional abhorrence of cremation, and the requirement of burial within twenty-four hours after the death.[73]

The traditional Jewish funeral procession stopped seven times *en route* to the gravesite to recite Psalm Ninety-One, and then recited it once more after throwing handfuls of earth onto the lowered coffin. Before re-entering the house of the deceased, mourners washed their hands prior to partaking in the "meal of consolation" on the first day of *Shiva*, the seven-day mourning period when the immediate family neither left the house, nor participated in mundane activities.

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the deceased. Smart, 34 and 132; Lisa Alcalay Klug, "Jewish Funeral Customs: Saying Goodbye to a Loved One," Jewish Federations of North America, http://www.jewishfederations.org/jewish-life.aspx (accessed October 14, 2014); A. Freylicher, "Jewish Funeral Guide – Preparation for Jewish Funeral," under "Purification," http://www.jewish-funeral-guide.com/tradition/tahara.htm (accessed October 14, 2014).

[71] Klug, "Jewish Funeral Customs: Saying Goodbye to a Loved One."

[72] Smart, 35, and 133; Klug, "Jewish Funeral Customs."

[73] Robert Goldenberg, "Death and Afterlife in the Jewish Tradition," in *Death and Afterlife*, Hiroshi Obayashi, ed. (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1992), 165, in Kodo Matsunami, introduction to *International Handbook of Funeral Customs* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), xxii.

The scriptures also required families to sit on wooden Shiva stools that were low to the floor[74] It was also customary to pay a Shiva call on the grieving family, for which visitors would bring food, an appropriate gift for the occasion. The remaining family members would have received great solace when being in company with close friends, sharing their memories of the deceased.[75]

Conclusion: The Response of the Living to the Deceased

Despite the cultural expansion of the Thunder Bay District, there is strong evidence to suggest that Britain had the strongest influence on the funerary customs and traditions practiced in the Lakehead during the late nineteenth century.[76] Many of the funeral customs that came to Ontario, and therefore to Canada, stem from the death of Prince Albert in 1861. His widow, Queen Victoria, wore black for forty years as an expression of her profound grief; instead of earning criticism for her withdrawal from public life, she received the admiration of the people as a martyr. She became the quintessential mourner, "and her example trickled down through society."[77] In Ontario, morally reputable women were publishing funerary etiquette guides for

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[74] Bible Gateway, Job 2:13 KJV: "and they sat with him to the ground seven days and seven nights," https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=KJV&search=Job%202 (accessed December 12, 2014); Genesis 50:10 KJV: "and he made a mourning for his father seven days," https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=KJV&search=Genesis%2050 (accessed December 12, 2014).

[75] Smart, 133-4. For a recent example of Shiva, see *This is Where I Leave You*, directed by Shaun Levy, Warner Bros., 2014.

[76] A reiteration of the alliance between church and state: "A certain form of Christianity has been interwoven with the framework of the British Constitution. The state, in the way of equivalent for the advantages it derives from such an alliance, has provided, in this manner, a solemn and abiding memorial of its religious duty, --an article of which duty is, to shield the church from injury and aggression." *The Church* (newspaper), 5 September 1845, 34, in Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 119. See also Smart, 64-70; Curl, *Victorian Celebration of Death*, 1-27; and Morley, 14.

[77] An etiquette book of the time included glowing comments about the queen's attitude toward mourning: "Her widow's cap has never been laid aside, and with her long veil of white falling down her back when she appears at court, it makes the most becoming dress that she has ever worn. For such a grief as hers there is something appropriate and dignified in her adherence to the mourning-dress. It fully expresses her sad isolation: for a queen

young girls. One author claimed that custom made people into slaves, as the slightest error in behavior or dress earned the sternest criticism of the community. Though she proposed the idea of wearing blue for mourning, she noted that custom, adopted from England, decreed that people needed to wear black as "a mark of respect to those we have lost, and as a shroud for ourselves."[78] In addition to the wearing of black by mourners, there were attitudinal changes towards the ostentatiousness of the Victorian funeral, rules of etiquette and decorum set forth not by established tradition, but by the 'sagacious' advice of women's magazines, covering content that included the appropriate time for mourning dependent upon the reader's degree of relation to the deceased, from three weeks for a first cousin, to two years for a widow.[79]

While she considered the mourning-dress a form of physical and emotional protection for widows in the Victorian era, there were calls for the simplification of funerals, calls answered with the onset of the First World War, when honour and modesty became part of the new decorum for funereal etiquette. Alfred L. Kroeber noted that mortuary patterns and expressions of sentiment "fall rather into a class with fashions, than with either customs or folkways on the one hand, or institutions on the other."[80] Aubrey Cannon further corroborated the view, inferring

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can have no near friends." Mrs. John (Mary Elizabeth Wilson) Sherwood, *Manners and Social Usages* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1887), 195, in Internet Archive, "*Manners and Social Usages*," Internet Archive, https://archive.org/stream/mannersandsocia00shergoog#page/n8/mode/2up (accessed November 15, 2014), in Smart, 64-5.

[78] Mrs. Sherwood, *Manners and Social Usages*, 189.

[79] "Mourning Clothes and Customs," *The Woman's World* 2 (1889): 418.

[80] Alfred L. Kroeber, "Disposal of the Dead," *American Anthropologist* 29, no. 3 (September 1927): 314, on Wiley Online Library, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1525/aa.1927.29.3.02a00090/pdf (accessed November 16, 2014).

that there is a much deeper level of knowledge to study when investigating the significance of funeral customs within the context of immigrant cultures.[81]

In studies of immigration, language is the most important aspect of cultural identity.[82] Robert B. Klymasz emphasized the use of traditional language in the folk lament, newspaper obituary, and the funerary oration of Ukrainian-Canadians in western Canada. He noted that each form of communication attempted to relieve some degree of tension held by the living, the relieving of the inner tension offering "a measure of compensation in the form of a strongly reinforced folk belief complex where [...] the dead are far from deaf, mute or oblivious to their earthly past."[83] The use of language to express the emotions associated with death and loss is a universal similarity among other European cultures, including the immigrant cultures that settled in Thunder Bay and the surrounding district. The language of religion immigrants used to express their understandings of death proved more familiar than previously suggested by Anglo-Saxon members of the Protestant clergy. While the dialects were initially an impediment in the predominantly English-speaking culture of the Lakehead, the need to acknowledge and maintain a relationship with their God overcame the divisive behaviour, and encouraged the incorporation of the minorities into the communities, creating a distinct multicultural character for the Thunder Bay District.

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[81] Aubrey Cannon, "The Historical Dimension in Mortuary Expressions of Status and Sentiment," *Current Anthropology* 30, no. 4 (Aug. – Oct., 1989): 437.

[82] George A. De Vos, "Ethnic Pluralism: Conflict and Accommodation," in *Ethnic Identity: Creation, Conflict, and Accommodation*, Lola Romanucci-Ross, and George A. De Vos, eds. (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 1995), 15-47, in Katrina Jurva, and Peruvemba S. Jaya, "Ethnic Identity among Second-Generation Finnish Immigrant Youth: Some Voices and Perspectives," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 40, no.2 (2008): 115.

[83] Robert B. Klymasz, "Speaking At/About/With the Dead: Funerary Rhetoric among Ukrainians in Western Canada," *Canadian Ethnic Studies/Etudes ethniques au Canada* 7, no.2 (1975): 56.

Chapter 4:

The "Lakehead" Tradition of Cemeteries from the Ground Up

> "Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs;
> Make dust our paper and with rainy eyes
> Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth,
> Let's choose executors and talk of wills"
> --William Shakespeare, *Richard II*

In the nineteenth century, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladourie argued that death, as a topic

deserves to be at the centre of historical interest, "like the graveyard in the middle of the

village."[1] Others agreed with the observation, including Richard Francaviglia, Thomas Harvey,

Julie Rugg, and Ken Worpole.[2] Though they share a mutual consensus on the importance of

cemeteries as sites of historical significance, there is no agreement upon a single precise

definition of a cemetery. This chapter illustrates how, through exploring the cultural role of the

cemetery as a burial place for the dead, cemeteries provided multicultural character with

enhancements based on the "garden cemetery" movement from Britain. Inspirations from the

movement contributed to the further definition of the region's multicultural landscape as markers

of civility and community, but also contributed to the national historical record as sites of

cultural preservation.

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[1] Jean Glénisson, "France," in Georg G. Iggers and Harold T. Parker, *International Handbook of Historical Studies: Contemporary Research and Theory* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979), 186, in Bruce Bowden and Roger Hall, "The Impact of Death: An Historical and Archival Reconnaissance into Victorian Ontario," *Archivaria* 14 (1982): 96.

[2] See William D. Pattison, "The Cemeteries of Chicago: A Phase of Land Utilization," *Annals* (Association of American Geographers) 45, no. 3 (1955): 245-57, and Larry W. Price, "Some Results and Implications of a Cemetery Study," *Professional Geographer* 18, no. 4 (1966): 201-7, in Francaviglia, "The Cemetery as an Evolving Cultural Landscape," 501; John B. Jackson, "The Vanishing Epitaph: From Monument to Place," *Landscape* 27, no. 2 (1967-1968):22-6; Catherine Howett, "Living Landscapes for the Dead," *Landscape* 21, no.3 (1977): 9-17, in Thomas Harvey, "Sacred Spaces, Common Places: The Cemetery in the Contemporary American City," in "Wilbur Zelinsky and U.S. Geography," special issue *Geographical Review* 96, no. 2 (Apr., 2006): 295; Julie Rugg, "Defining the place of burial: what makes a cemetery a cemetery?" *Mortality* 5, no. 3 (2000): 273. See also Ken Worpole, *Last Landscapes: The Architecture of the Cemetery in the West* (Chicago: Reaktion Books, 2004).

Understanding the Foundations of Cemeteries

According to Michael C. Kearl, the English language derived the term cemetery from the Greek *koimētērion*, or resting place for the dead, an observation corroborated by the majority of English-language dictionaries.[3] What is interesting is the additional information added to the definition. Aside from being simply a place for burying the dead, the common feature among the interpretations is the marked distinction of maintaining the separation of the cemetery from the church, an ironic observation given the moral and spiritual guidance provided by the churches attended by immigrants in Canada.

Though James Stevens Curl attempted to provide his own definition of the cemetery, he did not stray too far from the established convention, describing a cemetery as "a burial ground, especially a large landscaped park or ground laid out expressly for the deposition or interment of the dead, not being a churchyard attached to a place of worship."[4] There is some deconstruction by Jacek Kolbuszewski, who suggested that the definition deserves a broader approach, noting how not every burial ground is a cemetery, citing the example of mass graves used during the racial cleansing of Yugoslavia. According to him, a cemetery is "a certain sector of space delimited by certain a priori formulated resolutions, according to which it is there that funeral practices consistent with religious, ethnic, cultural (that is customary) and other easily defined needs of a given community, will be carried out."[5] While their analyses are useful in

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[3] Michael C. Kearl, "Kearl's Guide to the Sociology of Death: Quests for Longevity and Symbolic Immortality," under "Cemeteries," Michael C. Kearl, http://www.trinity.edu/~mkearl/death-3.html#ce (accessed April 9, 2013).

[4] James Stevens Curl, *Oxford Dictionary of Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), in Rugg, "Defining the place of burial," 260.

[5] Jacek Kolbuszewski, "Cemeteries as a text of culture," in O. Czerner and I. Juskiewicz, eds., *Cemetery art* (Wroclaw, PL: ICOMOS, 1995), 17, in Rugg, 260.

understanding the true purpose of a cemetery, their interpretations are narrow in scope, omitting most other defining features.

Rugg referred to the category of ownership, and how, unlike a churchyard, secular authorities owned the cemetery, a creation in common use since the nineteenth century. Other physical characteristics included an established perimeter, marked by the erection of a surrounding boundary hedge or railing. Rugg inferred that the secure boundary served a dual purpose: "protecting the dead from disturbance and–increasingly in the [eighteenth and nineteenth] centuries—sequestering the dead from the living."[6] In addition to the segregation of the living from the deceased, Philippe Ariès noted how the "completeness" of the place remains as a distinguishing quality. Though his comments were in reflection of French Revolutionary War cemeteries, they are also applicable to cemeteries in the Lakehead, for they reproduced the community as a whole, where "all are brought together in the same enclosure, but each has his own place."[7] Death expert Douglas Davies concurred with the observation, noting how one of the major goals of cemeteries in America is to link members of a diverse population into a "symbolic unity."[8] He refers to a cemetery in New Jersey, one devoted specifically to Ukrainian-Americans, where the memorialization of the deceased was in terms of their occupational, social and professional associations. According to Davies, there was an emphasis upon male occupations, as the grave markers reflected their professions with the tools of their trade. Regardless of a wife's own profession, the cultural community buried her with her husband.[9]

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[6] Rugg, "Defining the place of burial," 260-2

[7] Philippe Ariès, *L'Homme devant la mort* [The Hour of Our Death] (Paris, 1977), 503; John McManners, *Death and the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), in Rugg, 262.

[8] Davies, *Death, Ritual and Belief: The Rhetoric of Funerary Rites* (London: Continuum, 2002), 110.

[9] Davies, *Death, Ritual and Belief,* 110-1.

Kolbuszewski presented a different perspective to the analysis of a cemetery, when he referred to it as a "text of culture."[10] Culture is a complex term with multiple meanings and applications, including the "encompass[ing of] a society's entire understanding of itself, [or] the ways in which that understanding is expressed."[11] Christianity is also significant in the development of culture and cultural identity. It is important to consider the role of state religions and their authority over the sacred in regards to the relaying of traditions relating to death, as the Lutheran Church "practically monopolized the graves and the practice of burial to its own hands [in Finland]."[12] Kaarina Koski also noted how the Lutheran Church of Finland enforced the permanent separation of the living from souls of the deceased through the rejection of Christian Purgatory, and strengthened the message of sequestering the churchyard-*väki* to graveyards through the spread of belief legends that portrayed them as "evil and aggressive" souls that attacked the living.[13] Despite the biased dissemination of the suggestion of fear surrounding the inhabitation of graveyards and cemeteries by the *väki*, illustrated by the Christmas service of the dead narrative, the lessening authority of Death encouraged Finns to frequent cemeteries with less fear. Beginning in the 1920s, Finns visited cemeteries on Christmas Eve and lit candles at the graves of loved ones, including the war dead.[14]

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[10] Kolbuszewski, "Cemetery as text of culture," in Rugg, 260.

[11] Margaret Frenette and Patricia Jasen, "Community through Culture," in Thorold Tronrud, and A. Ernest Epp, *Thunder Bay: From Rivalry to Unity* (Thunder Bay, ON: Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society Inc., 1995), 144.

[12] Kaarina Koski, "Conceptual Analysis and Variation in Belief Tradition: A Case of Death-Related Beings," *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore* 38 (2008): 49, http://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol38/koski.pdf (accessed April 20, 2015).

[13] Koski, "Conceptual Analysis and Variation in Beings: A Case of Death-Related Beings," 59-60.

[14] World Book Inc., *Christmas in Finland*, vol. 9 of *Christmas Around the World* (Chicago, IL: World Book Inc., 2001), 26-8; Juha Y. Pentikäinen, *Kalevala Mythology*, trans. and ed. Ritva Poom, rev. ed. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), 255.

The tradition of lighting candles at gravesites to commemorate the deceased is also a poly-ethnic tradition that came to the Lakehead in the early twentieth century, following the influx of immigrants from Central and Southern Europe. Harry Kirk, a former City Clerk, recalled that the cemetery was aglow with lit candles annually on 1 November, commemorating the beatification of saints on All Saints' Day. While immigrants from most Catholic countries light candles, others brought flowers to the cemetery; Kodo Matsunami identified the practice primarily with the funeral customs of Italy, with the variation of presenting white chrysanthemums when visiting the grave. Yet All Saints' Day was a Holy Day of Obligation for all Catholics from Europe, which further demonstrated the sacredness of the cemetery as a site of multiculturalism.[15]

The sacredness of cemeteries was also important to the Ukrainians who immigrated to Canada. In contrast to the popular perception of cemeteries as spooky places to avoid, pioneer cemeteries established by Ukrainian immigrants maintained the significance of connecting the people to the physical and cultural landscape "because their loved ones were now part of that new soil."[16] In addition to the emotional link to cemeteries as mourning places, "the cemeteries were a gathering place, through which the pioneers found a new sense of community. This sense of community, in an odd way, also manifested itself because ethnically and religiously exclusive cemeteries demonstrated distinctness of the Ukrainian settlers from other prairie peoples."[17] Though the grave markers formed part of that distinctness, many of the original wooden crosses

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[15] David Nicholson, e-mail message to author, May 6, 2014; Kodo Matsunami, *International Handbook of Funeral Customs* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 133; Catholic Online, "All Saints' Day – All Saints' Day – Saints and Angels – Catholic Online," under "Customs," http://www.catholic.org/saints/allsaints/ (accessed June 13, 2015).

[16] Sterling Demchinsky, "Lost Folk Art in Ukrainian-Canadian Cemeteries," 2, Ukrainian Churches of Canada, http://www.ukrainianchurchesofcanada.ca/lost-folk-art.pdf (accessed June 8, 2015).

[17] Frances Swyripa, *Storied Landscapes: Ethno-Religious Identity and the Canadian Prairies* (Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press, 2010), 66-7, in Demchinsky, "Lost Folk Art," 2.

have either rotted away or burned in brush fires. In the Ruthenian/Ukrainian Catholic Cemetery located on Arthur Street, there are a few stone markers at the gravesites of immigrants, with most burial sites marked by the presence of a steel rebar standing in the ground. The permanence of the stone markers suggests a socioeconomic gap among immigrants within a country and across Europe, an observation corroborated by the findings of Diane O. Bennett in modern Greece.

Diane O. Bennett observed how the "natural and supernatural aspects of death [in modern Greece] made [the cemetery] a powerful symbol of social relations among the living, and this symbolism can be forcefully represented in the arrangement of cemeteries. Where and how one [was] buried is an important sign of one's place in society, although how this symbol [was] put to use varied greatly."[18] Though the intention of the burials in traditional cemeteries was to symbolize the final equality of all deceased as former members of the community, not all graveyards conveyed an egalitarian ideal, as communities often divided the spatial layout of the cemetery into first-, second- and third-class sections.[19] The non-negotiable status of interment in one of those sections grew intolerable to the Greeks, who prided themselves on their independence from the class system in death.

Despite the segregation of graves by profession, faith, or nationality in European or American cemeteries, the segregation of cemeteries in Port Arthur and Fort William during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were minimal at best. The application of Rugg's observation about the exclusivity of areas within the cemetery for "religious groups or minority ethnic communities"[20] to Port Arthur and Fort William suggests that the physical landscape of

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[18] Diane O. Bennett, "Bury Me in Second Class: Contested Symbols in a Greek Cemetery," in "Symbols of Contention, Part 2," ed. Diane O. Bennett, special issue, *Anthropological Quarterly* 67, no. 3 (Jul., 1994): 123.

[19] Bennett, "Bury Me in Second Class," 123-5.

[20] Rugg, 263.

the two cities is dotted with cemeteries that catered to each category. Societal divisions were more socio-economic in nature, though there were burial plots set aside for members of fraternal organizations, including the Sons of England Benevolent Society, and the International Order of Odd Fellows. What unified the minorities with the Anglo-Saxons was the need for a municipal cemetery.

The Types of Cemeteries

Though Worpole and others described cemeteries as primarily a physical landscape, some scholars, including Larry W. Price, identify the burial sites as a type of geographical and spatial extension of the people who lived in the area. The four classifications for cemeteries Price applied to the American Mid-West, are also applicable to the rural and urban cemeteries located in the Thunder Bay District. Undifferentiated sites were the burial places of "voyageurs, lumbermen and early settlers, their burials located usually along early transportation routes."[21] While possibly marked by a small cross at best, the locations are often difficult to identify due to weathering or overgrowth. Ukrainian immigrant Mikhailo Shymkiw found an undifferentiated site unexpectedly, while working on a stretch of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway between Fort William and Sioux Lookout, during the summers of 1912 and 1913:

> After work, during my free time on Sundays, I often went for walks into the forest. Once, when I had walked some fifty feet from the track, I saw two crosses overgrown with weeds, standing between two poplars. I went cold at this unexpected sight. Walking up, I saw that one of the crosses bore a knife-carved name, Herhory, the rest was unreadable, for both crosses were in a state of decay.

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[21] Price, "Some Results and Implications of a Cemetery Study," 201-7, in Knight, *Cemeteries as Living Landscapes*, 8.

I told my foreman about them. "There are many such crosses along this railroad," he said. "There are also many graves that no one knows about and will never know about!"

It was true, I found six such graves myself among some tall birches six miles from Sioux Lookout. Looking at them I felt a deep sadness. They seemed to be saying: "Tell our families that death found us here, let them not expect us back."[22]

The second type of cemetery located throughout the District was the small family plot, a site that formed a semblance of symbolic unity on the grounds of individual farms. The plots ranged in size from five to twenty burials; often they were multiple generations of a single family. In 1914, the family of the late Esaias Smedberg, a twenty-seven-year-old Finnish farmer, buried him on the family farm in McIntyre Township.[23] In addition to the restriction of mobility and family wealth, Price claims that small family plots existed as a reflection of the strong personal attachment early settlers held for their developed land.[24] Knight observed how the aggravation of population pressure on the land encouraged rural communities to bury their dead in community cemeteries. While he uses the example of farmers in China, the loss of arable land due to farm burial was also a concern for the farmers in the outlying townships that comprised the Thunder Bay District.[25]

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[22] Virtualmuseum.ca, "First Wave of Ukrainian Immigration, 1891-1914," under "Mikhailo Shymkiw's story," under "Grave upon Grave," Taras Shevchenko Museum, Toronto, Ontario, http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/histoires_de_chez_nous-community_memories/pm_v2.php?id=story_line&lg=English&fl=0&ex=464&sl=5507&pos=1 (accessed January 6, 2015).

[23] Ancestry.ca. *Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869-1938 and Deaths Overseas, 1939-1947* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2010; death record for Esaias Smedberg found in Archives of Ontario, Series MS935, Reel 213 (accessed May 22, 2014). http://search.ancestry.ca/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=ontario_deaths&gss=sfs28_ms_db&new=1&rank=1&msT=1&MS_AdvCB=1&gsfn=Esaias&gsfn_x=NP&gsln=Smedberg&gsln_x=1&msbpn__ftp_x=1&msddy=1914&msddy_x=1&msdpn__ftp_x=1&msypn__ftp_x=1&msfng_x=1&msfns_x=1&MSAV=-1&uidh=000 (accessed May 22, 2014).

[24] Price, "Implications of a Cemetery Study," in Knight, *Cemeteries as Living Landscapes*, 9-10.

[25] Ibid., 10.

Pioneers located rural activity focus cemeteries, the third type suggested by Price, near "a node of rural activity, be it a church, school, or road junction," yet Knight observed a tendency for communities to locate their cemeteries on hilltops or on slopes, for the purpose of drainage. A local example is Stanley Hill Cemetery in Oliver-Paipoonge Township, in which the old section is comprised mostly of sand and loose gravel. Nicholson found that the sandy soil composition required the men in the community to dig the graves in a unique manner that prevented the collapse of the gravesite.[26] Price claimed that they received fewer burials due to "a general outmigration to urban centres" and a change in the social orientation of younger generations, weakening their connection to older rural cemeteries.[27] He also noted, "There is a definite tendency for people to bury their dead where there have been burials in the recent past and where the cemetery is maintained. As a result most burials have been in the larger cemeteries near population centres."[28] The urban cemetery in the population centre of the city is the fourth type of cemetery noted by Price. Historically some of them were on the margins of villages or towns, "settlements which experience[d] great growth [had] the formerly peripheral cemeteries surrounded by urban development."[29] Like most of the major cities in Canada, Port Arthur and Fort William experienced their greatest population growth in the years from 1901 to 1911. During the decade, the total population of the two communities quadrupled, from seven thousand

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[26] David Nicholson, interview by author, November 25, 2014. See also David Nicholson, *Stanley Hill Cemetery: An illustrated history* (Murillo, ON: Stanley Hill Cemetery Board, 2002).

[27] Knight, 11.

[28] Price, 205, in Knight, 12.

[29] Knight, 12.

two hundred eleven people, to twenty-eight thousand seven hundred nineteen people.[30] The

amounts are indicative of a culturally diverse population that flourished in the Lakehead region.

The Garden Cemetery Movement

Harvey noted that the prevalent historical view of cemeteries has been to perceive them

primarily as sacred spaces where the living laid the dead to eternal rest. He also observed how,

within the last thirty years, cemeteries are becoming multiple-use landscapes, with cemeteries

"increasingly viewed as amenity landscapes that provide historic, scenic, and ecological values

to the communities that surround them."[31] Yet Curl provides evidence to support the ancient

genesis of funerary gardens. In the Greco-Roman world, flora played a significant role in the cult

of the dead, through the offering of flowers and libations to commemorate their deceased. He

acknowledged the Greeks through the writing of the seventeenth-century English polymath Sir

Thomas Browne, that "in strewing their Tombs, the *Romans* affected the Rose, the Greeks

Amaranthus and myrtle; that the Funerall pyre consisted of sweet fuell, Cypresse, Firre, Larix,

Yewe, and Trees perpetually verdant, lay silent expressions of their surviving hopes [sic]."[32] To

the Greeks, the amaranth was a most appropriate choice of flower for mourning the dead. The

name, derived from the Greek *amaranth*, means "one that does not wither (or fade)," reflecting

its resilience to the elements, a characteristic highlighted in a fable by the Roman fabulist Aesop,

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[30] Epp. "The Achievement of Community," 191.

[31] Harvey, "Sacred Spaces, Common Places," 295 and 310.

[32] Curl, *A Celebration of Death*, 42. The italics are Browne's.

and in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*.[33] *A Victorian Flower Dictionary* describes myrtle, as an evergreen shrub with white flowers, symbolizing love and affection, and often associated with the Roman goddess Venus. The connection between myrtle and love and marriage, warranted its pairing with orange blossoms in the Victorian bridal bouquet.[34] The reference to myrtle in Browne's naming of funereal flora, suggests that widows strewed myrtle over the graves of spouses. In ancient Rome, roses were another flower of choice for mourning; in addition to their association to Venus, roses represented death and rebirth, and Romans often planted them on graves.[35]

Though the Greeks and Romans appear to share reciprocally their defining funerary architecture and rituals, Curl gives more credit to the ancient Romans for the development of funerary gardens; walled enclosures "laid out and planted to provide fruit, flowers, and wine to honour the dead. [...] [They] must have been delightful oases of peace and beauty, with vines and roses in abundance."[36] He inferred that the charm and tranquility of the garden ensured enjoyment for both the living and the dead, for the Romans thought the dead could feel emotion as well. The inclusion of wells, pools, statuary, and shady walks in the formal plans of the sepulchral gardens, was part of a religious strategy for Romans to construct "the ideal landscape of an Elysian after-life [that] could be enjoyed on earth, for the funerary garden symbolized the

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[33]John R. Lang, "AesopFables.com – The Rose and the Amaranth – General Fable Collection," AesopFables.com, http://www.aesopfables.com/cgi/aesop1.cgi?4&TheRoseandtheAmaranth (accessed January 9, 2015). John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, book 3, lines 353-61, on Project Gutenberg, http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/20/pg20.html (accessed January 9, 2015); New World Encyclopedia contributors, "Amaranth," *New World Encyclopedia, ,* http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/p/index.php?title=Amaranth&oldid=963908 (accessed January 9, 2015).

[34] Mandy Kirkby, *A Victorian Flower Dictionary: The Language of Flowers Companion, with an introduction by Vanessa Diffenbaugh* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2011), 101, s.v. "Myrtle."

[35] Myth Encyclopedia, "Flowers in Mythology – Myth Encyclopedia – Greek, god, story, legend, names, ancient, symbolism, Hindu, Japanese, world" under "Stories and Meanings," s.v. "Rose," Myth Encyclopedia, http://www.mythencyclopedia.com/Fi-Go/Flowers-in-Mythology.html (accessed January 10, 2015).

[36] Curl, *A Celebration of Death*, 42.

gardens of the other world."[37] Curl notes that people in Europe and the New World, owe a great debt to Roman culture, to their inheritance of funerary rituals and customs, the planning of cemeteries, and the Roman legacy of funerary architecture.[38] The importance of appeasing the spirits through the respecting of traditional customs was paramount for European immigrants who came to and settled in the Thunder Bay District.

The funerary garden of ancient Rome became a source of inspiration for the "garden cemetery" movement that, from the late seventeenth century onwards, allowed visitors to "profit spiritually and emotionally from landscapes and memorial forms that seek to build bridges between life and death."[39] Authors including Washington Irving and Samuel Taylor Coleridge expounded the need for the improvement of funerary aesthetics, noting that cemeteries "should bear a solemn and soothing character, equally remote from fanatical gloom and conceited affectation."[40] Since the late eighteenth century, the quintessential garden cemetery in Europe was the Père la Chaise Cemetery in Paris, and many landscape designers in Victorian Britain desired a similar model, in contrast to the decrepit, barren patches of earth that were the traditional churchyards. John Strang felt a similar sentiment when writing his *Necropolis Glasguensis* in 1831.[41] In Strang's treatise, he argued that Glasgow deserved a dignified garden cemetery that would bring some national pride to the Scottish people:

That Scottish church-yards, and particularly those attached to cities and towns,

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[37] Ibid., 42.

[38] Curl, 40.

[39] Worpole, *Last Landscapes: The Architecture of the Cemetery in the West*, 57.

[40] Curl, 245.

[41] Strang, preface to *Necropolis Glasguensis*, vii.

are, with few exceptions, little else than vast fields of the dead, which, instead of possessing any thing attractive, have every thing of an opposite nature, will scarcely be denied by any one who has ever entered their precincts. How different, however, are the feelings experienced on wandering through the neat and well-kept sepulchres which are to be met with in England and Wales, or the still more striking burial grounds of Switzerland and France [sic]?[42]

While Strang and others considered the Père la Chaise Cemetery in Paris to be the quintessential garden cemetery on which to base all other cemetery designs, Curl and Worpole agree that the founding father of the movement was John Claudius Loudon. In his influential book *On the Laying Out, Planting and Managing of Cemeteries*, he surmised that the disposal of the dead should "not prove injurious to the living, either by affecting health or by shocking feelings, opinions, or prejudices." In addition, he noted that cemeteries as a type of 'recuperative landscape' could positively contribute to 'the improvement of the moral sentiments and general taste of all classes and more especially of the great masses of society."[43] To prevent the disruption of the tranquility of the place, Loudon also opposed the practice of burying multiple bodies in a single grave, and of the re-use of graves after a limited time, arguments that he supported with references to Jewish, Quaker, and Moravian custom.[44] In his efforts to dispel the horrors of the unsavoury vault and parish graveyard, Loudon revolutionized the burial process as a proponent of wooden coffins to prevent putrefaction and promoting the union of the body with the earth. Though he was able to improve the aesthetic value and appeal of the cemetery, guarded entrance gates and surrounding railings were still a necessity to prevent the theft of corpses by

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[42] Strang, *Necropolis Glasguensis*, 27-8.

[43] John Claudius Loudon, *On the laying out, planting, and managing of Cemeteries, and on the improvement of Churchyards* (1843); Idem, *The Gardener's Magazine* (1843): 93, in Curl, *A Celebration of Death*, 245.

[44] Curl, 245.

medical students, another source of fear for the living, prior to the passing of legislature that allowed people the choice to allocate their remains for medical research.

While residential dwellings surrounded most English cemeteries, Loudon advised the directors of cemetery companies to locate the new cemeteries in the countryside "in an elevated and airy place" for adequate drainage, as well as to prevent drainage into public wells, eliminating "a public menace to health."[45] He oversaw the planting, and labelling of numerous trees and ornamental shrubs to provide the best appearance and practical function in the cemetery, though he disapproved of planting flowers, which suggested the disruption of the soil. In order to promote "free circulation of the air and the drying effect of the sun," Loudon advocated the planting of trees with conical shapes, "like the cypress ... associated with places of burial from time immemorial." He also favoured evergreens, especially those with naturally dark foliage and narrow conical heads": for the cemetery, Loudon suggested pines and firs (including Taurian or Austrian black pines), Irish yew, Swedish juniper, and cedars of Lebanon.[46] He objected to the planting of weeping willows, for they require much water for care and maintenance, and would therefore be inappropriate for the dryness of the cemetery.

Though Loudon died shortly after the publication of his book in 1843, his work on cemeteries had an enormous impact, its influence carried over to the New World for the planning of cemeteries in North America. The American Association of Cemetery Officials began in 1899, with the goal of revolutionizing the large and small cemeteries in that country. The organization expanded into Canada in 1912, and became The Association of Cemetery Officials

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[45] Curl, 249.

[46] Loudon, *The Gardener's Magazine*, 105, in Curl, 250, 255, and 262.

of Canada, which had "for its object the betterment of conditions in Canadian Cemeteries [...]."[47]

On 1 August 1914, they sent an invitation to The Fort William Board of Parks Management, the

City department that oversaw the operation of Mountain View Cemetery, for any official or

member of the Cemetery Committee to attend their Second Annual Convention in Toronto, from

8-9 September 1914. Of the subjects of the papers discussed at the conference, the second topic

in the list is "Trees suitable for cemetery planting." There was no record of any reply in the fonds

folder for Mountain View Cemetery in the Thunder Bay Archives, so it is therefore unknown as

to whether anyone attended the event.

Mountain View Cemetery as a Historical Garden

What the material in the fonds folder does suggest, is that the teachings of Loudon and

other British cemetery landscape designers made their way to the Thunder Bay District.

Following the onset of the First World War, the City of Fort William made significant efforts to

improve the aesthetic appeal of Mountain View Cemetery. Originally named the Fort William

Cemetery Company by John and Peter McKellar; they sold the property to the town in 1901, and

changed the name to Mountain View Cemetery.[48] The Roman Catholic Diocese bought property

from the McKellar brothers in 1899, and named it Saint Patrick's Catholic Cemetery.[49] In an

invoice from the John Connon Company Limited in Hamilton, Ontario, dated 22 April 1915, the

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[47] W.H. Saunders, Secretary-Treasurer of The Association of Cemetery Officials of Canada, to City of Fort William Cemetery Committee, August 1, 1914, from City of Thunder Bay Archives fonds, Reference: TBA 088-13.

[48] David Nicholson, *Mountain View Cemetery: Welcome to Thunder Bay's largest cemetery and "outdoor museum"* [for the Doors Open event, September 6, 2014] (Thunder Bay, ON: Thunder Bay Historical Society, 2014).

[49] Corporation of the City of Thunder Bay, "Cemetery History," under "Recreation and Parks," Corporation of the City of Thunder Bay, http://www.thunderbay.ca/Living/recreation_and_parks/Parks/Cemeteries/Cemetery_History.htm (accessed November 22, 2014).

City of Fort William Cemetery Department ordered numerous trees and ornamental shrubs, including twenty-five Austrian pines and twenty-five Scotch pines, two species of conifers that Loudon himself used in the layout of cemeteries in London.[50] To ensure the continual care of the plants, the City extended the waterworks to Mountain View by laying pipes throughout the cemetery, allowing for the watering of flowers planted at gravesites by the caretaker.[51]

Though the extension of the pipe length was a significant development for the era, the progress was not enough for some individuals, including Mr. R. A. Dowlen. In one of multiple letters to Mayor H. Murphy dated 10 March 1916, Mr. Dowlen expressed concern over the perceived barrenness of the cemetery, implying that the ornamental shrubs and flowering plants planted the previous year were annuals, which would not have likely survived the winter temperatures. His letter not only implies that there were no permanent plans in place to beautify the cemetery, but also that the cemetery as a type of 'memorial park' deserved to be an area of civic pride that appeals to the living.[52] The necessity to beautify the cemetery prior to the arrival of friends and family for the opening of the vault and the burial of residents, who died during the winter, came with the development of new attitudes in response to the locating of local cemeteries within city limits. With names from the classical lexicon like *necropolis* and *cemetery*, Roger Hall and Bruce Bowden inferred that the new burial grounds "were to be planned places of beauty where the dead and the living might mingle in restful reflection."[53]

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[50] Chairman of John Connon Company Limited, to The Fort William Board of Parks Management, invoice of ornamental trees and shrubs for Mountain View Cemetery, April 22, 1915, in Thunder Bay Archives fonds, TBA 0088-13.

[51] City of Fort William, to Mrs. M. Bowman, May 6, 1915, in Thunder Bay Archives, TBA 0088-13.

[52] R. A. Dowlen, to Mayor H. Murphy, Esq. (The Fort William Board of Parks Management), March 10, 1916, TBA 0088-13.

[53] Roger Hall and Bruce Bowden, "Beautifying the Boneyard" The Changing of the Cemetery in Nineteenth-Century Ontario," *Material Culture Review* 23 (Spring 1986): 14.

They also state that due to the growing appeal of garden cemeteries in the mid-to-late-nineteenth century, families of individuals already laid to rest in traditional burial grounds, exhumed the bodies and re-buried them in the new garden cemeteries. In Fort William, family members removed the corpses from the Old Fort William Burying Grounds, originally located near the corner of McVicar Street and Donald Street, and re-interred them in Mountain View Cemetery. Relatives did the same in Port Arthur with the closing of the St. John's and Brown's Cemetery in 1887, located on Red River Road between Rockwood Avenue and Windemere Avenue. They re-interred their loved ones in Riverside Cemetery.[54]

In addition to re-inhumation of corpses, another factor that shaped the landscape was the designation of lots for the burial of members belonging to fraternal organizations in the city. In a letter dated 14 August 1915, Recording Secretary J.R. Hesler Esquire of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F), Algoma Lodge No. 267, requested the forwarding of information to enable the locating of deceased members' gravesites. The reply letter dated 23 August 1915 indicated that while there was a specific plot for the Odd Fellows, only Brother Duncan and Frederick J. Gilleybrand were there. Secretary W.C. Ravening of the Lodge Guildford of the Sons of England Benevolent Society issued a similar request on 10 March 1921, asking the City where the plot for the Sons of England was in Mountain View, and whether an adjoining plot for an additional ten graves was available for purchase. The reply from the City Clerk two days later suggests that Fort William was undergoing yet another significant population expansion, for

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[54] Jude Mitchell, "Old Fort William Burying Grounds," Jude Mitchell, http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~jmitchell/fwburyinggrounds.html (accessed January 16, 2015); Idem., "Port Arthur Cemeteries," http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~jmitchell/portarthurcemeteries.html (accessed January 16, 2015); St. Michael and All Angels Church, "St. Michael's Anglican Thunder Bay: Important Dates," St. Michael and All Angels Church, http://www.stmichaelsthunderbay.com/History/historydates.htm (accessed January 16, 2015).

"[the] old part of the cemetery in which [the Sons of England plot] is situated is now entirely taken up so that there is no more space near [the] plot available. There is, however, an excellent location in the new portion […] which is situated close to the [Daughters of the Empire] plot."[55] The requests for burial locations by various associations implied a gross lack of organization in the record keeping as the responsibilities of the cemetery were in transfer to the Board of Parks.

The logistical flaws of the record-keeping process at Mountain View Cemetery did not escape the attention of the Provincial Board of Health for Ontario. In 1918 the Chief Officer of Health sent a questionnaire to all cemeteries, mausoleums and burying places in the municipality of Fort William, "for the purpose of regulating the proper care of cemeteries in respect to their physical conditions, the rates charged to the public, in short improvements in every way possible."[56] The city's response is evident in a letter to Messrs Cameron & Co., a company of undertakers that frequently transported and interred bodies in Mountain View, dated 13 November 1918. The City Clerk advised them that significant changes would be made regarding the regulation of the cemetery; in the first paragraph, he mentions, "in all cases, it will be absolutely necessary before interment order is made for the burial of a body that the Medical certificate of death must be made out by the physician in charge."[57] There is the mention of strict instructions to the effect of procuring the death certificate before they requested the interment certificate. The insistence of the instructions suggests that the City would pay significant fines in the event that the funeral industries did not follow the recommendations from the Provincial Board of Health within the acceptable period.

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[55] City Clerk of Fort William, to W.C. Ravening, March 12, 1921, TBA 0088-13.

[56] Chief Officer of Health, to City Clerk of Fort William, c. 1918, TBA 0088-13.

[57] City Clerk of Fort William, to Messrs. Cameron & Co., November 13, 1918, TBA 0088-13.

There is also mention of the regulation of fees, an area significantly lacking in consistency, as implied by the amounts listed in two letters. The first letter, dated 20 May 1916, acknowledged the following of instructions for the retrieval of a deceased baby from the vault early due to a spring thaw, and the burial of the baby in the father's plot. According to the Clerk, the required fee was two dollars, a payment that would go to the upkeep of the cemetery. Three years later, on 16 January 1919, the letter addressed to Mr. D.M. Parr of Winnipeg indicates that the burial of his child cost seventeen dollars. There is a wide spectrum of prices for the burials in Mountain View, all of which the Clerk states to Cameron & Co., must be paid in advance. In 1918, the fee for the opening of a large family plot (ten feet x seventeen feet five inches) was fifteen dollars, plus three dollars for an adult and two dollars for an infant, though the 1919 letter did not indicate if the opening was of a single grave or of a large plot.[58] According to the Clerk, the City of Fort William was in the process of "straightening out matters in connection with the cemetery and turning it over to the Parks Board […]."

> Our cemetery has been allowed to go without very much work being done but now that the Parks Board have taken it over they are going to make it a beauty spot, and otherwise fence up and make improvements to it, and I am assured that a small fee is to be charged each year for the up-keep of the plots and graves, […].[59]

Despite the accruing of fees designated for the expansion and upkeep of the cemetery, the Board of Parks Management faced severe financial difficulties. In a report dated 12 April 1924, the City Council reduced the budget for the cemetery from one thousand seven hundred fifty dollars ($1,750) to one thousand dollars ($1,000) for 1924. Secretary Langford noted that the

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[58] City Clerk of Fort William, to W.D. Smith, Esquire, of Moose Jaw, SK, May 20, 1916, TBA 0088-13; City Clerk of Fort William, to Messrs. Cameron & Co., November 13, 1918, TBA 0088-13; City Clerk of Fort William, to Mr. D.M. Parr, Esquire, of Winnipeg, MB, January 16, 1919, TBA 0088-13.

[59] City Clerk, to Mr. Parr, January 16, 1919, TBA 0088-13.

withholding of the seven hundred fifty dollars ($750) would require the termination of the summer help. Without them, Mountain View would resume "its old neglected, unkempt, weed-tangled appearance. […] The work of ten years would be practically lost in one year, and the cemetery transformed from something in which the people of the City are beginning to have a little pride into something of which they would be ashamed."[60] The other option involved the forgoing of future bids on saleable property, expanding the cemetery to accommodate the continuing population growth of Fort William. Though there was no documentation indicating which option the men selected, a letter dated 14 March 1928 suggests that the Parks Board terminated the summer help, instead choosing to accumulate funds through the sale of plots and graves in additional properties, including the twenty-five acres of land bought from the CNR at a price of three hundred dollars per acre.[61]

They also accrued additional costs for the cemetery during the 1920s and 1930s, including the purchase of a power mower for the caretaker; other costs included the increase of burial fees: by 1925, the fee to open a plot increased from fifteen dollars in 1918, to forty dollars, with one individual calling the increase a hunt for "Blood money [sic]."[62] On 9 November 1926, the Parks Board requested to City Council to increase the fee for winter burials to twenty dollars, and a fee of ten dollars "is sufficient to cover the cost of the work."[63] The

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[60] Secretary Langford, to City Clerk, April 12, 1924, in regards to the financial situation of Mountain View Cemetery, TBA 0122-22.

[61] City Clerk, to Secretary Langford, March 14, 1928, regarding the purchase of additional land for Cemetery Ground, TBA 0122-22.

[62] City Clerk, to City Engineer, May 10, 1933, regarding the recommendation of the Property Committee for the purchase of a power mower for use at the Cemetery, TBA 0122-22; Robert McGregor, to City of Fort William Mayor and Council, March 24, 1925, in regards to the charging of 'blood money' for burial, TBA 0122-22; City Clerk, to Robert McGregor, March 25, 1928, reply to letter regarding 'blood money,' TBA 0122-22.

[63] City Clerk, to Mr. E. Langford, Secretary for Board of Parks Management, November 11, 1926, in TBA 0122-22.

financial depreciation of Mountain View that followed the decision made by the Property Committee to relieve the Parks Board of the care of the cemetery as of 31 December 1928, suggests that in the years leading to the Great Depression, capitalism became a higher priority than civic pride, and the cemetery returned to being an ordinary burial ground.

Conclusion

Though the discussion of local cemeteries within the Thunder Bay District focussed primarily on the early historical development of Mountain View, the disproportionate amount of attention was due to the restrictions on materials from the Thunder Bay Archives, pertaining to Riverside Cemetery and St. Andrew's Roman Catholic Cemetery in Port Arthur. While archival documentation for Mountain View demonstrated the downward spiral of deficits and cultural depreciation of the property, it was far from being an ordinary municipal cemetery. Efforts made by the Cemetery Committee and later by the Board of Parks Management, suggest that Mountain View had the potential to become a garden cemetery; while the committees did not achieve the goal, the cemetery remains important as part of the local, and therefore the national historical record.

In addition to "reflect[ing on] aspects of culture and all its changing complexities," Worpole found that the distinct landscape of urban cemeteries is a reminder to the living that only Death itself is timeless, and beyond human or bureaucratic control.[64] The lack of control

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[64] Knight, 32; Worpole, *Last Landscapes*, 29.

over death and dying, and the impermeable immortality of the cemetery led Pierre Deffontaines to write that "Geographically, the pre-occupation with the dead has translated itself materially and visually into a series of facts, so numerous and important that they have become part of the landscape. Thus the dead, who are no longer with us, are often the most important occupants of the earth."[65] The posthumous status he bestowed upon the deceased is similar to that granted by God upon the corpses resurrected through the prophecies of Ezekiel in his "valley of dry bones" vision.[66]

Francaviglia concurs, inferring that the cemetery "is a microcosm of the real world. [While they are only one element in the cultural landscape, cemeteries] may bridge the nebulous gap between conscious and subconscious motivation in the manipulation of form and space. […] Cemeteries, as the visual and spatial expression of death, may tell us a great deal about the living people who created them."[67] As the final resting place for many of the immigrants who came to Northwestern Ontario and settled in the Thunder Bay District during the late nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century, urban and rural cemeteries represented, and continue to represent the mosaic of the Canadian identity, with the diversity of minorities buried within the properties. John Stewart and Susan Buggey viewed the cemetery as a physical and cultural landscape that deserves recognition as a form of historic garden. In their words gardens are

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[65] Pierre Deffontaine, "The Religious Factor in Human Geography: Its Force and Its Limits," *Diogenes* 1, no. 2 (March, 1953): 24-37, in Knight, 32. See Idem, *Géographie et religions* (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), especially 43-67, and 178-96. In addition to other sections of Deffontaine's book, see David E. Sopher, *Geography of Religions* (Toronto and Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1967), 32. For further elaboration of aspects of the *Geography of Religions*, see Paul Fickeler, "Fundamental Questions in the Geography of Religions," in *Readings in Cultural Geography*, eds. Philip Wagner and Marvin Mikesell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 94-117, and the many writings of Erich Isaac, including "Religious Geography and the Geography of Religion," in *Man and the Earth*, University of Colorado Studies Series in Earth Sciences, no. 3 (Boulder, CO: University of Colorado Press, 1965), 1-14.

[66] Ezekiel 37: 1-14 ESV, in Bible Gateway, https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=ESV&search=Ezekiel%2037 (accessed January 5, 2015).

[67] Francaviglia, "Cemetery as Evolving Cultural Landscape," 501 and 509.

"living monuments; [that] 'reflect the periods and tastes of its creators and users [as a] metaphysical symbol of man and nature.'"[68] Cecilia Paine asserts that the history of abandoned cemeteries in the province "make these sites valuable as tangible evidence of the cultural influences that have shaped the landscape of Ontario."[69] Though she discussed the preservation of cemeteries in the province, she discredited her argument by admitting to focus on cemeteries located in eastern and southwestern Ontario. In the socio-historical context of the Thunder Bay District, Rugg is most accurate in her observation of what makes a cemetery important to the history of a region, and to the people in that area:

> The [nineteenth] century cemetery is often embedded in local historical narrative, partly because of its use over generations, partly because it tended to flourish in periods of rapid urban growth, and partly because it often achieved a near monopoly with respect to accommodating the dead of a particular location. The high incidence of visits over a protracted period of time means that the site becomes sacred and is afforded some degree of permanence.[70]

While sacredness is a slippery concept that seems to defy definition, the cemeteries in Fort William and Port Arthur often convey what M. Makins considers the secular interpretation, to be "worthy of or regarded with reverence, awe or respect."[71] To Pierre Muret, the need to isolate the deceased from the living and the life of the community, stems not from the health hazards associated with the putrefaction of the dead that were common, but rather from the inappropriate behaviour and disrespect by the living that developed during the Victorian era:

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[68] John Stewart, and Susan Buggey, "The Case for Commemoration of Historic Landscapes and Gardens," *Bulletin of the Association for Preservation Technology* 7, no. 2 (1975): 99.

[69] Cecelia Paine, "Landscape Management of Abandoned Cemeteries in Ontario," in "Conserving Historic Landscapes," ed. Susan Buggey, special issue, *APT Bulletin* (Journal for the Association of Preservation Technology), 24, no. 3/4 (1992): 59.

[70] Rugg, 264.

[71] M. Makins, ed., *Collins English Dictionary* (Glasgow: Harper Collins, 1991).

> [...] at one time people [honoured] the memory of the dead every year. Today the dead are not even mentioned; that would smack of popery. If one should happen upon a funeral procession, those who are escorting the body behave with such impropriety, joking and making idle chatter all along the way, that you would think they were going to the [theatre] instead of to a funeral. In the old days the tombs were decorated with flowers, but nowadays that is unheard of. "There is nothing more distressing than a cemetery, and to see these tombs, one would think that they had served to bury the carcasses of a pig or an ass."[72]

In contrast to the pessimistic observation by Muret, Rugg noted how the fences and wrought-iron gates seem to provide protection for the bereaved from crimes and other inappropriate activity. In 1902, Fort William City Council passed Bylaw No. 302, outlining the rules and regulations for appropriate behaviour in Mountain View Cemetery, including the giving of fines or punishing with imprisonment in the district jail for the defacing or injuring of any monument, fence or other structure in the cemetery.[73] The penalty of imprisonment in the jail with or without hard labour, intimates that cemeteries in general were important sources of morality, particularly in pioneer communities where the prevalent atmosphere was rough and crude.

Katherine R. Cook acknowledged the presence of a wider scope to understanding cemeteries, outside the traditional definition of the burial ground.[74] In her study of the Mount Pleasant Cemetery in Hamilton, Cook raised an excellent point that is applicable to all cemeteries: A cemetery is not a cemetery without dead people buried in it. Without their population number continually growing, there is no need for the 'cities of the dead' to be located

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[72] Ariès, *The Hour of our Death*, 348-52.

[73] Municipal Council of the City of Fort William, "Bylaw No. 302 of the Town of Fort William for the Government of Same," copy in *Fort William Daily Times-Journal*, in TBA 0088-13.

[74] Katherine R. Cook, "Deathscapes: Memory, Heritage and Place in Cemetery History" [master's thesis, McMaster University, 2011), 1.

in protected cemeteries, their own "gated communities." Their 'permanent addresses' engraved

on their headstones, an excellent source of information both biographical and historical.

Chapter 5:

One Last Mark on the World: Gravestones and Symbolism

> Gone are the living, but the dead remain,
> And not neglected; for a hand unseen,
> Scattering its bounty like a summer rain,
> Still keeps their graves and their remembrances green.
> --Gravestone epitaph for Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, in Mount Auburn Cemetery, in Cambridge, MA[1]

Thomas C. Meierding acknowledges that while cemeteries "are among the most durable of cultural landscapes," the longevity of such places is mostly due to the condition of grave markers and other monuments located within them. He notes that grave markers are important not only because they "display a sacred symbolism, but also [they] record a valuable history of the population, often the only one remaining for ordinary people."[2] Douglas Davies also argues that grave markers are excellent sources for revealing the socio-historical context of the deceased.[3] In this chapter, the gravestone symbolism that highlights the socio-historical context in which a person lived and died, not only reveals clues about life details of the deceased individual, but also about the collective experiences of people, especially the groups of immigrants who lived in pioneer communities, including the cities of Fort William and Port Arthur.

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[1] BrainCandy.com, "gravestone quotes celebrity epitaphs unusual tombstones," BrainCandy.com, http://www.corsinet.com/braincandy/graves.html (accessed January 16, 2015).

[2] T.J. Hannon, "Western Pennsylvania cemeteries in transition: A model for subregional analysis," in *Cemeteries and Gravemarkers: Voices of American Culture*, ed. Richard E. Meyer, 237-57 (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Research Press, 1989), in Thomas C. Meierding, "Marble Tombstone Weathering and Air Pollution in North America," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 83, no. 4 (Dec., 1993): 568.

[3] Douglas Davies, *Death, Ritual and Belief: The Rhetoric of Funerary Rites* (London: Continuum, 2002). See also Laura Suchan, "Memento Mori: Bringing to the Cemetery," *The History Teacher* 42, no. 1 (Nov. 2008), and Leilah Wendell, *Encounters with Death: A Compendium of Anthropomorphic Personifications of Death from Historical to Present Day Phenomenon* (New Orleans, LA: Westgate Press, 1996).

The History of Headstones

Grave markers were significant as acknowledgements to the inevitability of death, and as reminders of man's failed quest for immortality. Richard Rolt Brash observed how a common desire of humankind was, and remains, "to leave after him something to perpetuate his memory, something more durable than his [or her] frail humanity."[4] The power of memory was also important in the acknowledgement of the deceased with the placing of a marker. John Stuart found that "the erection of stones to the memory of the dead has been common to [the entire] world from the earliest times."[5] A prime exemplar of an ancient memorial stone is the engraved boulder at Thermopylae in Greece, where the lyric poet Simonides of Ceos carved an epitaph into the rock, commemorating the lives of the three hundred Spartan soldiers killed at the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 BCE. The purpose of the commission was to ensure that their heroic values remained in present memory:

> Go tell the Spartans, stranger passing by,
> That here, obeying their commands, we lie.[6]

Though absent from the importance of modern society, the record of the Spartans and their contributions to the Persian Wars prove to be a major milestone not just in Greek history, but also in the cultural evolution of the grave marker. Despite its deceptively simple appearance,

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[4] Richard Rolt Brash, *Ogam Inscribed Monuments of the Gaedhil in the British Islands, with a Dissertation on the Ogam Character, Etc., Illustrated with Fifty Photo-lithographic Plates*, ed. George M. Atkinson (n.p.: G. Bell, 1879), in William Thomas Vincent, *In Search of Gravestones: Old and Curious* (London: Mitchell & Hughes, 1896; repr. Kessinger Publishing: Whitefish, MT, 2003), 97.

[5] John Stuart, *The Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, 2 volumes, (1867), in William Thomas Vincent, *In Search of Gravestones: Old and Curious* (London: Mitchell & Hughes, 1896; repr. Kessinger Publishing: Whitefish, MT, 2003), 97.

[6] Sarah B. Pomeroy, Stanley M. Burstein, Walter Donlan, and Jennifer Tolbert Roberts, *Ancient Greece: A Political, Social, and Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 196.

the boulder served a major function in connecting the past with the present. Philippe Ariès notes how the boulder served to not only mark the exact location of a person's death, but also to "transmit the memory of the deceased to later generations," hence *monumentum* or *memoria*.[7]

When analyzing gravestones as forms of cultural expression, the seminal work is Richard V. Francaviglia's study on necrogeography. He identifies nine different types of grave markers used in American cemeteries during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: the gothic, the obelisk, the cross-vault obelisk, the tablet, the pulpit, the scroll, the block, the raised-top inscription type, and the lawn-type (or plaque) that lies flush with the ground. His focus on the nature of gravestone design further illustrates the historical significance, for the style of the stone is an indicator of the shifting trends and tastes during their dates of installation. Based on his data chart regarding the types of monuments and their dates of occurrence, it is feasible to infer that during the decade of 1901-1911, when Canada experienced its greatest flux in immigration, the styles of headstone most preferred were the obelisk, the cross vault obelisk, and the tablet.[8] Yet Verna Elinor Gallén observed in her research on Finnish cemeteries in Saskatchewan, the tablet was the most common type of grave marker there, appearing one hundred fifty-eight times in total, while the top of the tablet, or *tympanum*, had a serpentine edge forty-six percent of the time.[9]

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[7] Philippe Ariès, *L'Homme devant la mort* [The Hour of Our Death] (Paris, 1977), 202.

[8] Richard V. Francaviglia, "The Cemetery as an Evolving Cultural Landscape," *Annals* (The Association of American Geographers) 61, no.3 (1971), 502 and 504, fig. 2.

[9] Verna Elinor Gallén, "In Silence We Remember: The Historical Archaeology of Finnish Cemeteries in Saskatchewan" (master's thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2012), 41-2.

Though some scholars criticized Francaviglia for the shortcomings of his cemetery research, his work continues to be widely read as a research reference for cultural geographers.[10] Assumptions and other concerning features of his study led Donald G. Jeane to note that in regards to cemetery research, there are "other culturally relevant factors" to consider, among them "preferred arrangements associated with religion, after-life, respect for the dead, family ties, rank, prestige, and community involvement."[11] Often prominent families expressed these attributes and connections using substantial wealth that contributed to the perpetuation of class distinctions in the cemetery. Frank W. Young observed, "Grave markers … can reflect the wealth and prestige of the buyer, and very likely a whole family."[12] A local exemplar is the McKellar family marker. Engraved with the names of over one dozen family members, the sheer size of the monument is a significant indicator of not only the family's wealth, but also of their contributions to the development of Fort William as a pioneer community. The ornate architecture of the tiered obelisk suggests conformity to the Gothic style that Francaviglia found prevalent during the 1870s in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Though Duncan McKellar died in 1875, his wife Margaret (nee Brodie) died in 1896, a period marked by the decline in the number of motifs on funerary markers, an observation Darrell A. Norris attributed to the "comparatively low incidence of obelisks."[13] The absence of such motifs resulted in the enlargement of the engraving for many names on all four sides, including that of their daughter Effie.

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[10] Donald G. Jeane, and Richard Francaviglia, "A Plea for the End of Tombstone-Style Geography," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 62, no. 1 (Mar., 1972): 148.

[11] Jeane, and Francaviglia, "Plea to End Tombstone-Style Geography," 149.

[12] Frank W. Young, "Graveyards and Social Structure," *Rural Sociology* 25 (1960): 447, in David B. Knight, *Cemeteries as Living Landscapes* (Ottawa: Ontario Genealogical Society, 1973), 17.

[13] Darrell A. Norris, "Ontario Gravestones," *Markers* (The Association for Gravestone Studies) 5 (1988): 132.

The importance of the grave marker as a representative icon of death echoed in the words of John Strang who emphasized the cultural and national importance of grandiose tombs, mausolea, cenotaphs, sarcophagi, and other artistically elaborate funerary monuments. As "the most convincing tokens of a nation's progress in civilization and in the arts," Strang compares the artistic value of funereal monuments to places of sepulchres in foreign lands, including Egypt and Italy, where death and art intimately intertwine.[14] In his treatise to advocate for the establishment of a garden cemetery in Scotland, Strang noted how to identify the status of the typical burial plot of the middle class, a space identifiable by the telltale presence of

> a sepulchral urn, a small pillar, or a cross, to tell the name and quality of him who lies [below. The] more ambitious monuments consist of obelisks, pyramids, temples and marble sarcophagi, decorated with figures and *basso relievi*, while a third consists of crypts and family sepulchres in some degree similar to those in ancient Rome.[15]

Strang's description of indicative funerary markers at common burial places suggests that he developed a dislike of the bourgeois middle class and its representations. He was disgusted with the drudgery of the family wine business and sold the inheritance, free to pursue the elite interests of literature and continental travel.[16] His travels exposed him to the artistic tastes of France, including the styles in the much-desired Père La Chaise cemetery in Paris. Inspiration also came from the emerging "garden cemetery" movement in England, where the natural landscape segregated traditional burial markers from more elaborate funerary memorials.[17]

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[14] John Strang, *Necropolis Glasguensis; with Observations on Ancient and Modern Tombs and Sepulture* (Glasgow: Atkinson and Company, 1831), 62-3.

[15] Strang, *Necropolis Glasguensis; with Observations on Ancient and Modern Tombs and Sepulture*, 29.

[16] *Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v. "Strang John (1795-1863)."

[17] Strang, 21.

Markers as Living Monuments in Canada

Darrell A. Norris elaborated on Francaviglia's findings when researching the grave marker inventories of some cemeteries in southern Ontario, producing a list of seventeen different forms, comprised of eight types of vertical slabs, three types of obelisks, four types of ground-level markers, crosses, and other forms.[18] In his research into the evolution of southern Ontario gravestones during the Victorian era, he found that "gravestones are a revealing mirror of the province's identity in the wider and changing context of nineteenth-century North American material culture."[19] It is possible that gravestones have their own language, when considered within the context of Norris' findings and their impact on the cultural landscape of the country, through their fulfillment of five important roles. The first and obvious role was to provide "a fitting and durable memorial" to the deceased individual, a desire common to humankind in all ages.[20]

Though the perceived focus of the marker was on the individual, the purpose of the second role brings into question the subjectivity of what was 'fitting,' as the gravestone also served to mark the social position of the family within the immediate community. David B. Knight observed how, during the 1880s to the early 1900s, ornateness was an essential characteristic of grave markers for the wealthy and respectable pioneer families.[21] In addition to the McKellar family marker in Mountain View, there is also a tall white obelisk located in

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[18] Norris, "Ontario Gravestones," 130, table 1.

[19] Norris, 126.

[20] Norris, 126; Richard Rolt Brash, in Vincent, *In Search of Gravestones*, 97.

[21] Knight, 19.

Riverside Cemetery. At the base are the engraved family names of Flaherty, Bell and Tees.

Through the Archives of Ontario, the death records of three individuals from the families were

available for research. Though the respectability of the families was not evident with the Bell and

Tees records, the death record for James Flaherty suggests the nature of his community

involvement was occupational, as a retired hotelkeeper.[22] Despite the prominence of obelisks in

large towns and cities, Knight notes the "slower rural acceptance of much of the ornateness and

largeness of styles […]."[23] Obelisks were a sparse form of grave marker in Riverside, rarer still

in Mountain View, and seemingly nonexistent in rural cemeteries throughout the District.

While the second role of the gravestone was to celebrate "the fact of *belonging* […]

replicated through ties based on church membership, ethnic background, [and] social standing,

and of course place of residence," the third role was a continuation of the intentions of the

family, "to petrify and endorse the complex social order of North American localities."[24]

William M. Kephart observed, "Historically, the rich man's grave was marked by a large

memorial or mausoleum, the poor man's by a small head or footstone, or perhaps by the absence

of a stone."[25] While David B. Knight intimates that the gravestone "provides a means by which a

private family experience with death is made a public one to be shared," Julie-Marie Strange

challenges the idea when addressing the history of the pauper's grave, where individuals buried

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[22] Death registry for Phoebe Bell in Archives of Ontario, Series MS935, Reel 94; for Samuel Tees in Archives of Ontario, Series MS935, Reel 473; for James Flaherty in Archives of Ontario, Series 935, Reel 63; Jude Mitchell, "Thunder Bay area cemeteries," under "Riverside Cemetery," http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~jmitchell/riverside.html (accessed August 15, 2014).

[23] Knight, 19.

[24] Norris, 126.

[25] William M. Kephart, "Status After Death," *American Sociological Review* 15, no. 5 (October, 1950): 642, in Knight, 17.

there alongside felons, brought eternal stigma to their families.[26] She asserts that burial in the

pauper grave was a loathsome idea to the Victorian Canadians, who viewed the most

rudimentary form of interment as "a disgrace to the bereaved household."[27] The attainment of

respectability in death required the purchase of the rights to burial in a private grave and access

to mourning and commemorative rites, including the installation of a gravestone.[28] Though

Strange writes exclusively about the pauper's grave in England, the observations made there,

were also applicable to the cemeteries of the Thunder Bay District, as many of the traditional

funerary customs that came to Canada were often of British heritage. The prohibition of

installing a headstone on a pauper grave was what Sarah Tarlow infers as a stripping of identity

and individuality, due to the absence of mourning paraphernalia that gave any indication as to the

personality of the deceased, and the lack of a 'proper' gravesite.[29]

Though the prevalent definition of the cemetery maintains a secular position for the

majority of landscapes, there are expressions of religion in the cemeteries, engraved either on

headstones or as part of the main memorial. The death records of immigrants buried in

cemeteries within the District indicate they practiced a variety of faiths, further lending

credibility to the cultural diversity of cemeteries. There are various types of grave markers, the

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[26] Knight, 17. Robert Roberts, *The Classic Slum: Salford Life in the First Quarter of the Century* (London: n.p., 1971), 87; Carl Chinn, *Poverty Amidst Prosperity: The Urban Poor in England, 1834-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 104; Francis Michael Longstreth Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society: A Social History of Victorian Britain, 1830-1900* (London: n.p., 1988), 200, in Julie-Marie Strange, "Only a Pauper Whom Nobody Owns: Reassessing the Pauper Grave c. 1880-1914," *Past & Present* 178, no. 1 (February 2003): 148.

[27] Ellen Ross, "'Not the Sort that Would Sit on the Doorstep': Respectability in Pre-World War One London Neighbourhoods," *International Labour and Working Class History* 27 (1965): 46, in Strange, "Reassessing the Pauper Grave," 148.

[28] Strange, 148-9, 151, 160.

[29] Sarah Tarlow, *Bereavement and Commemoration: An Archaeology of Mortality* (Oxford: Wiley, 1999), in Strange, "Reassessing the Pauper Grave," 160.

cross being a predominant feature. The grave marker of English dairy hand Eric Partridge, who

died 26 June 1930 at age twenty-one from an accidental drowning (Figure 6a), is an example of

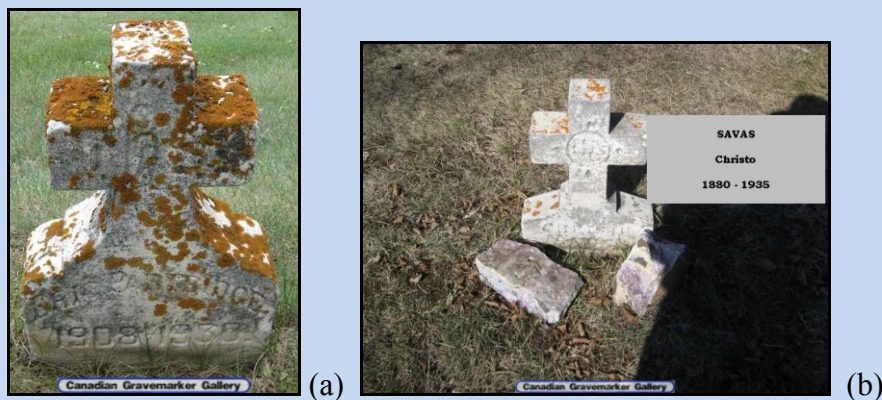the traditional Latin cross, an icon "most commonly associated with Christianity."[30]

Figure 6: (a) The Christian-style grave marker of Eric Partridge and (b) the marker for Christo Savas (1880-1935), defined by a Greek cross. Though they appear similar, there are significant differences. Photos are from the Canadian Gravemarker Gallery.

Though moss covers a considerable portion of the Partridge marker, the letters IHS are

discernible on both headstones, representing the first three letters of Jesus' name according to the

Greek alphabet: Iota, Eta, Sigma.[31] While the symbol suggests the predominance of Christianity

on all types of crosses, the crosses present their own uniqueness. The freestanding Greek cross of

Christo Savas, identifiable by its equidistant arms, is a rarity in itself; they are "more likely to

appear as a decoration on a tomb," intimating that financial restraints did not discourage the

presentation of cultural pride.[32] Other forms of the Greek cross include: the *floré*, or floriated

cross, where the arms end in petal-like projections; and the *batté*, or broad-footed cross, where

the arms end in triangles, resembling a compass rose pointing to each of the four cardinal

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[30] Douglas Keister, *Stories in Stone: A Field Guide to Cemetery Symbolism and Iconography* (Layton, UT: Gibbs Smith, 2004), 175.

[31] Keister, *Stories in Stone,* 146-7.

[32] Ibid., 74-5.

directions. In Mountain View Cemetery, two distinct markers illustrate both styles.[33]

Figure 7: Two markers of unknown graves in Mountain View Cemetery, illustrating both styles of the Greek cross. Photos are from the Canadian Gravemarker Gallery.

In addition to Latin and Greek crosses, the Thunder Bay District is dotted with Celtic crosses, and triple-barred Russian Orthodox crosses throughout the region. David Nicholson notes many Orthodox cross grave markers in Mountain View, corroborating Douglas Keister's observation that they stand together as clusters in large cemeteries.[34] The visible Orthodox crosses appear as engraved symbols on headstones, often on the markers of individuals who died after 1935, suggesting there was discrimination against Orthodoxy adherents. Some Orthodox crosses, along with Latin crosses, stand under a wooden triangular roof. Douglas Keister and others posit the idea that they are "Old Believer" crosses, with the roof symbolically housing the

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[33] "Canadian Gravemarker Gallery," under "Section 68-69, 82, 83-96," http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~murrayp/thunder/mcintyre/mountain/old/68-96/unknow20.jpg , and http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~murrayp/thunder/mcintyre/mountain/old/68-96/unknow21.jpg (accessed May 25, 2014).

[34] Keister, 176-7; David Nicholson, e-mail messge to author, May 6, 2014.

soul(s) of the deceased.[35] Though the date of the exemplar in O'Connor Municipal Cemetery is more recent than preferred, it illustrates the shelter it conveys.

Figure 8: The roofed marker of Jacob and Albert Untersander. Photo is from the Canadian Gravemarker Gallery.

The gravestone also preserves the social standing of individuals. While a significant number of gravestones in Thunder Bay and the surrounding district provide a clear demonstration of the task, some headstones use engraved diction to ensure the permanence of respect and reverence for the dead. In Mountain View, the Curtis family headstone lists Charles, his wife Eliza Emma, and their son Private Bertie Curtis. The headstone states that he died in 1918, killed in action overseas during the First World War. Further details about his army affiliations provide a springboard for additional research to explain the unit's connection to Vimy Ridge, a claim clearly engraved on the family headstone. The problem is the information on his Circumstances of Casualty register, which reveals that Private Curtis did not participate in the Battle of Vimy Ridge, and therefore not laid to rest at the Vimy Memorial; instead, his unit

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[35] Keister, 177; Andrej G., e-mail comment to Beth Santore, "Gravestone Symbolism," Beth Santore, http://www.graveaddiction.com/symbol.html (accessed February 3, 2015)

buried him at the Ecoivres Military Cemetery, four and three-quarters miles northwest of Arras, France.[36]

Jonathan F. Vance argues that the armed forces did not practice the repatriation of Canadian soldiers unless they died in England; those buried at the front stayed there, as per the stipulation of the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC). He asserts the reason was partly symbolic, (to not separate the unity of fallen comrades) and partly logistical, as the attempts to uncover and repatriate the remains would result in "immense administrative difficulties" due to "the chaos on the former battlefields and the sheer number of bodies."[37] Some families noted the overseas deaths of relatives that served in the Canadian Expeditionary Forces (CEF) on family grave markers, as a form of pilgrimage for Canadians who were unable to travel to the war-torn battlefields of France and Flanders, and lay a wreath at a proper gravesite. Mary MacLeod Moore wrote in 1920, "To many Canadians, it is the dream of their saddened lives that they may someday cross the ocean and the Channel to stand beside the grave of a boy who offered his life for others." John Wesley Dafoe described the First World War as "[the event that] will doubtless always remain the most romantic page in our national history."[38] The inclusion of Private Curtis on the family grave marker, and not on an individual plaque, suggests the lack of benefits for

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[36] Curtis family gravestone, Canadian Gravemarker Gallery, http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~murrayp/thunder/mcintyre/mountain/old/1-to-6/curtis1.jpg (accessed April 15, 2014); Original data: War Graves Registry: Circumstances of Death Records. Record Group 150, 1992–1993/314, Boxes 145–238. Library and Archives Canada. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.War Graves Ledger Books. RG 150, 1992-93/314, vols. 239–302. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Ancestry.com. *Canada, War Graves Registers (Circumstances of Casualty), 1914-1948* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010. Circumstances of Casualty register for Private Bertie Curtis, in Library and Archives Canada; *War Graves Registers: Circumstances of Death*; Box: *169.*

[37] Jonathan F. Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 60.

[38] Mary MacLeod Moore, "Corners of 'A Foreign Field': The War Cemeteries of France and Belgium," *Saturday Night*, September 25, 1920, 25; J.W. Dafoe, *Over the Canadian Battlefields: Notes of a Little Journey in France, in March 1919* (Toronto: Thomas Allen, 1919), 13, in Vance, *Death So Noble*, 56-7.

relatives of soldiers prevented the Curtis family from affording the purchase of a separate marker and a site in the Military Plot at Mountain View. Regardless of where CEF soldiers are at rest, the exemplar of Private Curtis is illustrative of the pride Canadians had, and continue to have, in their service members for the past century.

Vance also noted that the second guiding principle of the IWGC was to mark the graves in the war cemeteries with a standard headstone. While the goal was partly aesthetic to prevent the littering of graves with elaborate markers, the purpose of the uniform headstone was symbolic, affirming the equality of all soldiers in death.[39] The observation not only challenges the idea of death as a state of individuality, but also contradicts Norris' fourth role of the gravestone, as they reflect "shifting currents of *popular taste* in North American society."[40] Francaviglia, Knight, and Norris assert the socio-historical significance of grave marker styles and forms as trendsetters of Victorian material culture, as "death was a catalyst for a vogue or conformist expression through memorial art."[41] While other studies corroborated Francaviglia's claims, the 1966 study conducted by Young addressed the trend in two Canadian seacoast villages, revealing "a decrease in height of stone markers after the turn of the century [...]."[42] Research by Sally Ross and Deborah Trask examined the material nature of grave markers in Acadian cemeteries. They found that, prior to the Deportation of 1755, wooden crosses were prevalent as early grave markers. When Acadians began to return to Acadia during the second half of the eighteenth century, they adopted a more permanent style of grave marker, made from

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[39] Vance, *Death So Noble*, 61.

[40] Norris, 126. The italics are Norris'.

[41] Francaviglia, "The Cemetery as an Evolving Cultural Landscape," 504.

[42] L. Price, "Some Results and Implications of a Cemetery Study," *Professional Geographer* 18 (1966): 201-7; Frank W. Young, "Graveyards and Social Structure," *Rural Sociology* 25 (1960): 446-50, in Francaviglia, 504.

sandstone found near the coastline.[43] Trask, along with Debra McNabb, explored the cemeteries in King's County, Nova Scotia, to glean artifact information from grave markers and corroborate the findings with historical records to enhance the local history of communities in the region during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A cursory examination found that the gravestones predating 1780 were slate, and carved in the ornate style common to the Massachusetts Bay area. The findings further substantiate the historical understanding of an established trade route between Nova Scotia and New England.[44]

The Tsimshian Indians of British Columbia blended Victorian gravestone art with their traditional woodcarvings. Contact with Europeans settling in the province exposed them to the religions practiced by the missionaries. When they demanded that the Tsimshian use British-style grave markers, the Native Indians incorporated the new style into the artistic tradition of their totems. The melding of the two styles produced a cultural synthesis, "a hybrid that lends permanence to the totem and breathes a vernacular freshness into the art of the Victorian stonemason."[45] Knight infers that the blending of the two traditional styles of markers was an example of gravestone styles reflecting the changes in culture over time.[46]

While the historical trend for headstones in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has shown the grave markers installed in an upright position, Knight stated that the new trend, increasing in popularity after the 1930s, was the flat lawn-type monument that lay flush to the

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[43] Sally Ross, and Deborah Trask, "Acadian Cemeteries in Nova Scotia: A Survey," *Markers* 22 (2005): 4 and 6.

[44] Deborah Trask, and Debra McNabb, "Research Report on the Graveyards of King's County, Nova Scotia," *Markers* 5 (1988): 151.

[45] Ronald W. Hawker, "In the Way of the White Man's Totem Poles: Stone Monuments Among Tsimshian Indians 1879-1910," *Markers* 7 (1990): 215.

[46] Knight, 18.

ground. He notes that there is "the effect of having a free and open looking landscape."[47] The freedom associated with the openness of cemeteries and "memorial parks" in urban centres, belies the industrialism of both the cemetery as a place of business, and the gravestone as a manufactured commodity. Norris' research indicates that the fifth and final role of the gravestone "signalled the beginning of mass material culture in the industrial age."[48] Susan Smart notes that the earliest pioneer markers were wooden crosses with the inscription printed in black paint. As immigrants settled and established communities, they considered using types of stone as more permanent resources. Both Smart and Meierding observe marble as the earliest choice of stone for the making of grave markers, as the thin white marble was easy to carve, allowing for the inscribing of symbols and lengthy epitaphs.[49] The findings of Ernest Caulfield, who followed the Connecticut River to find the elusive American stonecarver Gershom Bartlett, suggested that the river was the main transportation route for the delivery and export of Vermont marble headstones into Canada.[50] Despite the efforts American stonecarvers put into their work on the markers, the engravings faded to the point of becoming indecipherable. Meierding attributes the loss of the historical knowledge to the increase in industrial pollution resulting from the rise of urbanization associated with population growths, either from the waves of immigrants arriving in Canada, or from the relocation of rural residents to the urban centres, including the cities of Fort William and Port Arthur.[51]

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[47] Knight, 30.

[48] Norris, 126.

[49] Smart, 94-5; Meierding, 569.

[50] Ernest Caulfield, "Wanted: The Hook-and-Eye Man," *Markers* 1 (1979/80): 43.

[51] Meierding, 569.

The Significance of Symbols

Aside from the choice of form and style, Norris acknowledged the importance of the gravestone as a "durable consumer good [that] combined the illusion of uniqueness with the realities of standardized manufacture."[52] To maintain the illusion, stonecarvers engrave symbols and epitaphs into headstones and other types of grave markers, their importance as a form of language "intended to speak to many generations."[53] While Taylor suggests that, the linguistic expression of death happened at some moment after the advent of speech but before the existence of writing, he also acknowledges the debate among scholars regarding when to date the power of speech, at two million years, or around forty thousand years ago. He infers that the evolution of speech also allowed for the propagation of ideas about the soul, and the importance of controlling the soul's malevolence, either by reabsorption of the soul when released through ritual funerary cannibalism, or by physical isolation of the corpse from normal life.[54] Though his inferences into the socio-historical genesis of death and funerary rituals are speculative at best, he admits that archaeology is not an exact science, and can draw much controversy when inferring ideas from objects, including grave markers.[55]

Davies agrees with Taylor that understanding the significance of language in relation to human culture is integral to understanding the cultural impact of death. Death is not only a transformative entity, but is also a state of transformation that affects the identity of both the

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[52] Norris, 127.

[53] Lynn Russell and Patricia Stone, "Gravestone Carvers of Early Ontario," *Material Culture Review* 18 (Fall, 1983), 37.

[54] [54] Timothy Taylor, *The Buried Soul: How Humans Invented Death* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), Taylor, *The Buried Soul*, 3 and 14.

[55] Taylor, *The Buried Soul*, 3.

deceased and the living. The expression of grief marks the rupturing of relationships, and the loss of the deceased's identity upon death. As Davies explains, because the corpse's absence from society is also an absence of identity, a strong sense of self-awareness is present among the living.[56] Though he mentions how people use verbal language to defy death, he does not specifically mention any other use. It is feasible to analyze epitaphs on grave markers within the same context. In addition to the name and date of the deceased, some early gravestones also bore the relation of the person to the provider of the marker, such as son or daughter, wife or husband, or other familial title.[57] A local exemplar stands in Mountain View Cemetery, where the gravestone for Harry Blake (1884-1931) includes the words "Beloved Husband of Rose Anna Ross," followed by his birth and death years.[58] In Riverside Cemetery, the headstone for Adeline Gardner (1894-1933) indicates her status as the "Beloved Wife of John Gardner."[59] The status of the individuals not only reiterates Davies' observation about the impact of death on relationships, but also one of the other research benefits of grave markers espoused by Meierding.

Meierding observes how grave markers also reveal important information about the demography (age and sex ratios, fertility and mortality rates) and settlement (ethnic and religious composition, timing of migration) of an area, as well as social patterns (occupational structure,

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[56] Davies, *Death, Ritual and Belief*, 5.

[57] See for example, the gravestone of Sarah Wheelock, wife of Eleazar Wheelock. Ernest Caulfield, "Wanted: The Hook-and-Eye Man," *Markers* 1 (1979/80): 38.

[58] Murray Pletsch, "Canadian Gravemarker Gallery," under "Ontario," under "Northern Ontario," under "Thunder Bay," under "City of Thunder Bay (Fort William)," under "Old Area" of Mountain View Cemetery, Thunder Bay Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society, http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~murrayp/thunder/mcintyre/mountain/old/62-to-67/blake2.jpg (accessed May 14, 2014).

[59] Jude Mitchell, "Thunder Bay area cemeteries," under "Riverside Cemetery," under "Gardner, Adeline," Jude Mitchell, http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~jmitchell/riverside.html (accessed September 3, 2014).

famous deeds) and cultural patterns (moral sensibilities, and attitudes to life).[60] In Mountain View, there is a simple granite tablet erected by the citizens of Fort William, to commemorate the deaths of fifteen-year-old Gordon Howard, and twelve-year-old Connie Howard, both of whom drowned in the attempt to save their seven-year-old sister Isobel from drowning in the Kam River on 13 August 1927. In the newspaper story that warranted two pages of writing, it described the children as heroic and self-sacrificing individuals, despite their efforts being unsuccessful. Though the article does not mention in extensive detail how they died, the death registries for the three Howard children identifies asphyxiation as the primary cause of death.[61]

The epitaph of the Howard children is a most appropriate description of their lives, given how physically close they were in death:

> They were lovely in their lives,
> And in death they were not divided.

To J.B. Jackson, the small inscription epitomizes the purpose of engraving the words into the stone. He maintains, "The principal intention of epitaphs is to perpetuate the examples of virtue, that the tomb of a good man may supply the want of his presence, and veneration for his memory produce the same effect as the observation of his life."[62] While some epitaphs simply refer to a future meeting with the soul of the deceased, or feature a quote from the Bible, there are other headstones in the Thunder Bay District that feature a more poetic tribute to those who died. The

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[60] James F. Deetz, and E. S. Dethlefsen, "Death's head, cherub, urn and willow," *Natural History* 76 (1967): 28-37; Paula J. Fenza, "Communities of the dead: Tomb-stones as a reflection of social organization," *Markers* 6 (1989): 137-58; Jordan, *Texas graveyards*; Price, "Some Results and Implications of a cemetery study," in Meierding, "Marble Tombstone Weathering and Air Pollution in North America," 568.

[61] "Three Drowned in Kam," *Fort William Daily Times-Journal*, August 15, 1927, p. 1, and "Three Drowned," p. 3. Death registries for Henry Gordon "Gordie" Howard, Constance "Connie" Evelyn Howard, and Emily Isabella "Isabel" Howard. in Archives of Ontario, Series MS935, Reel 353.

[62] Johnson, quoted in J.B. Jackson, "The Vanishing Epitaph: From Monument to Place," *Landscape* 17, no. 2 (Winter, 1967-8): 23, in Knight, 21.

most frequent choice of epitaphs referred to the future reunion of spouses ("Until we meet again"

or "Together again"), or to the reunion of loved ones with the Resurrection. Some gravestone

epitaphs refer to the earning of a well-deserved rest or sleep, including the headstone marking the

gravesite of English infant Delmar Workman, who died in 1934. Though there is no evidence of

Welsh heritage on the death registry, the epitaph on the family marker reads *Cwsg a gwyn dy fyd*

("Sleep and blessed are you"), a Welsh phrase with references to the Beatitudes in the Bible.

Other forms of expressions include pictorial symbols that convey beliefs and attitudes

towards death. Diane O. Bennett explains how the choice of symbols was important to the

immigrants who settled in the Thunder Bay District, where identity, encroachment, and

ambiguity were central to the immigrant experience:

> Struggles for dominance and control develop as classes, communities, and ethnic
> groups seek to preserve their distinctive identities in opposition to hegemonic
> national identities and incursions of increasingly intrusive bureaucratic and
> economic systems. These groups try to protect their cultural practices and their
> political economic autonomy from encroachment by a diverse range of groups
> and forces […]. An important form of struggle that emerges in these cases is the
> attempt to shift the discourse in which a symbol signifies. In several cases
> contention enters on whether a symbol will represent class or territorial identity
> (local, regional, or national) […].[63]

Though immigrants encountered much opposition from the dominance of the Anglo-Saxon

population in the two communities during their lives, death was to many a state of relief from the

difficulties of living in a foreign country. Engraved into their gravestones are symbols that

express important facets of peoples' lives. In the Hebrew Cemetery, several of the older

headstones feature a menorah, a symbol Keister observes as indicating the grave of a righteous

Hebrew woman only.[64] While cultural identity often connotes nationality and religion, the

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[63] Diane O. Bennett, "Symbols of Contention," *Anthropological Quarterly* 67, no. 2 (Apr., 1994): 47.

[64] Keister, 74-5.

symbols can also convey the importance of community involvement. In Mountain View, there are a significant number of markers with the square-and-compass logo denoting past members of the Freemasons; many also possessed the capital G to represent the fifth element that brings order to the world, as either God or geometry. Equally intriguing is the number of wives whose markers feature the icon representing the Order of the Eastern Star, the female counterpart of the Freemasons. Another fraternal organization that contributed to the well-being of the communities was the International Order of the Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.), their grave markers sometimes designated by the symbol of the three-chain link or the picture of hands clasped in benevolence, among other symbols. Though the clear distinction of the symbols suggests easy detection, the Masonic Lodge of Education suggests otherwise, for the Freemasons and Oddfellows share both symbols to represent similar guiding principles.[65]

The form of pictorial expression frequently used on gravestones designated for the Canadian military was the Latin cross, the traditional symbol for mourning the loss of civilians and soldiers. Vance's research into the mythmaking surrounding the Canadian effort during the First World War, found that "Canada's memory discouraged mourning" for the soldiers killed overseas. When the Minister of Militia and Defence suggested the striking of a commemorative cross for the mothers of sons killed overseas, the icon of choice was a Maltese cross, "for a Latin cross which a woman would wear in memory of some sorrow, would not […] serve the purpose."[66] Despite maintaining the choice of the Maltese cross for the medals, the Latin cross remains the symbol of sorrow for remembering fallen Canadian soldiers.

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[65] Masonic Lodge of Education, "Masonic Gravestones," Masonic Lodge of Education, http://www.masonic-lodge-of-education.com/masonic-gravestones.html (accessed February 13, 2015).

[66] A.M. Stephen, "The Cenotaph," in *The Land of Singing Waters* (Toronto: J.M. Dent, 1927), 124; Sir Edmund Walker, to Eric Brown, February 18, 1919, Canadian War Memorials 1919, in Sir Edmund Walker papers, box 31, f, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, at University of Toronto, in Vance, *Death So Noble*, 51.

Prior to and including the eighteenth century, traditional European attitudes treated children as miniature adults in life; in death, the influence of adult interpretations prevailed as gravestone symbols.[67] In the Victorian era, a gentler form of mourning imagery emerged, one that suggested the optimism and hope of everlasting life. In addition to changes in the perception of death, children were no longer little adults; instead, they received their own symbolic icons, including lambs, doves, and little cherubs.[68] The tradition of perceiving children as children, continued in the Thunder Bay District during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In Mountain View and Riverside cemeteries, there are sections in each place designated as "Babyland," where parents buried the remains of their infants who died from fatal injuries, and illnesses spread during community outbreaks.[69]

Conclusion

Though the language of symbols is a powerful form of expression of grief and other death-related emotions, the language of economics appears to have played a more significant role in influencing the trends of grave markers and other funerary monuments. Aubrey Cannon noted an economic depression in the late nineteenth century curbed the elaboration of monument forms, but led to the "subsequent decline in diversity."[70] Knight observed in Canada how post-Depression grave markers lost their uniqueness, no longer reflecting the individuality of the

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[67] Jackson J. Spielvogel, "The Eighteenth Century: European States," in *Western Civilization: Since 1300*, 6th ed. (Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2006), 519; Vincent, 18-9.

[68] Meyer, 8, and Patricia Stone and Lynn Russell, "Observations on Figures, Human and Divine, on Nineteenth-Century Ontario Gravestones," *Material Culture Review* 24 (Fall 1986): 27.

[69] Piovesana, 29. See also City of Fort William Board of Health meeting minutes.

[70] Cannon, "Historical Dimension in Mortuary Expressions of Status and Sentiment," 440.

deceased. People chose the lawn plaque monument, the form that offered some room for the

engraving of basic biographical information, and not much more.[71] Though the formula of Vere

Gordon Childe explains the change in funeral customs from austere mourning to a diversified

ritual, the theory also applies to the downgrade from elaborate grave marker to ordinary

headstone: "as societies become culturally and materially more stable, their funeral customs

become less elaborate and, conversely, as they lose stability, elaboration comes again."[72] Thomas

Carlyle noted that biographies make up history, as each person contributes their own chapter to

the historical record.[73] Regardless of the elaborateness of grave markers from the past, many

scholars of death-related disciplines unanimously agree that headstones and other grave markers

are significant not only to the socio-historical context of the immigrant experience in the

Thunder Bay District, but also to the biographical portion of the national record.

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[71] Knight, 21.

[72] Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death: a Study in Religion, Culture and Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), in McManners, "Death and the French Historians," in Whaley, 121.

[73] Carlyle, "Heroes of History," in Stern, "History as Biography," 90.

Conclusion:

The Final Curtain?

> For life is quite absurd
> And death's the final word
> You must always face the curtain with a bow.
> Forget about your sin – give the audience a grin
> Enjoy it – it's your last chance anyhow.

> -- Monty Python's *Life of Brian* (1979)

Arnar Árnason and Sigurjón Baldur Hafsteinsson argue that the prevalent "death as taboo" thesis is coming under critical scrutiny within the last twenty years. They maintain that other scholars advocate the taboo for reasons of "secularization, medicalization, the rise of bureaucracy, and the rise of individualism along with a decline in stable social networks and established traditions."[1] To Tony Walter, there is no sufficient reason to treat death as a social taboo for the collective fear of the unknown; instead, people need to acknowledge the inevitability of death, and recognize the ideological errors made by monastic chroniclers and Western historians. In the pursuit of 'objective' history and a unilinear path of chronology, they inadvertently privileged the position of life in historical studies. In defense of the litany of mistakes made by earlier historians, the seventeenth-century French author François de La Rochefoucauld famously observed how death was, and continues to be a difficult subject to approach: "Le soleil ni la mort ne se peuvent regarder fixement."[2] Yet the maxim loses its original meaning when applied to the historian, "who when he writes about death always turns

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[1] Arnar Árnason, and Sigurjón Baldur Hafsteinsson, "The revival of death: expression, expertise and governmentality," *British Journal of Sociology* 54, no. 1 (March 2003): 44-5.

[2] "Neither the sun nor death can be looked at directly." Sometimes people incorrectly translate the phrase to read as "with a steady eye." Maxim 26, from *Reflections, or Sentences and Moral Maxims (1665-1678)*, by François de La Rochefoucauld, in Project Gutenberg, http://www.gutenberg.org/files/9105/9105-h/9105-h.htm (accessed February 17, 2015).

out to be writing about something else. As he is concerned only with life […] it could hardly be otherwise."[3] Bruce Bowden and Roger Hall's concern over the dismal prevalence of life-oriented histories and the meagre corpus of Canadian thanatological scholarship stems from the romanticized version of history perpetuated through the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, where order and reason influenced the social treatment of death.

A Re-interpretation of History

Despite being the nexus of Western culture, professional historians often ignore the potential applications of the subject in academic research. Michael A. Simpson asserted that death became a hidden secret, albeit a badly kept secret as "there are over [six hundred fifty] books now in print and asserting that we are ignoring the subject."[4] The limitations of their research scopes draw attention to a significant question: Is there a right way to interpret the past, or does the legacy of the long-since-gone deserve a serious second glance? According to Robert B. Townsend, the problem lies in the fixation of the professional/public framework. He notes that the 'professional historian' with the history PhD and the authorship of several noteworthy books, has more influence in the field as a member of the academic elite, despite being part of a minority. Yet he noted that "public history has a much deeper and richer significance in a range of historical organizations, [... but] have been and remain vital partners in the work of the

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[3] Cf, "Ou le fait de mouri n'appartient pas à la mort, mais à la vie. Il ne s'oppose pas à elle; il ne la nie pas, il l'achève." In English: "Or the fact of death is not death, but life. He is not opposed to it; he did not deny [that] it ends." Raymond Polin, *Du Laid, du Mal at du Faux* (1948), 78, in McManners, "Death and the French Historians," in Whaley, 130.

[4] Michael A. Simpson, *Dying, Death and Grief: A Critical Bibliography* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1979), vii, in Arnar Árnason, and Sigurjón Baldur Hafsteinsson, "The revival of death," 45.

discipline."[5] Theodore S. Hamerow intimated that the historical profession "is today troubled by increasing doubts about its purposes and prospects," as the "sheer love of the subject" that encouraged 'amateurs' to write about the past became endangered with the professionalization of history in the nineteenth century, as it encouraged the writing of more mediocre works.[6] Donald A. Yerxa asserted, "Academic historians as well as those historians who practice 'without a license' have much to contribute to producing good history."[7] Though Townsend, Hamerow and other historians did not specifically refer to the influence of death on history, there is a hinting at the importance of public historians to address such a topic.

Though death is a universal concept, Johann Gottfried von Herder, Kodo Matsunami, Timothy Taylor and other academics suggest the beliefs in death and their expressions are culturally and regionally unique, and therefore warrant the need for public historians to investigate and explore the historical roots of things seen by the public eye:

> In burial rites we have a phenomenon of world wide distribution, connected with certain human elements such as death itself the various attitudes towards it, the fear of the ghost, the significance of burial, the specific attitude toward the corpse, and the problem of life after death. […] Since the deceased was in the realm of the unfathomable and incomprehensible, a corpse was associated with everything mysterious and uncanny and was placed in the same category as thunder, lightning, earthquakes, spirits, and other phenomena of nature and magic. Hence, arose the necessity of propitiating such a spirit, otherwise, it might bring disaster upon the living.[8]

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[5] Robert B. Townsend, introduction to *History's Babel: Scholarship, Professionalization, and the Historical Enterprise in the United States, 1880-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 4-6.

[6] Theodore S. Hamerow, *Reflections on History and Historians* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 3, 39, 46.

[7] Donald A. Yerxa, *Recent Themes on Historians and the Public: Historians in Conversation* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2009), 2.

[8] Effie Bendann, introduction to *Death Customs: An Analytical Study of Burial Rites* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930), 13-4.

While the populations studied by Effie Bendann were indigenous peoples in Australia, Micronesia, and other exotic nations, her observations corroborated with Taylor's European findings, supporting the idea of worldwide distribution. Philippe Ariès noted that "as man[kind] progressed through time,' and climbed higher 'up the urban and social ladder," their growing distance from nature equated to the gradual loss of their familiarity with death, a theory he used to explain the uneasy fear of death held by modern society.[9]

The Polyethnic "Mosaic" of Death in the Lakehead

When analysing the contributions of immigrant peoples to Canadian history, it is important to consider the contributions of European immigrants not only to cultural life, but also to the cultural interpretation of death. Despite the importance of death in relation to the immigrant experience, there is either a significant lack or complete absence of thanatological literature pertaining to Northwestern Ontario, especially in the Thunder Bay District. The void in scholarly research regarding the historical significance of the region, and its stereotyped designation as an area of focus for environmental research, is typical of the treatment by cultural and governmental intellectuals in southern and eastern Ontario. In 1973, Elizabeth Arthur also made the same observation, noting that the treatment of Northwestern Ontario has not changed from the time of the fur trade by the Hudson's Bay Company.[10]

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[9] Philippe Ariès, "The Reversal of Death: Changes in Attitudes Toward Death in Western Societies," trans. Valerie M. Stannard, in "Death in America," ed. David E. Stannard, special issue, *American Quarterly* 26, no.5 (Dec., 1974): 539.

[10] Elizabeth Arthur, *Thunder Bay District, 1821-1892: a collection of documents* (Toronto: Champlain Society for the Government of Ontario [by] University of Toronto Press, 1973), 1.

When European immigrants left their homelands to come to the Northwestern region of Ontario, they left what was familiar, to face a country full of unknown risks that resulted in bringing death to the forefront of their lives. Death was a constant companion, claiming the lives of both the young and old through a variety of accidents.[11] Despite the unknown hazards of the Canadian climate and terrain, the mixture of European immigrants that settled in the cities of Fort William and Port Arthur or throughout the Thunder Bay District influenced the socio-historical component of the region, through their development of funerary customs, intertwined with religion to help them cope with their individual, familial, and communal grief. The research findings in this thesis indicate that, without the settlement of diverse cultural groups in the communities of Port Arthur and Fort William, and in the Thunder Bay District, the cultural interpretations of equality of individuals in death may not have spread to the Prairies, reiterating the significance of the historical footprint in Northwestern Ontario.

Without the contributions made by immigrants to the funeral customs of Canada, Al Alvarez argues "Death is everywhere and […] it becomes indifferent, impersonal, inevitable and finally, without any meaning."[12] David B. Knight observed that culture is never static, its icons continually changing over time to reflect socio-historical circumstances. Harold J. Perkins was unable to create a clear and concise definition of social history, appearing at first glance as an academic flaw that invalidates the field from the scope of 'true' history. Further examination of

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[11] Alexander Frederick Agombar died on December 25, 1935 at age thirty, during a hockey game in the Prince of Wales arena. The cause of death was a severe fracture to the brain vault, and a concussion, after colliding with his teammate, and falling back onto the ice. Death registry found in Archives of Ontario, Series MS935, Reel 568; "Alex Agombar Dies as Result of Heavy Fall," *Fort William Daily Times-Journal*, December 26, 1935, p. 1. Bliss Woodberry Lutes died March 30, 1932, at the age of fifty-nine. A survivor of both the Boer War and the First World War, he succumbed to his injuries when hit by a streetcar. Death registry found in Archives of Ontario, Series MS935, Reel 459; "Man Hit by Tram Hurt Fatally: Bliss Lutes Dies, Result of Injury," *Fort William Daily Times-Journal*, March 30, 1932, p. 1.

[12] Al Alvarez, *The Savage God: A Study in Suicide* (London: W.W. Norton, 1971), 199-203, in David Cannadine, "War and Death, Grief and Mourning in Modern Britain," in Whaley, 236-7.

his essay reveals the opposite truth, for the lack of a definition promotes flexibility that allows

for the application of his work to the emerging discipline of thanatology.[13]

Conclusion: The Future of the End?

Walter also noted that the debut of thanatology as an academic hybrid challenges the

long-standing feud among historians, being neither an art nor a science, but both at the same

time. In addition to the blending of disciplines and specialities, he asserted that the

encouragement of discussing death in public life, provided by grief counsellors, bereavement

centres and "death cafés," provides sufficient evidence to suggest that death is experiencing a

social revival, urged on by the individualism of the age.[14] Though the traditional use of cemetery

property is to serve as a sacred space for the eternal rest of the dead, the recent individualist trend

of society is to use the space for passive recreation.[15] James Stevens Curl argued that cemeteries

are also a significant repository of culture and cultural history. He noted how historians tend to

neglect the subject of cemeteries, and inferred that the larger fault lies with Western civilization,

for "play[ing] down death, robbing it of its great significance. We treat the disposal of the dead

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[13] The Center for Thanatology Research & Education, Inc., "Home," The Center for Thanatology Research & Education, Inc., http://thanatology.org/home.html (accessed July 30, 2013).

[14] Clive Seale, *Constructing Death: The Sociology of Dying and Bereavement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Michael A. Simpson, *Dying, Death and Grief: A Critical Bibliography*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia University Press, 1987); Tony Walter, "Modern death –taboo or not taboo?" *Sociology* 25, no. 2 (1991): 293-310; *The Revival of Death* (London: Routledge, 1994); "A new model of grief: bereavement and biography," *Mortality* 1, no. 1 (1996): 7-25; *On Bereavement: The Culture of Grief* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999). See also Jennifer Lorna Hockey, "The human encounter with death" (PhD dissertation, Durham University, 1986), and Neil Small, "Theories of grief: a critical review," in *Grief, Mourning and Death Ritual*, by Jennifer Lorna Hockey, Jeanne Katz, and Neil Small, eds. (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2001), in Árnason and Hafsteinsson, "The revival of death," 43-6.

[15] Christopher Tunnard, and Boris Pushkarev, *Man-Made America: Chaos or Control? An Inquiry into Selected Problems of Design in the Urbanized Landscape* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1963), 370-1, in Harvey, "Sacred Spaces, Common Places," 296.

in much the same way as that in which we rid our towns and cities of waste products. [...] The contemporary tourist misses much if he avoids the places where the dead are buried, yet such avoidance is symptomatic of the present attitudes towards death and remembrance."[16] Knight concurs, stating that they form "a part of the cultural landscape, moulded and modified by man."[17] Ken Worpole notes that cemeteries and other forms of burial grounds "somehow seem to fix a time and a place in a culture forever, carrying the past into the present and even into the future in perpetuity."[18] The cultural quality of Western cemeteries lies in their socio-historical roots in Europe, how they gradually transformed from undifferentiated burial sites, to the systematized "memorial parks" that cemeteries have become in Canada. Research into the development of Mountain View Cemetery into a municipal cemetery with the potential of becoming a garden cemetery during the early decades of the twentieth century, revealed the possible creation of a "Lakehead" tradition, with most persons of various cultural and religious backgrounds buried in the grounds of one secular cemetery. The significance of the observation suggests that, despite the immigration of Americans into Canada, the American 'melting-pot' ideology did not penetrate the societies of Port Arthur and Fort William, allowing European immigrants to become important people in the communities, both in life and death.

Despite the idea of collectiveness promoted by the perpetual occupation of cemeteries by the deceased, headstones from both the past and the present promote the personal and psychological need for individuality. James Deetz noted that gravestones and grave markers

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[16] Curl, introduction to *A Celebration of Death: An introduction to some of the buildings, monuments, and settings of funerary architecture in the Western European tradition* (London: Constable and Company, 1980), xxiii-xxiv; *The Victorian Celebration of Death*, 180.

[17] Knight, *Cemeteries as Living Landscapes*, 1.

[18] Ken Worpole, *Last Landscapes: The Architecture of the Cemetery in the West* (Chicago: Reaktion Books, 2004), 17.

represent the "relationship between culture and cognition."[19] In addition to the importance of

local history, gravestones provide significant insight into nineteenth-century life not only on a

community level, but also on a national level. The connection to national history is an opinion

also shared by the sagacious historian J.J. Talman, who said, "All history, no matter how local, is

part of the national record."[20] The profoundness of the observation is evident when examining

the symbolism of grave markers to understand the local, social and cultural history of Thunder

Bay proper and its surrounding district.

In the eloquent yet thought-provoking commentary by Rex Murphy, he described how

sex and the grave were "verbally akin," where the pun, "to die" signified both the end of life and

sexual climax.[21] He states that most of what is memorable in the language of death is from the

seventeenth century, when poets and intellectuals were 'word-mad' to use language as a means

to "express their fears [of death] in order to quell them."[22] The uncertainty of what fate befell the

deceased was also a concern for European immigrants that came to Canada, and settled in either

Fort William or Port Arthur, considered by many as pioneer towns. Their cultural interpretations

of death demonstrated not only how death influenced the settlement of Northwestern Ontario, but

also how they contributed to the expansion of Canada as a unified nation. Within the larger

context of history, they explain why death deserves to merit greater attention in studies of

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[19] James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten: The Archeology of American Life* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1977), cited in David H. Watters, "Gravestones and Historical Archeology: A Review Essay," *Markers* 1 (1979/80): 175.

[20] Laura Suchan, "Memento Mori: Bringing to the Cemetery," *The History Teacher* 42, no. 1 (Nov. 2008): 41; Donald Wright, *The Professionalization of History in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 93.

[21] Rex Murphy, "Your quaint honour turn to dust," The National Post, entry posted October 25, 2013, as part of special issue "How We Die Now." http://fullcomment.nationalpost.com/2013/10/25/rex-murphy-your-quaint-honour-turn-to-dust/ (accessed October 28, 2013).

[22] Murphy, "Your quaint honour turn to dust."

Canadian history not only as an important area of study, but also to emphasize the significance of death as an important piece of the quintessential Canadian "mosaic." This overview of death and its cultural treatment in the Lakehead region of Northwestern Ontario adds another piece to the puzzle.

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