The Numinous Cult(ur)e:
Reconciling Québec's religious heritage for a post-secular age.

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to investigate the motivations and strategies employed by the Québec state and its national institutions to preserve and promote its religious history, particularly in the present context of vociferous secular discourse. Building upon past works on the sociology of secularity and modernization, in addition to concepts of patrimonialization, museology, curation, and cultural studies, this paper advances thinking on Québec's strategy of reconciling its dominant paradigm of religious rupture – one that allows for disavowal of and nostalgia for its religious past. Of specific interest to this analysis, is on the one hand the Franco-Québécois audience for whom this religious narrative is being crafted, namely, one for whom living memory of Québec's clericalism is receding into the historical horizon. On the other hand some attention is also paid to Québécois who do not share this religious past, and are as such, marked as outsiders by its promotion as a source of distinction and identity. To apply the thesis mentioned above to the actual process of national identity building, le *Musée de l'Amérique francophone* is discursively and spatially analyzed. This research is situated within the present theoretical context of post-secularism to explore the notion that the grandchildren of the Quiet Revolution are negotiating a prevailing sense of loss of distinction, both through the process of capitalist consumerism and increasing ethnic and religious diversification. Ultimately, this thesis argues that cultural institutions are in the midst of co-opting the emotional and symbolic repertoire of Québec's religious heritage in an effort to renovate an important distinguishing characteristic of its past.

Table of Contents

Title Page	1
Abstract	2
Table of Contents	3
Chapter 1: Introduction	4
Chapter 2: Notions of the Numinous in contemporary nationalism	9
Chapter 3: Cultural Policy on Religious Heritage	29
Chapter 4: Museum Analysis	46
Conclusion	88
Works Cited	92
Index of Images	97

Chapter 1: Introduction

Is there a way, soon in the near future, to communicate simultaneously uniform and common impressions to all the people of France that will have the effect of making them all worthy of the Revolution?... That secret has been well known by the priests, who through their catechisms, their processions, their missions, their pilgrimages, their statues, their paintings, and everything else that nature and art put at their disposal, led mankind inevitably in the direction the priests intended. – Rabaut Saint-Étienne Convention in December 1792

For decades now sociologists, theologians, politicians and the citizens of Quebec have been studying the steady decline of the Roman Catholic Church, not just in empty pews but also in the deterioration, and destruction of its buildings, the virtual absence of new clergy, and most profoundly an increasing lack of awareness amongst Québécois about what their religious heritage even means. Precious architectural heritage, which makes up more than one-third of all protected sites in Québec, along with a treasure trove of artwork, as well as archives and cultural knowledge has been at risk of being lost for more than a decade and this tangible peril has begun to raise awareness about just what the nation stands to lose. At the same time, Québec's sense of distinction –once rooted in its religious exceptionality and subsequent response to it - has been facing intangible sources of peril for which the crumbling edifice of its religious heritage serves as an apt metaphor.

If Québec's identity was once defined by anti-materialism, ethnic and religious homogeneity and tradition, then the looming threats of global capitalism, increasing ethnic and religious diversity and generational loss loom large and have prompted much introspection as to what it means to be a Québécois in the 21st century. An advisory group to the Minister of Culture and Communications expressed this fear in a report warning that “[o]n peut y lire l’expression à la fois d’un besoin et d’une inquiétude: besoin de concrétiser le sens de l’identité nationale,

inquiétude grandissante devant certaines menaces portées par une mondialisation qui pourrait engendrer l'uniformisation de la culture,” (Groupe-conseil, 2000, pg. 10). They worried that market domination within the cultural sphere of Québec would lead to weakened sovereignty, the hegemony of a single socio-cultural model and a sole language, at least in North America.

While capitalism poses the risk of homogenization, ethnic diversity presents the problem of incoherence. Prompted by Hérouxville's 'Code of Conduct' and debates over 'Reasonable Accommodation', public discourse has routinely flared up during the last decade over how far Québec should go to culturally adapt to newcomers. The issue has challenged deeply-held values of gender equality and has returned questions of religion to the sphere of public debate.

Questions relating to secularism have inevitably been raised as many new and second generation Québécois practice their religion at a much higher rate than 'traditional' citizens. For many of the *non de souche*, that practice is very public whether through cultural norms, dress, or ritual prayer. Zubryzicki argues that the state response has been to “redefine Catholicism as a cultural patrimony...meant to redefine and harden the symbolic boundaries of the nation that many argue have been stretched to breaking by the over-accommodation of the religious practices of cultural minorities,” (Zubryzicki, 2012, pg. 451-52). Thus, cultural institutions have turned to its religious past to reassert its cultural control of public space.

However, due to increased alienation from the practice and decreased support of its French Catholic religious heritage, there have been increasing challenges to Québec's ability to leverage its heritage in a way to address the perils of capitalism and ethnic/religious diversification. While the authors of the Quiet Revolution and their children were imprinted by the Church's legacy, having either participated in the mass exodus from the pews or growing up in the newly declared

period of secularism, these two generations had a living knowledge of their nation's religious heritage. They were either Quiet Revolutionaries, or the heirs of secularism which they understood as the departure from clericalism. The grandchildren of the Quiet Revolution, on the other hand, lack most memory of Church dominance and as a consequence, *their* secularism is without a concrete referent (Taylor, 2004). Illustrative of this is a tour guide at the Nicolet Museum of World Religions, who recounts an anecdote saying “lors de la visite d’une exposition, il y a quelques années, l’animatrice identifiait des objets de culte –ciboire, tabernacle, calice – et, l’un des enfants demanda s’il n’y avait pas aussi un ‘maudit’,” (Dufour, 2005, pg. 28-29). This generational amnesia means that Québec's religious past, which has been a defining feature against which to reference the nation's secularism, is increasingly being lost and, as such the very nature of secularism is being called into question. Evidence of this is apparent in the Bouchard-Taylor Commission and the recent foray into the Charter of Values - both of which have tried to codify values, once assumed during a period of vibrant cultural Catholicism.

But, while young Québécois are increasingly ignorant of much of their Catholic heritage, another perspective suggests they are curious to learn more. With respect to religion, Lefèbvre argues “Franco-Catholic Quebec is torn by ambivalence, struggling with a combination of resentment and peaceful memories,” (Lefèbvre, 2010, pg. 290). That struggle can be understood as a generation gap where older Québécois recall the excesses of the Church, whereas younger Québécois historians “are able to explore their religious roots and to reconstruct collective memory in a much more serene fashion than did their counterparts who had themselves lived through a rupture with the Church,” (Lefèbvre, 2010, pg. 209).

The renewed openness to religion, or at least religion as patrimony, is symptomatic of an emerging trend in sociology called post-secularism, which is the phenomenon that argues

individuals and groups are growing more open to what were once considered the irrational aspects of religion and are increasingly prepared to acknowledge religion's capacity to describe that which reason cannot. Decades ago, Baum would have called those who now embrace post-secularism, 'symbolic realists' who, "by their refusal to become reductionists, acknowledge a conception of human life, of which the deepest dimension remains hidden, lies beyond the grasp of science, manifests itself in the world of religions, and finds expression in people's personal quest for self-transcendence," (Baum, 1975, pg. 262). In terms of Québec, I argue the state is seeking less a return to religion, but rather a renovation of its religious past that provides an argument for the collective transcendence of its identity peril.

This thesis shall argue that in response to the threat of the loss of national distinction, posed by global capitalism, ethnic diversity and generational cultural loss, Quebec cultural institutions are turning to the emotional and symbolic repertoire of its religious past in an attempt to reinforce its the idea of distinct nationhood. Using its religious heritage to achieve this, I argue, makes most sense through the paradigm of the trope of reconciliation. This is because of the pervasive presence religious heritage, the liturgical emphasis on collectivity and the Church's long historical reach. In order to draw on this heritage, cultural institutions must reconcile the popular narrative of religious rupture tied to the Quiet Revolution by resolving the disavowal of clericalism in order to achieve nostalgia for an identity that if embraced on a wide scale, has the potential to solidify Québec's identity in post-modern world where 'nation' has lost its definitional potency.

As an object for analysis, this thesis shall examine how cultural institutions are implementing what I recognize as a post-secular strategy into practice in the space of le *Musée de l'Amérique francophone*. Here I argue is presented a strong theme of reconciliation which permeates the

three main exhibitions relating to religious heritage. Through a spatial analysis, the museum will be discussed as a sacred space, where identity and history intersect within the national subject. Moreover, the analysis will identify the affective-aesthetic strategies operative in the museum to reconcile Québec's religious heritage within a broader government discourse and policies that confirm state-attempts to resurrect its religious past for a secular future.¹

¹ The following research rests heavily on secondary sources to inform my spatial analysis and situate it in the context of present conversations relating to religion, nationalism, museology and post-secularism. The diversity of these reflect my interdisciplinary approach and my interest in stimulating discussion across disciplines. For instance the main theorists of religion I engage with are Baum, Bibby, Caulier, Foucault, Gauvreau, Habermas, Lefèbvre, Lemieux, Meunier, Nevitte, and Taylor, whom diversely approach the question of religion in Québec and more broadly the nature of Western religion in late modernity. To steep my research in literature on nationalism I consult Brennan, Keohane, Smith, Trépanier and Zubrzycki whom variably describe the relationship between nation, memory and the 'Other'. My research on the nature of state museum is indebted to Arthur, Crane, Karp & Levine, Knott, Maines, Nixon, Otto and Yanow who enriched my conception of the numinous in the museum and strategies for reading space and inferring its meanings. In addition to these theoretical sources, my research is grounded by documents from *le Conseil religieux du Québec*, Museum scenarios from *le Musée de l'Amérique francophone*, the National Capital Commission of Québec, and the writing of Arpin, former director of the Museums of Civilization.

Chapter 2: Notions of the Numinous in contemporary nationalism

I refer to an imagined community of the faithful that unites the dead, the living , and the yet unborn along an upward, linear trajectory of time, but one that lives not just in the imagination, as Anderson claims, but equally in the conscious will and mass sentiments. (A.D. Smith, 2000, pg.802-3)

Contemporary, secular Québec faces a paradox in the way it cultivates ‘conscious will and mass sentiments’, which this chapter seeks to address and resolve. That is in attempting to define and promote secularism, the government is investing more than ever in its religious heritage as a source of definition. While the cultural policy guiding present efforts to preserve and promote Québec’s religious heritage will be discussed in the following chapter, here I shall approach the problem from a theoretical perspective. Specifically, I will attempt to reconcile a disenchanted secular modernity with the continued manipulation of the numinous and sacred. In other words, I will argue that cultural institutions actively use the numinous language and symbols derived from its religious past to re-enchant national identity in a globalized and heterogeneous cultural landscape. To make this argument I will examine the numinous or “sacred dimension of nationalism” (Smith, 2000), followed by evidence of Québécois’ continued identification with and renovation of their religious past. In addition, post-secularism will be discussed as a means by which to make sense of the above-mentioned paradox and lastly, these themes will be applied to the museum as a national space where the sacred can be both numinous and secular.

Secularism

Secularism as a concept has dominated both sociology and theology since the decades following the 1960s (Cox, 2003, pg.205-6), rooted in an academic orthodoxy that privileges the notion of a linear causation between economic modernization, urbanization, industrialization and religious decline. He argued the reason this account of secularism has enjoyed such privilege is that it

provided a useful narrative. While secularization's orthodoxy increasingly faces academic critique, its place in popular history and Québec's national narrative remains firmly rooted. Indeed, Nevitte argues this orthodoxy expresses itself in the popular conviction that secularization was "at the cutting edge" of the Quiet Revolution and is presumed to have "paved the way" for the independence movement," (Nevitte, 1984, pg. 340). Baum finds the source of Québec's secular orthodoxy in the nationalist strategy to "secularize Québec's self-perception and replace the religious myth ... that had defined Québec's place and destiny in the past," (Baum, 2000, pg. 151-2). Together, these orthodoxies present what Gauvreau and Hubert call the "modernization as secularization story" – a narrative that casts the Church as either a bulwark of elite hegemony and traditional values, or as an "unstable liberal consciousness, destined to melt away under a corrosive individualism or to be recuperated by an expansive modern state," (Gauvreau & Hubert, 2006, pg.9).

Habermas has recently concerned himself with the potential dangers of the kind of discursively dogmatic secularism presently rearing its head in France and Québec. He writes that if the secular paradigm convinces people that religion is an archaic relic of a pre-modern era, one of Western society's cornerstones – freedom of religion – is at risk, and will lead to intolerance in pluralist societies. Situating religion exclusively in the past, Habermas warns, could lead citizens to understand "religion as the cultural version of the conservation of a species in danger of becoming extinct," and lead to a scenario where people can no longer engage in serious dialogue with anything but secular language (Habermas, 2006, pg.15).

Faced with the oft-cited opposition between the poles of nationalism and clericalism, Brennan suggests rather, a continuum, arguing "nationalism largely extended and modernized (although did not replace) 'religious imaginings', taking on religion's concern with death, continuity, and

the desire for origins,” (Brennan, 1990, pg.50). His argument aligns with a Durkheimian perspective of religion, one that A.D. Smith describes as demoting the gods and defining the term more along social and ritual terms, (A.D. Smith, 2000, pg.797). Like religion, A.D. Smith argues that national collectivities produce a ‘holy communion’ of citizens, through which symbolic and ritual practices can be preserved in a secular paradigm, yet retain their sacred character.

The Numinous

In many ways, the turn towards the numinous is a response to what Weber famously described as the ‘Iron Cage’ of capitalist bureaucratic statism. The numinous represents that which cannot be engaged by rationalization. A contemporary of Weber’s, Rudolf Otto suggested that “the whole affective, emotional side of religion, its impact at the level of feelings has been sidelined. We have mistakenly assumed that everything succumb to rational terminology and can be neatly categorized, quantified, described and caught in words,” (Arthur, 2000, pg. 7). He views the numinous as a ‘non-rational factor’ where the sense of the sacred is located which can be experienced “in many different forms, ranging from the kind of eerie sense of supernatural dread and terror associated with ghosts, to a feeling of profound awe and wonderment in the apparent presence of an omnipotent deity,” (Otto, 1923, pg.6). In his work on nationalism, A.D. Smith applies the sense of sacred to national belonging and ancestral connections. Nationalism, he argues along Durkheimian lines can replace religion and as it does, often employs its language, symbols and liturgies through the politicisation of religion. For example, he writes:

Among these mass transformations is the oft-noted *politicisation of religion*, in which traditional motifs are endowed with new political significance. For example, traditional prophets and sages like Moses, Muhammad, and Confucius are metamorphosed into national heroes, while religious revelations are turned into national shrines such as Mecca, Guadeloupe, and Yasna Gora. Religious miracles like the eight-day lamp or the crossing of the Red Sea turn

Chanukah and Passover into mainly national feasts, and holy scriptures like the Bible, the Koran, and Bhagavad-Gita are reinterpreted as national epics, (Smith, 2010, pg. 799).

In Québec, this politicisation finds expression in the secularisation of religious figures as geographical markers, figures like Groulx, D'Youville, and Laval, who are now cast as nation-builders as opposed to missionaries, and feasts like St. Jean Baptiste transformed into a national holiday. Smith calls this the 'displacement of affect.'

[The] transfer of awe and reverence from the deity and his or her 'church' to the location of the shrine and its worshippers, for here all the members participate equally by virtue of being ancestrally related to the territory in question. In this case, to have been hallowed suffices; once blessed, the land becomes even more sacred, because it attracts to itself much of the exaltation and holy love that was formerly accorded to the deity, (A.D. Smith, 2000, pg. 807).

Smith articulately recognizes that in the process of secularization that had been underway since before the Quiet Revolution, societies - particularly in Québec – often retain much of their affinity for experiencing the sacred, but locate it often in heritage.

This is especially true for a state like Québec which has based its national identity on its distinct North American character and has extensively expressed its difference through heritage. In his discussion on the 'contagiousness of the sacred,' Handler describes the importance of the relationship between the collective individual and its *patrimoine* arguing from a Lockean perspective that possessions can come to define their possessors through a "mystical bond uniting the agent with the things he acts upon," (Handler, 1988, pg. 154). In Québec the inventory of mystical relationships between the collective individual and its national claim has been in a constant state of expansion since it began regulating them in 1922 (Handler, 1988, pg. 152). I argue that one reason for this stems from the fact that as Québécois increasingly live like

North Americans, they require more reassurance of their difference and as one of the most pervasive cultural symbols throughout its territory, the Québec Church becomes an increasingly valuable identitary asset. The question then arises: how can Québec draw on its religious heritage in a climate and discourse of strict separation between Church and State and overcome widespread ambivalence toward religion? But first, a brief sketch of Québécois' relationship to the Church is necessary.

Québécois and their Church

Religious scholar Reginald Bibby's 2007 survey "conclusively" shows that the "vast number of Québeckers still continue to see themselves as Roman Catholics," (Bibby, 2007, pg. 8). Eighty-three percent of respondents described themselves as "Catholic," despite a province-wide regular attendance of only 20 percent. These numbers indicate minimal change from 1960s statistics when regular attendance was "allegedly in the 80%-plus range in the 1960s," and 88 percent of Québec residents described themselves as "Catholic," (Bibby, 2007, pg. 8). Moreover, when asked whether or not respondents would consider changing their religion, 97 per cent of Québec's Catholics who attend Mass less than weekly to never said "no," (Bibby, 2007, pg. 8).

It is therefore interesting to question why Québec Catholics retain such a strong identification with their religion while simultaneously practicing it at the lowest level in the country.

Additionally, one of the major thrusts of this chapter, indeed this thesis, is to discern what aspects, practices and auras of religion can be transposed by cultural institutions in order to capitalize on such strong levels of identification to bolster social cohesion and national distinction.

Bibby, among others, writes that Catholics in Québec, like people elsewhere, “continue to have longings for the sacred, to believe, to pray, to experience the gods... They also continue to look to the Church for rites of passage and for seasonal celebrations of Mass...rites and celebration appear to play a major role in perpetuating the belief that they are “Catholic,” (Bibby, 2007, pg. 16, Turcotte, 2001, pg. 510-511). Quoted in Lefèbvre (2000), Charles Taylor goes even further, proposing that “Québec’s history is lived through the sentiment that collective identity is intimately bound to fidelity to God as expressed in denominational Catholicism,” (Lefèbvre, 2000, pg. 284-85. While some may disagree, Meunier (2014) citing his most recent survey, suggests that in the last decade this trend seems to be declining (that is baptisms, marriages and funerals). I will suggest and will argue later, Québécois’ propensity for ritual is increasingly being transposed onto the secular sphere, outside of the Church entirely.

Rituals do not always need to occur within the Church. Many of Québec’s sacred rituals occurred in the streets, such as the holy processions of la Fête-Dieu. For many, *seeing* the collectivity assembled in the streets or in the fields was sacred. Nixon notes the important aspect of “seeing,” arguing that sometimes “seeing is a ritual in and of itself,” (Nixon, 2012, pg. 158) citing the Catholic ritual of the Eucharistic Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament as an example of how “seeing” can be an extremely emotional event. As such, by drawing on the rituals of pilgrimage, adoration and reconciliation to name a few, it is arguable that Catholic ritual retains much of its salience albeit, located outside of the Church. It is, however, a transformed salience which plays to a new secular ‘Doubting Thomas’ audience who need to see and touch, not to believe in organized religion per se, but rather to believe in their continued sacred bond to one another.

Post-secularism

A willingness to believe in something other than what can be reduced to reason can help explain Québécois' continued identification with their religious heritage. Post-secularism calls into question the absolute discursive value of reason, by acknowledging the inter-subjectivity of religious and rational truth. In the mid-1960s Ernst Bockenford asked: "[t]o what extent can peoples united in a state live solely on the guarantee of individual freedom without a common bond?" Habermas (2006, *On the relations...*, pg. 251) notes this question "expresses doubt that the democratic constitutional state can renew the normative preconditions of its existence out of its own resources." In so doing, he underscores questions being raised involving secularity in both Québec and Europe. As the only remaining elements of the 'Old Empires' Habermas elsewhere argues that religions' cognitive substance has not waned in the differentiated architecture of modernity noting, religion still bears "semantic potential that unleashes an inspiring energy for *all of* society as soon as they release their profane truth content," (Habermas, 2006, *Religion in the...*, pg.17). Essentially what Habermas argues, is that rational thought is prepared to learn from religion, "but remains agnostic in the process," meaning that within a post-secular frame, rationalist presumption must refrain from deciding what aspects of religion are and are not rationale.

Another way of framing post-secularism is advanced by Joas who clarifies the misconception that it refers to an increase in religiosity, but rather, following its decrease, captures a "change in mindset of those who, previously, felt justified in considering religions moribund," (Hent, 2006, pg. 2-3). Accordingly, Hent describes post-secular society as one that "reckons with the diminishing but enduring – and hence, perhaps, ever more resistant of recalcitrant – existence of the religious," (Hent, 2006, pg.3).

So how has this phenomenon been experienced in Québec? Various scholars describe the softening of contempt for religion to a new post-secular sensibility. Gauvreau and Hubert (2006, pg. 5) claim that Québécois historiography of religion has moved beyond demonization and is now “characterized by a post-revisionist current that seeks to escape the ideological paradigm of modernity and has to come to terms with the obvious importance of religion and the Catholic Church in the history of Québec.” Lefèbvre concurs noting that today’s young historians occupy the opposite side of a generation gap that to a degree determines a new approach to Québec religion. She points out that “[m]any young historians are able to explore their religious roots and reconstruct collective memory in a more serene fashion than did their counterparts who had themselves lived through the rupture with the church,” (Lefèbvre, 2000, pg. 290). Echoing the tenets of post-secularism, Lefèbvre acknowledges that Québécois now live in the paradox of an almost “post-Christian situation on the substratum of a persisting cultural Christianity,” (Lefèbvre, 2000, pg.301) but one where the majority remain culturally attached to Catholicism. Thus, a renewed openness to the semantics and semiotics of religion call for a refoundation of how religion is remembered in Québec.

Refoundation

“Self-consciousness emerges under the sign of that which has already happened, as the fulfillment of something always begun. We speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left,” (Nora, 1989, pg. 7). It is this phenomenon, relating to work on *Les lieux de mémoire*, which I argue inspires ‘re-memory,’ as not only a project for various communities, but also as a tool for analysis to understand how it works. Nora explains the distinction between *les milieux de mémoire* as real environments of memory and *lieux de mémoire* as being produced by a rupture with the past. Specifically, when this rupture affects sites “where a certain sense of historic

continuity exists,” (Nora, 1989, pg. 7) and where this rending imperils a site’s ability to embody an important aspect of the past. So, as was discussed above, if the numinous can operate at a temporal level to draw one closer to national sacred time and allow people to re-experience the past, the question arises: what happens if historical rupture renders those times and experiences profane, as with *la grande noirceur*? Suddenly they lose the power for national identification and thus, an identity surrenders important symbolic power. In order to explain how, I argue that certain sectors in Québec use re-memory in order to reconcile the rupture between its clerical past and the period of secularization following the Quiet Revolution, I will employ Trépanier’s model of *refondation*. What I call “reconciling the rupture,” Trépanier calls a desire to establish equilibrium:

un remodelage qui n’efface pas toute légitimité antérieure à son expression comme le ferait l’idée de révolution. L’idée de refondation provient des velléités de recommencement. Elle est en relation étroite avec les idées de péril, d’appartenance, d’excentration et de rénovation de l’héritage, (Trépanier, 2005, pg. 3)

Before discussing the specifics of Trépanier’s four-pole, axial model, it is appropriate to situate the argument within a discussion of the sacred, which is after all the way in which I will deploy her ideas. A.D. Smith makes a similar argument when he writes that due to both expediency and their own ethno-religious traditions, nationalists

– even when they tend towards revolutionary atheism – soon find that they must accommodate their message to the horizons and sentiments of those they wish to mobilise and liberate, and couch it in language and imagery which can rouse and kindle their ethnic kin. The need to enquire how and to what extent given examples mingle sacred and secular elements, and with what political effects, (A. D. Smith 2000, pg. 802).

Smith's sentiments recall the opening quotation of this thesis in which Rabaut Saint-Étienne calls upon the leaders of the French Revolution to draw on the catechisms, arts, and rituals of the priests to produce a less-traumatic transition towards a new society. I argue he was calling upon a primordial sense of Trépanier's model of refoundation, and had he succeeded in convincing more of his colleagues, it is worth wondering if much less blood would have been shed.

Trépanier's model consists of four poles of axial tension: *peril*, *excentration*, *appartenance* and *renovation de l'héritage*. *Péril* represents a tension between survival and assimilation, *excentration* from "some external centre and exceptionality grounded in an internal core," *appartenance* represents the tension between belonging and not-belonging, and *renovation de l'héritage* is the axis between conservation and renewal. (Neelin, 2012, pf. 198-200).

I will briefly focus on two of the axes, that of *peril* (survival-assimilation) and *appartenance* (belonging and not-belonging) before addressing how these relate to re-memory. As I note in my introduction, it is arguable that homogenizing capitalism, generational loss and increased ethnic diversity have instilled a sense of peril among Québécois and specifically among their national elite who might worry a loss of distinction will compromise the state's claim to sovereignty over the nation. I have been arguing that one strategy to address this peril is by invoking Quebec's religious heritage as an historical symbol and galvanizing experience. However, in order to employ this strategy, the marginalization of Québec society by its clerical elites, which has been popularly understood through the paradigm of *la grande noirceur*, must be rehabilitated. Marginalization of religious heritage must be transformed into a symbol of distinction in order for Québec to retain the meaningfulness of the Church in its secular national mythology.

In a similar manner, the tension present in *renovation de l'héritage* of belonging and not-belonging is important. While efforts to promote Roman Catholicism over other minority

religions may be an obvious system of exclusion, specifically for those whose religious affiliations are made public through dress or reasonable accommodations. I argue that those efforts also represent an attempt to invite non-practicing Catholics to transform ambivalence into nostalgia, without actually proselytizing.

Re-memory

Nixon cites Tolia-Kelly's description of the re-memory concept (2004) argues "the valency of social memory is inscribed within the materials of culture as signifiers of 'home', 'tradition', and history', together forming a collage of 'textures of identification'," (Nixon, 2012, pg. 151).

Those 'textures of identification' are where we find re-memories. Nixon, quoting Lane, proceeds to elaborate the concept at greater length, which I believe warrants quoting in full. Re-memory is,

[m]emory that is encountered in the everyday, but is not always a recall or reflection of actual experience. It is separate to memories that are stored in site-specific signs linked to experienced events. Re-memory can be the memories of others as told to you by parents, friends, and absorbed through day-to-day living that are about a sense of self beyond a linear narrative of events, encounters and biographical experiences. It is an inscription of time in place, which is touched, accessed or mediated through sensory stimuli. A scent, sound or sight can metonymically transport you to a place where you have never been, but which is recalled through the inscription left in the imagination, lodged there by others' narratives. (Lane, 2001, pg. 151).

Others' narratives then, have the power to define the way one experiences the sacred, both in the sense of space and time. So things like the popular Quiet Revolution narrative of rupture and that of *la grande noirceur* have the capacity to impact how Québécois view and value their religious heritage, especially the younger generations who, for the most part, must depend on re-memory for any knowledge of Québec's religious heritage.

Despite the dominical statistics which signal an anemic cultural Catholicism in Québec, especially among youth, the architects of the efforts to preserve and promote Québec's religious heritage can enjoy more nuanced studies that suggest Québécois youth continue to be interested in religion, albeit a more cosmopolitan expression than dogmatic one. François and Perrault note in a 2008 study of grades four and five as well as among secondary students that only 18 percent of respondents had no interest in religion whatsoever, however, monotheist religions were some of the least popular compared to Eastern religions such as Buddhism (François & Perrault, 2008, pg. 534). They credit this interest, especially among sub-cultures to the interpretation of youth

expérience en termes religieux (ou « spirituels »), notamment comme résurgences de pratiques « tribales » ou archaïques en se réappropriant le thème du « réenchantement » d'un monde moderne désenchanté par la rationalité, l'État bureaucratique, le capitalisme et les médias de masse. (François & Perrault, 2008, pg. 534).

In this, Québec youth, for whom clerical society is but a re-memory, are not as some describe 'orphans' of Catholicism. One of the arguments for the increasingly post-secular view of religion, described in the introduction, is that people are more open to a critique of rationalism and seek more transcendence. I point to the student movement that led the student strikes of 2011 across Québec. The strike united many groups that sought change whether it be educational, economic, political, environmental or all of the above and reflected a strong tradition of youth activism in Québec that traces its roots to the deeply clerical period in the 1930s. If Québécois youth have indeed inherited the religiosity of their forebears but without the constraints of organized religion, the strike, followed by a strong youth-involved deposal of the Bloc Québécois in favour of the more left-leaning New Democratic Party and strong environmental activism surrounding fracking indicate a positive re-memory of Catholic societies' ability to quickly mobilize over social issues.

Thus in many ways, drawing on Halbwachs, (cited in Geoghegan, 2007) there is an argument to be made about a utopian or at least an idealist openness to the possibilities of religion's repertoire and the consequent conceptions of the sacred among contemporary Québec youth. Much like refoundation and re-memory Halbwachs argues "the new structure was elaborated in the shadow of the old...It is upon the foundation of remembrances that contemporary institutions were constructed," (in Geoghegan, 2007, pg. 258). Movements are often driven by the urge to create utopias which are inhered with elements of the sacred and likewise are regularly conceived in the midst of turmoil and uncertainty. Geoghegan looks to Bloch to explain why this might happen. He suggests that:

The religious memory or heritage of humanity for Bloch contains the most explosive of material. Historically, religion has been the realm where the most unassimilable hopes and fantasies of humanity have been invested. Its radical, extravagant otherness has made it the final secure resort for aspirations crushed, compromised or only partially fulfilled in reality. (Geoghegan, 2007, pg. 260)

Thus the peril faced by Québec society over the loss of its North American distinction, that homogenizing capitalism and increasing ethnic diversity, might be addressed by looking to its past through museums like *Le Musée de l'Amérique francophone* as a point of reference for current efforts to define secularism. So, even though various spheres of Québec Society - activists, youth and the cultural elite - might conceptualize utopia differently, it is the numinous quality of a sacred past that I argue can lead to the recycling, or as Trépanier posits, the refoundation of national or religious mythologies to advance present political projects. Therefore it is by looking to the past that the perils of the present can be faced and critiqued, as Hervieu-Léger writes:

Utopia serves to create in a renewed way an alternative imagined continuity: a continuity reaching back further than the one that suits the social conventions of the present, a continuity which reaches more nearly the foundation that feeds the consciousness of the chain, a continuity with a past that is blessed and beneficent, and which stands in opposition to the misfortunes, the dangers and the uncertainties of the present. (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, 144–145).

In the Québec context, the blessed chain is the heritage of the Church, which for so long was the symbol of Québec society and in many ways continues to serve as the referent for its contemporary secular identity. Combining the numinous spatial and temporal elements of the former Séminaire de Québec, the state, through *Le Musée de l'Amérique francophone* powerfully marries the teaching of its religious heritage with a deep connection to a primordial and collective past, in a way that reconciles the narrative of rupture in a new post-secular environment. By opting to use religion to evoke the numinous in relation to the state, they achieve an aesthetic-affective capacity which Geoghegan argues is not replicated in other discourses and as such:

makes religion a particularly potent vehicle for exploring the furthest horizons of hope, and creates a space in which the incredibly rich contents of the past are able to help energise yet grander conceptions of the future. Religion pays the ultimate compliment to humanity, in that, as Bloch argues, 'it cannot think highly and mysteriously enough of man'. (Geoghegan, 2007, pg. 265)

That mystery, associated with nationalism is what I argue makes the combination so numinously potent and religious heritage such an effective scaffold for national representation. It is then not surprising that state museums would employ religious tropes, language and artefacts in its authoritative depiction of national identity. Discussion will now proceed to examining the functional and aesthetic similarities between churches and museums.

Museums: Secular Temples?

Just as museum visitors bring with them their own constructed texts that affect the ways in which they experience the museum, so too does their subjectivity affect the way they feel the numinous. Citing Lane (2001), Nixon argues that holiness in the museum is established in three ways: by the numen-seeking visitor, the presence of conflict and by human experiences (Nixon, 2012, pg. 148). While I later establish spatial conflict between the three chapel spaces and the tensions inherent in them, as well as human experiences through the participation in recycled rituals such as reconciliation and education, this section will focus on the first of the three ways in which the museum is and becomes numinous. It shall proceed to make this argument by examining how numinosity relates to objects and material culture and its relation to memory and time.

Maines and Glynn (1993) note that the term ‘numinous’ borrows a term from Roman paganism; “inhabited by a *numen* or spirit that calls forth in many of us a reaction of awe and reverence,” (Maines & Glynn, 1993, pg. 9). This can happen in many places ranging from a cathedral or chapel to a majestic grove of trees or an immense landscape. The point of my using the term is that it captures a human reaction that transcends both clericalism and secularism in that in either system, humans seem to demand places of reverence, even if that desire is expressed and experienced in different ways. Otto, describes its deeper source as non-rational and amoral, that which, in religious terms, is experienced as the ‘holy’ (The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 2006). This definition fits with the post-secular ethic of rehabilitating that which modernity dismissed as infantile irrationality - that which cannot be explained by scientific observation. Due to this change in values, the numinous has been embraced by scholars as a legitimate means to observe, analyse and explain human behaviour not so easily measured.

The numinous can be found in both space and objects, something the museum captures in a very striking balance. Museums and the objects exhibited within them tell stories. Maines and Glynn

argue that numinous objects “are the stuff of social and intellectual history – the interaction of emotions, ideas, and beliefs with material culture,” (Maines & Glynn, 1993, pg. 9). This is an excellent argument for the notion that museums, especially museums featuring religious heritage, make an ideal site for post-secular numinous experience – one that bridges the rational and affective-aesthetic appetite of a post-secular audience. Though Taylor argues (2000) that the age of magic has been eclipsed, the numinous museum would suggest that visitors can access at least a glimpse of that magic through a combination of rational analysis and numinous openness. By viewing, occupying, and hearing, the objects, spaces and voices of a magical past, visitors can feel closer to ancestors and community which reason has distanced them from. Through this process of temporal pilgrimage, these same ancestors can be made more familiar and understandable via the transcendent numinous experience.

Therefore, another aspect of the numinous is its relation to memory and time. This section will link the previous discussion of objects to the manner in which they affect memory and sense of time for the museum visitor. As discussed above, objects – and spaces *as* objects – have the ability to trigger intense emotional responses, so much so, that they can elicit memories and affect the passage of time, *or* the development of a story. Ricoeur writes:

Let us... characteriz[e] the narrated story as a temporal totality and the poetic act as the creation of a mediation between time as passage and time as a duration. If we may speak of the temporal identity of a story, it must be characterized as something that endures and remains across that which flows and that which passes away. (Ricoeur, 1991, pg.22)

If humans indeed do understand the world through enduring narrative, as Ricoeur suggests, then it is vital to understand how these stories are recycled across time and generations so that for instance, we may understand how Québécois can personally engage in a story that has its roots more than 400 years ago. This, as Ricoeur argues, is because stories are *recounted* and not lived,

therefore my interest in the numinous stems from how the living tell and are told their national mythologies and how these affect the way in which the living identify with their national community. Maines and Glynn capture this idea when they write:

The emotional force of association objects is their validation of memory and physical connection to the past. They concretize abstract memories, especially those of intense experiences not easily captured in words: danger, suffering, birth, marriage and the thrill of achievement, (Maines & Glynn, 1993, pg. 10)

Thus, objects are endowed with a socio-cultural magic that Nixon argues we “collect and preserve not for what they may reveal to us as material documents, or for any visible aesthetic quality, but for their association, real or imagined, with some person, place, or event,” (Nixon, 2012, pg. 157). As such, religion’s emotional repertoire and symbols can function as a viaduct for the numinous experience. Therefore, religion becomes less about understanding and more about experience and effects a transfer of awe, a transfer of magic, from organized religion to secular society. This transfer is what allows for the reconciliation of disavowal of and nostalgia for a clerical past which both oppressed, and more importantly from the distance of the present, distinguished Québec society. As a result, the collective memory mutates in a way that preserves the ability for Québec society to use the emotional repertoire of its religious heritage to resurrect a collective and distinct national identity for the 21st century.

In much the same way *Le Musée de l’Amérique francophone* blurs the distinction between the museum and the temple by transferring the awe once dedicated to the glory of God to the glorification of the national collective. Gregory Baum writes that “[i]f institutions create consciousness, if society creates the mind-set out of which people understand their lives and act, then the coordinates of the imagination are produced by society itself,” (Baum, 1975, pg. 247).

This argument is particularly salient to Québec society where one of the three pillars of its

national identity has been the preservation of its institutions, which have shifted from clerical, to bureau-technocratic control. Karp and Levine (1991), cited by Nixon argue that:

[t]he honoured place we give museums in society causes us to treat them as temples. Large museums in Canada such as the ROM, with its giant crystal, or the National Gallery in Ottawa, which resembles the parliament buildings, elicit similar feelings to visiting a large Cathedral or temple. In fact, a religious space can even be a part of a museum. The curator can also design the museum so a visitor must, or is strongly encourage to walk through a place of worship (Nixon, 2012, pg. 174)

In this way, therefore, museums become places of worship and thus allow sacred spaces to continue playing a definitional role for recycling and building a national identity in an explicitly secular state. On the other hand, some scholars have argued that this affinity between the museum and the church stretches further back than the period of avowed secularization. So as much as museums are increasingly viewed as sacred spaces, traditionally understood sacred spaces, like the seminary chapel, once performed a similar function of collection and display.

Dufour writes that

[e]ntre l'Église et le musée : ces deux institutions partagent une histoire commune. Faut-il rappeler que les églises ont rempli depuis très longtemps des fonctions semblable à celles des musées modernes, tour à tour témoignage d'architecture, site d'exposition d'objets précieux et même sacrés, galerie d'art religieux et centre de conservation. ((Dufour, 2005, pg. 24)

When we apply these ideas to the Québec context, the distinction between the museum and the chapel becomes even less clear given that many places of worship have in fact been repurposed into museums, including seminaries, convents, monasteries, chapels and even large churches. And while the distinction becomes more ambiguous, perhaps the purpose of harnessing the numinous qualities of religious architecture, language and ritual are illuminated by the necessity of some sacred element for community.

This is especially true for a community that has for so long existed in contrast to the dominant society surrounding it. For embattled societies like Québec, Ireland and Poland, the Church functioned as a lightning rod for national preservation, advocacy and cultural practice (Baum, 2000, pg. 150). Citing Lisenthal (2001) and Crane (2000), Nixon claims that part of what makes museums numinous is their quality to inspire remembrance for groups who have gone through difficult histories. Accordingly, Nixon argues that museums can “create a second opportunity for numinous experiences when they serve as memorials,” (Nixon, 2012, pr. 153). In many ways Le *Musée de l’Amérique francophone* serves as such a memorial. Not only does it remind visitors of the Church’s vital role in shoring up a French Canadian identity and language following the Conquest and subsequent British occupation, but it also stands as a memorial for the period of *le grande noirceur*, when so many of the seminary’s priests were accused of cultural repression. Therefore remembrance allows visitors to experience the numinous beyond the affect of objects and space. Rather, it has the capacity to allow visitors to feel a connection to multiple important historical periods.

Recognizing then, the capacity of the numinous as a social adhesive through space, time and among individuals, it is no surprise that cultural institutions now seek to more explicitly invest in its propagation than it had in previous decades. I draw on Warren and Meunier, who writing about the Personalist movement, which they contend prompted the Quiet Revolution, argue that the state alone cannot guarantee a freer society. In writing about the capacity for religion to effect social change they ask: “l’État animé par les meilleurs intentions, peut-il changer les âmes, agir sur les consciences au point de les transformer? D’autre part, la personne laissée à ses seules ressources privée d’une transcendance héritée qu’elle plus libre qu’avant?” (Warren & Meunier, 2002, pg. 24). While the authors refer to the Personalist movement as a social project that sought

to root social transformation within a transcendent mission, their argument can be applied to the present phenomenon of preserving, promoting, and drawing on the emotional repertoire of Québec's religious heritage to guide their community to a collective transcendence.

This section has argued that given Québécois' continued identification with their religious heritage, its rituals and objects, museums are well situated not only to create numinous spaces for national reflection and pilgrimage, but also to allow visitors and national subjects to experience memories from their collective past. Yet, in order for Québec's religious past to be translated as a source of distinction in its present, there needs to be a reconciliation of its ambivalent relationship to clericalism for nostalgia to occur, much like Otto's reconciliation of the concept of the enchanted in modern rationalist society. Podmore links reconciliation, or rehabilitation to the numinous when he writes:

Otto's rehabilitation of an antiquated religious heritage of the numinous, in riposte to the characteristic impiety of the age, serves to reacquaint the modern reader with the mystery from which they have become estranged... In other words, humanity must overcome its estrangement from estrangement... The individual must therefore become reacquainted with the *mysterium* of the numinous – surmounting the fear and rational mistrust of the unknowable other via a *fascination* for the Holy," (Podmore, 2011, pg. 74)

So, as we shall see in the third chapter, reconciliation of a difficult history, of both the narrative of *la grande noirceur* and of the cultural schism ushered in by the Quiet Revolution, is a necessary aspect of inspiring a sense of the numinous for a secular subject. This involves a certain affinity for Catholic identification among Québécois, a post-Secular openness to the transcendental and a consequent refoundation of memory using museum-temples as the venue.

Chapter 3: Cultural Policy on Religious Heritage

Holiness seems too often an individual adventure, this solitary voyage on a path bordered with thorns...on the contrary we see all humanity, like a river, marching towards the Kingdom. We are a small drop of water in this river. We are the limbs of the mystical Body, members of an immense people comprising sinners and saints, in solidarity with all these people...This spirituality...will highlight this communitarian aspect of Christianity. (Alex and Gérald Pelletier quoted in Gauvreau, 2012, pg. 814)

Emergent Identities

Québec's communitarian aspect has been trumpeted and maligned whether it be for its generous social programs from a positive perspective, or from a critical perspective, its alleged xenophobic nature that depends on an assumption of homogeneity. These views are difficult to reconcile – those of inherent equality and integral essence – however, they are well-explained by the competition for national definition among various groups in response to their context. Because Québec's national identity, like any other, is contested by various classes, interests and periods, an interesting way to analyze governments' rehabilitation and enthusiasm for the nation's religious heritage is to employ Williams' concept of emerging identities. He divides society into three broad groups based on their cultural influence: dominant, emerging and residual. For Williams, 'residual' means that some group's experiences, meanings and values are not captured in terms of dominant culture yet remain lived experiences for them. These groups, however, are sometimes incorporated into dominant culture, especially when "the residue is from some major area past [and] will in many cases have had to be incorporated if the effective dominant culture is to make sense in those areas," (Williams, 2005, pg. 415-416). Rural and conservative Québécois, who may identify more with religious heritage, can then arguably represent the contemporary residual past, who while distinct from the dominant groups, may identify with its heritage. By emergent, Williams means "new meanings and values, new

practices, new significances and experiences, are continually being created. But there is then a much earlier attempt to incorporate them, just because they are part – and yet not a defined part – of effective contemporary practice,” (Williams, 2005, pg. 416). Accordingly, I would suggest that the emergent group is neither the dominant heir of the Quiet Revolution, proponents of radical secularism, nor those who identify with a traditional national narrative. Instead, these are the historians, curators and artists, among others, who might subscribe to the post-secular view described in the previous chapter.

Quebec’s bitter debate over the Charter of Values is an apt manifestation of the admittedly generalized jostling between these spheres. However, in an interesting way this debate has created interesting convergences and divisions between different component parts of secular, traditional, socialist, neo-liberal and activist communities. One iteration of this shuffle has been the breakdown of the sovereigntist coalition that once bridged political divides – one example being the political collapse of the Bloc Québécois in the 2011 election. I argue that this political disintegration represents a challenge for nationalist forces, whom through both sides seek to use the adhesive of national culture to cobble together some social consensus on how to deal with the loss of distinction.

Augustine’s *Confessions*, discusses the future as a project at the intersection of the past and the present; “It is the gathering together of past into present to project a future. The past, which ‘objectively’ exists no more, is here in my present; it shapes this moment in which I turn to a future, which ‘objectively’ is not yet, but which is here *qua* project,” (quoted in Baum, 1975, pg. 56). Similarly, Québec’s social project is the present dreaming about its future, one that I argue is weighed upon by a rich array of symbols, language, heroes and myths derived from its religious past. Baum argues that these are important to consider because symbols are constitutive. He

writes that “men’s response to the world is ... determined by the symbols operative in their imagination. For not only do these symbols order the perception of the world, they also link this perception to the values and purposes that determine human action,” (Baum, 1975, pg. 242-3). Therefore, through processes of re-memory, state-led preservation, promotion and secular co-option of religious language and sacraments, Québec is able to influence a distinct response to the world and its challenges by drawing on their unique religious experience.

If we can agree that much of Québec’s identity is derived from a collectivist impulse, it can then be argued that the continued deployment of these pre-secular symbols creates a sense of stability for an identity that is grappling with rapid individualizing, ethnic and consumption-based social change, much of which is antithetical to Québec’s accepted ‘primordial’ identity. Thus, Baum argues that “religious symbols are inevitably a hidden political language,” (Baum, 1975, pg. 104). In Québec’s case, I believe the politics lie in a renewed sense of *survivance*, aimed at surviving no longer an external threat, but one that is derived from within. The reason, I argue, part of this strategy involves national museums like *Le Musée de l’Amérique francophone* is because of their potential in inculcating meaning which allows them to act both as “products and agents of social and political change...which a nation can use to represent reconstitute itself anew each generation,” (Shelton, 2006, pg. 480).

If an identification with the past is an aspect of the numinous, then it would make sense for nations to cultivate this in order to create an historically rooted and bordered community. One way of doing this is, as Handler argues (1988) the state must “claim and specify the nation’s possessions,” (Handler, 1988, pg. 154). As we have seen, Québec’s ‘contagiousness of heritage’ makes sense in the context of the lead up and aftermath of the 1995 Referendum, beginning with the early cultural policies of the 1960s and 1970s.

Evolution of Québec's Cultural Policy since the 1960s

Québec created its Ministry of Cultural Affairs in the early sixties following the election of Jean Lesage. In a brochure that announced the ministry's creation, the French and English versions were considerably different with the first emphasizing the need for cultural nationalism and the second employing titles like "Education and Culture" instead of "La Vie Nationale," (Handler 1988, pg. 102). There was concern for cultural development, but more one of *rattrapage* with other 'Normal Societies' (Handler, 1988, pg.102). By the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was concern among certain groups that Québec's rapid modernization had compromised and contaminated its primordial identity with that of the rest of capitalist North America.

The white paper of 1978 on culture refrained from identifying an essential Québécois identity preferring a more anthropological approach. In response, certain critics criticized the government because "a new distinctive culture ha[d] not arisen to take the place of the old. No institutions or practices can be identified as distinctive or peculiar to the francophone community. The new way of life has come from the outside; it has been borrowed," (Handler, 1988, pg. 129). Instead, one of the critics, Coleman, argued that "economic policies designed in the interests of the business and capitalist classes, have functioned to integrate Quebec into the mainstream economy of the North American continent rather than to maintain its distinctiveness outside it, (Handler, 1988, pg. 129). I suggest this early reaction relates to Québec's significant reliance on heritage to narrate its identity as well as prophesizes the rightward and ethnic nature of Québec's nationalism as evidenced by the discourse of the 2014 provincial election.

Between these periods, the early eighties and nineties, there were a number of events that affected Québec's cultural policies. Constitution negotiations, Meech Lake, the Charlottetown Accord and increased federal spending in Québec's art and culture spheres all led to aggravate

the relationship between Québec and Ottawa. Towards the end of this timeline, Québec reoriented its cultural policies using the 1992 Arpin Report as a guide. The report identified the objectives for the nation's cultural policy. The first was to "promote the assertion of Québec's cultural identity by encouraging French language and cultural heritage and by reinforcing dialogue between cultures. Another declared the state would expand access to cultural activities and encourage mass participation (Gattinger, 2010, pg. 286).

Thus, a series of governments, of both separatists and federalists, have determined that "L'État a un rôle fondamental à jouer dans la culture, dans la mesure même où il lui revient de créer les conditions essentielles d'accès à la vie culturelle," (Sicotte, 1999, pg. 71-72). As a central mission to the Québec state (Gattinger, 2010, pg. 287), cultural policy has played a foil for the nation's changeable identity politics, however it has consistently represented a key mechanism by which to respond to national threats from without and within in relation to national distinction. Pierre Nora, quoted in Bergeron, describes this impulse as one torn between "en même temps un pur souvenir, une construction de l'esprit, une utopie, une vision mythologique, un artefact historiographique. Un laboratoire et un conservatoire. Une survivance et un devenir. C'est étrange et c'est passionnant," (Bergeron, 2013, pg. 206). I will discuss in this chapter wider cultural policies of Québec's museums, particularly when they relate to religious heritage and specifically in how these intersect in le *Musée de l'Amérique francophone* and other national tourist attractions as well as speculate on what this intersection might mean for the negotiation of Québec's publicly-sanctioned identity.

Museums and Cultural Policy

Founder and former director of the Québec Museum of Civilization, Roland Arpin believed that museums were a core part of the national fabric. He attested that "les musées ne sont pas des

satrapies autonomes. Ils sont maintenant enraciné dans la Cité; ils peuvent être appelés à nourrir des débats, en susciter même à l'occasion. Il ne faut pas s'étonner qu'ils se retrouvent parfois au coeur des hostilités (politics),” (Arpin, 1999, pg. 8). As such, the museum is one of the key locations of the struggle for the power over national identity which will be discussed later in this chapter in the discussion of emergent identities. This is because the museum bestows authority on discourse, which makes critical museology such a critical task. As Giguère argues, curation, design and presentation of objects and narratives become

le discours et les dignes représentants de l'institution. D'après les mentions subjectives sur les objets, on peut pratiquement présumer d'un caractère esthétique et du pouvoir de l'image de l'objet technique, de science et d'érudition. Cette question de la visualité nous amène au coeur de la notion de culture visuelle qui touche transversalement tous les secteurs des collections du Séminaire de Québec (Giguère, 2013, pg. 184-5).

Of consequence also to the specific intersection between religious heritage and museums as curators of national identity, are the parallels noted in the previous chapter. Carole Duncan notes that museums were once (and I argue still) “comme espace de transcendance, un peu à l'image des églises et de leurs décors. La configuration de l'espace dans lequel les objets sont présenté sont composés selon une narrativité précise qui induit la croyance en la véracité du discours présenté,” (Giguère, 2013, pg. 109). Museums then reference the Church as powerful source of national identification and authority and as such merit a specific investigation of their functional symbolic function for the nation.

Religious Heritage

To begin, I will sketch a brief background of some of the ways in which the state is active in the religious heritage sphere. Between 1995 and 2013 *le conseil du patrimoine religieux* has received close to \$291 million in state funding to finance religious heritage restoration projects (Conseil

du patrimoine religieux du Québec, 2013, pg.9). This funding came in response to decades of the Church's inability to afford renovations to its extensive network of heritage properties due to markedly falling revenues as a result of a plummeting number of parishioners. Because of this trend, the state needed to address the widespread problem of religious heritage succumbing to privatization and destruction through a national policy regulating how this built heritage is treated. In 2006, the Committee on Culture of the National Assembly tabled a report on how the state would respond to the looming loss of its architectural and cultural heritage mostly relating to religious heritage. In an unprecedented move, it was unanimously adopted by its members undertaken through an order of initiative which sped up its implementation (Brodeur, 2006, pg. 14). I argue this reflects the non-partisan support this social project enjoys in Québec, where over the decades and despite government change, the preservation of religious heritage has commanded continued priority and thus suggests a political valorization of its religious past. The scale of this past is as daunting as the weight of its memory and significance. There are more than 4,000 religious buildings and institutional complexes with a religious or social vocation in Québec, along with 2,800 places of worship of which 1,200 or more than 40 percent have significant heritage value (Believing, 2006, pg. 15). As of 2006, almost 500 of these are protected under the Cultural Property Act, making up more than a third of all protected cultural property. This disproportionate figure reflects the preponderant role the Church and religion have played in Québec society and explain the priority with which the problem of infrastructural decay represents.

Once the cultural, intellectual and social centres of their villages and cities, the deterioration of these buildings may, for some, represent the unravelling of Québec's primordial social fabric in that even though for generations, Québécois have largely not formally practiced their religion, at

least the legacies of their identity stood as grand, if empty, monuments to their distinction. Now that an increasing number of these buildings are closing down, are up for sale or being demolished, I argue a certain level of cultural shock has prompted the dramatic state response and a renewed public curiosity into the historic role of the Church of defining not just the village or urban skyline, but also relating to one's understanding of their relationship to their national past, present and future. Part of this national heritage apparatus of course involves pedagogical institutions such as museums, historical sites and interpretation centres devoted to religious heritage, 49 of which now exist in Québec (Martin, 2004, pg. 50).

Fuelled by the peril of loss –heritage, identity, culture and distinction – I argue successive governments have reacted by claiming now, through the process of Handler's contagious heritage, their religious past as a source of a secular identity. In other words “*déculturation, crise du croire, [et] crise de la transmission forment les constats attendus et la religiosité de la jeunesse ne semble pas explicable autrement que par le paradigme de la perte,*” (Meunier, 2011, pg. 677).

I argue, it has become apparent that the loss of its religious heritage would be akin to Samson losing its hair. Essentially it would lose an essential source of power to mobilize the hearts and minds of its subjects to defend not only their unique linguistic dynamic, but also to effect a social project that stands at odds with its North American counterparts. The proceeding section will deal with government discourse relating to the importance of preserving at least some elements of its religious heritage as it moves forwards in creating a unique society. It shall focus on four subjects: that of cultivating ideals, continuity, collectivity and instilling value in Québec's religious heritage.

We will begin with the ways in which preserving religious heritage seeks to instill social ideals. Durkheim writes that “a society can neither create itself nor recreate itself without at the same time creating an ideal,” (quoted in Baum, 1975, pg. 87). This relates to Trépanier’s theory of refoundation which posits that renovating a heritage involves striking an equilibrium between social tensions in the pursuit of an ideal. Thus the ideal of the social project – maintaining difference – is necessary for Quebec to recreate itself and locate its equilibrium in a world that is difficult to achieve balance. Directeur de l’aménagement et de l’architecture, Commission de la capital nationale du Québec, Serge Filion argues that

Les prochaines années devront faire naître un organisme capable de relever les défis de la réanimation du patrimoine bâti et du sauvetage de l’héritage le plus éloquent que nos ancêtres nous ont laissé afin de poursuivre autrement les causes et les oeuvres qui ont justifié son développement au cours des quatre derniers siècles (Filion, 2004, pg. 5).

In other words, Québec must idealize its steeples, the lightening rods of a ‘golden age’

that act as points of reference within a wider national salvation drama, exemplifying the ‘true nature’ of the community and providing a repository of its authentic ‘virtues’ for use by future generations. In this way, golden ages can restore its identity to a community and create a feeling of collective (A.D. Smith, 2000, pg. 808).

By valorizing Québec’s golden age within a period of clericalism, cultural institutions are able to achieve several feats in its social project to reinforce a sense of national collective imperilled by global capitalism, as well as an increasingly diversified demographic that may have very little cultural experience of Québec. Filion argues that in order to preserve remnants of this golden age there must be a serious shift in the way that urban spaces are managed, something which speaks to the moratorium on the razing of historic religious sites. He says that “la restructuration du territoire métropolitain autour des grands axes de transport en commun d’une part et servent, autant que faire se peut, à la remise aux normes et à la mise en valeur du patrimoine bâti

remarquable en mal de vocation plutôt qu'à privilégier la construction neuve," (Fillion, 2004, pg. 7). Thus, part of the social project involves changing social values, something which museums are ideally situated to achieve via employing their state-sanctioned authority, numinous capacity along with their educational qualities. But why preserve the old at the expense of the new? Nationalism theorists such as Anderson, often argue that an important aspect of national legitimacy stems from a sense of long historic continuity, something which requires some kind of physical manifestation for the 'Doubting Thomas' Western world. Accordingly, the next section shall indulge the important political problem of continuity in establishing a national claim through the argument of historicity.

In Europe, castles and their ruins are important national historic sites because they demonstrate ancient control of a territory. Aside from military and trading forts, in Québec artefactual evidence of its claim to the territory more often than not lie in religious as opposed to aristocratic heritage. Martin argues that "promoters of religious heritage say churches constitute the patrimonial wealth of the 'nation.' By equating churches with castles, they want to show Europeans that the New World is old," (Martin, 2004, pg. 54). 'New' and 'old' possess interesting connotations. 'New' on the one hand seems without depth, while on the other, 'old' seems to possess something that has endured, a truth that only time can validate. As such, Québec's religious buildings have stood the test of time and as a result tacitly seem to reveal some truth, or truths about the land they punctuate and the people who have for so long lived amongst them. The National Capital Commission justifies their preservation, at least in Québec City, by the fact that they are emblematic of the nation's landscape, (Boulanger, 2004, pg.1) and in today's market language, brands that distinguish neighbourhoods (Boulanger, 2004, pg.2). Boulanger argues that Québec's churches represent national monuments to a culture in that "ce

sont nos châteaux de la Loire.” (Boulanger, 2004, pg.3). A politician, MNA Bernard Brodeur, echoed these allusions to national legitimacy when he spoke to the Committee on Culture saying

nous avons la possibilité de financer cette conservation du témoin de l'histoire du Québec qu'est notre patrimoine religieux. Parce que, Mme la Présidente, je l'ai dit à plusieurs reprises, si vous allez en Europe, par exemple, vous avez des châteaux, des immeubles qui rappellent l'histoire, l'histoire ancienne de ces pays. Ce que l'on a ici, au Québec, pour rappeler notre histoire, Mme la Présidente, se rappeler nos racines, se rappeler d'où l'on vient, ce sont nos monuments religieux, nos églises (Brodeur, 2006, pg. 16).

So despite and as a result of social changes that have rendered the spires and steeples of Québec churches less magnetic – in terms of drawing people to engage with them ritually – governments and heritage professionals deem them worthy of preservation. There are attempts underway to recast these centres as touristic, historic and community attractions. For instance, a recent state effort has been to illuminate iconic urban steeples as kind of *croix de chemin* to reinvigorate the popular religion impulse of Québécois religiosity. These too are relics. Much like castles, they define landscapes and can assume subjective meanings that tie individuals into systems of signification that bind geographic consciousness to historic and collective worldviews. This function is valuable for the social project of recycling religious heritage in that steeples and crosses continue to possess a cultural meaning, having witnessed decades, if not centuries of the nation's development and are an important reminder of past achievements.

Along with continuity comes the collective borne through time. Like the *croix de Chemins*, sanctifying local symbols of place implicates an identification with a landscape. The identity to which I refer is a collective identity, which I contend the state is seeking to nurture through its policy of religious heritage rehabilitation – both physical and cultural. What I argue, along with others, is that this rehabilitation is becoming an important strategy for the preservation of an

historical Québec identity. Advocates of this approach argue that, “[l]e patrimoine... ne contrevient pas à la logique économique, ni n’impose aux finances publiques un poids mort, puisqu’il répond dynamiquement à un besoin bien réel : celui des collectivités de s’approprier leur environnement,” (Noppen, 2005, pg. 388). In this sense the expense and effort to preserve Québec’s religious heritage is worthwhile because it serves a real purpose in galvanizing support for Québec’s social project to address the peril of cultural loss, or at least as Filion describes it, “the trivialization of our landscapes,” (Filion, 2004, pg. 5-6). As the full implications of the sortie “religieuse de la religion” are becoming clear and religious orders and the clergy lack the capacity to steward this heritage, many people in the community express an urgency for

[u]ne nouvelle façon de faire est indispensable afin de contrer la banalisation certaine de nos paysages par la destruction d’églises, coeurs d’agglomérations, dont les clochers ponctuent nos paysages comme les étendards d’une cause dont la défense devra se poursuivre et s’accélérer étant donné le vieillissement des personnes qui gèrent actuellement ces propriétés. (Filion, 2004, pg. 5-6)

Thus, it falls to the collective that once rallied together to erect these temples to preserve them for future Québécois.

But, to mobilize Québécois to invest their tax dollars and embrace their religious heritage in new ways, cultural institutions need to convince them it is a heritage worth preserving. The last theme of government discourse addresses religious heritage’s role in the national identity and how to cultivate its value amongst contemporary Québécois. As previously discussed, actual memory of Québec’s clerical past is becoming increasingly rare among Québec’s citizens. Charles Taylor writes that “for many people, the Christian religion is a black box; they have absolutely no comprehension of what takes place inside,” (Charles Taylor, 2004, pg. 1).

What does that mean for a state seeking to preserve religion’s cultural and architectural imprint? While I recognize that forgetting represents loss of a living and breathing tradition, I argue that it

also represents an opportunity for Québec's social project to define for itself the borders and meanings of its religious traditions so that they support and reinforce the secular and collectivist aims of the state. In his testimony to the Committee on Culture, Filion argues that the present urgency of saving Québec's cultural inheritance means "désormais apprendre à faire les choses autrement et mobiliser l'ensemble de la société civile autour de ce noble enjeu," (Filion, 2004, pg. 3). Speaking of convents and monasteries, Tanya Martin notes that Québécois are beginning to identify with and reconfigure their religious heritage in much the same way I described the cultural strategy, by disassociating them from the dominance of the clerical past while simultaneously rejecting the tyranny of the market to determine their nation's cultural inheritance (Martin, 2004, pg. 57).

Advocates for state-driven heritage preservation argue that the free market does not serve Québec's unique identity and thus appreciate some of the non-rational aspects of their religious heritage as a means by which Québec can maintain its difference in the face of an advanced capitalism that has erased much of the difference between Québec and the rest of North America. Much like the controversial Bill 101, advocates of religious heritage preservation argue that

N'eut été le fait que ces bâtiments et ces domaines constituent nos châteaux et caractérisent les paysages de nos villes et villages, tout comme le système de rang issu du régime seigneurial dans nos campagnes, nous pourrions laisser agir les forces du marché libre qui les transformeraient radicalement au gré du jeu de l'offre et de la demande. (Filion, 2004, pg. 6).

So, just as the state gained considerable support from Québécois for its language laws that are based on the argument that market logic threatens the French language, the preservation of religious heritage appeals to the same critique. Without state intervention, churches, monasteries, convents and parklands would surely be demolished, transformed into condominiums or other

commercial enterprises which would fail to preserve the symbolic, cultural and architectural integrity of the Québec's religious infrastructure.

In addition to direct government intervention through legislation, such as that which placed a moratorium on the destruction of historic places of worship, the province also funds the *conseil du patrimoine religieux de Québec*, which aptly articulates the way in which cultural institutions seek to use its religious heritage. One of the emphases of this organization is to promote Québécois to use the sites they preserve, in order to galvanize support for their work and for the expense of tax dollars. One way they do this is through tourism, or -- as they call it -- pilgrimages: a system within which *Le Musée de l'Amérique francophone* is deeply embedded.

Exclusive Identity?

What is interesting about studying the struggle to define the national identity through Williams' paradigm of emerging identities is "Pour un peuple, [le passé] reste dépendant des passions, des stéréotypes, des intérêts en lutte pour le contrôle de l'ordre symbolique, » (Lemieux, 2012, pg. 17). This battle is currently playing out in the panic surrounding and stemming from the crisis over reasonable accommodation and more recently, The Charter of Values, raised the spectre of a rightward swing in Québec's identity politics in the second half of this century's first decade. We discussed above bureaucratic and theoretical defences for renovating Québec's religious heritage: the need for historic continuity, nurturing collectivity, and the ability to defend and enact Québec's unique social project. Religious heritage is thus

enshrined as a collective 'good' and a value, sacralised through the notion of cultural patrimony. In an effort to inform and educate a public who no longer practices, the state has also put forth awareness campaigns, posting large

banners on religious sites whose preservation is funded by the state with the slogan ‘Our cultural patrimony, it’s sacred!’ (Zubryzicki, 2013, pg. 227).

However, like any identity project in a diverse society, one must question who this historically-rooted identity excludes? Whose culture is ‘ours’? (Zubryzicki, 2013, pg. 227). Sometimes problems can arise from looking to the past as a means by which to project the future for a very simple reason: many minority groups now living in Québec who do not practice Christianity much less Catholicism, are laid by the wayside while the historical identity reaffirms the “predominance of the majority group while confirming that religion indeed ‘belongs to the past.’” (Zubryzicki, 2013, pg. 227). And while situating religion comfortably in the past benefits Québec’s secular forces who wish to benefit from cultural Catholicism, yet from the comfortable distance of its location in the past, the same cannot be said for minority groups many of whom continue to practice their religion.

Compounding the issue, has been the recent waves of immigration derived from non-European countries, prompted in part by a rapidly declining birth rate among Francophone Québécois. Zubryzicki argues that because many of them are significantly more religious than domestic Québécois, society was once again forced to “reflect on secularism and their rapport to Catholicism, which many thought they had left behind for good,” (Zubryzicki, 2013, pg. 223).

Thus, she writes, the debate over religion is no longer internal and relating exclusively to a single religious heritage, but rather a multitude with the added conflict of racial and cultural tensions. This leads to a situation where the crucifix which hangs on above the Speaker’s chair of the National Assembly is called into question as an overt religious symbol presiding over an avowedly secular legislature. Whereas many Québécois might view the cross as a nod to their past, increasingly, newcomers see it as outright hypocrisy, which brings the argument of

cognitive dissonance to bear on the rhetoric of secularism. So, a debate prompted in defence of Québec's particular brand of secularism, that of reasonable accommodation and the Charter of Values, has "quickly morphed into a debate about the very identity of Québec," (Zubryzicki, 2012, pg. 449).

Québec's social project is about cultivating cultural, linguistic and social solidarity, albeit, as some argue, at the expense of elements of its society that might not feel a historic identity includes their stories and histories in the national mythological fabric. I have argued that cultural institutions have made very specific decisions relating to this social project by advancing it through the site of the Québec Seminary, which bears powerful symbolic, institutional and hierarchical dynamics in Québécois' memory. The paradox of Québec's turn to religious heritage despite its secular discourse can be explained by the recent and seemingly final impotency of the clergy, opening the door for institutions to revive religion's evocative religious repertoire. A similar co-option took place in 1920s Ontario, when summer camps suddenly began employing the symbolic repertoire of Indigenous peoples. Wall writes that because First Nations "posing a decreasing threat to white society, negative images of Indians could now, more often, give way to positive ones," (Wall, 2005, pg. 3). As a result suddenly little white boys valorized First Nations culture and appropriated it to indigenize their claim to the land. Wall also argues the appropriation was a result of alienating industrialization which made the simplicity of pre-modern times seem more appealing. I contend that much the same dynamic is at work in the case of Quebec's religious heritage.

Because of this ambivalence for religion, which once benefited state power relative to that of the Church, can be renovated as a national allegory that poignantly captures folklore, national struggle, and trigger memories of liberation all at the same time. I contend that because of this

capacity, Québec's religious heritage represents a tool for cultural institutions, not only in defending and strengthening what some may describe as an imperilled national identity, but also to effect a social project at odds with its North American counterparts that emphasizes collectivity over individualization.

Chapter 4: Museum Analysis

A Québécois Grammar of Religion:

In Québec, religious symbols, narratives and spaces permeate the public sphere, making it hard – even for non-believers – to ignore the Catholic fact of their society. This can be problematic for a group for whom religious adherence is largely either memory or lore. The problem can be approached in two ways. The first, in the sense that an ignorance or ambivalence towards religion could lead to a weakened identification with Québec's (former?) cultural exceptionalism and thus North American distinction. The second is the omni-presence of religious heritage that serves as a reminder of a past which conflicts with present efforts to articulate a confident, secular and outward-looking contemporary Francophone community. What strategies might cultural institutions employ to reconcile this discursive and semiotic conflict? I will argue that through institutions like *le Musée de L'Amérique francophone*, *le conseil du patrimoine religieux*, *la Bouchard-Taylor Commission*, and *la Charte des Valeurs Québécoise* among others, a paradigm shift is underway that embraces a post-secular perspective of Québec's Catholic heritage². That is to say, one that allows for the state to preserve, possess and promote a culturally definitional relationship to its clerical past.

To communicate this new paradigm, one where clericalism and secularism can be reconciled, Québec's religious symbols, narratives and spaces need to be read through a new grammar – a

² Discussed in the Introduction and Literature Review: Essentially, what Habermas argues, is that rational thought is prepared to learn from religion, "but remains agnostic in the process," meaning that within a post-secular frame, rationalist presumption must refrain from deciding what aspects of religion are and are not rationale. Another way of framing post-secularism is advanced by Joas which clarifies the misconception that it refers to an increase in religiosity, but rather, following its decrease, captures a "change in mindset of those who, previously, felt justified in considering religions moribund," (Hent, 2006, pg. 2-3). Accordingly, Hent describes post-secular society as one that "reckons with the diminishing but enduring – and hence, perhaps, ever more resistant of recalcitrant – existence of the religious," (Hent, 2006, pg.3).

one where awe is transferred from the deity to its worshippers. Whereas in the previous modern/secular paradigm a skyline of steeples might be read as oppressive and a relic of an enchanted, irrational past. Alternatively, in a post-secular framework, the same landscape could be a sign of the exotic: temples become monuments, relics transform into material consumption, saints mutate into folk heroes, and missionary zeal is reinterpreted as linguistic expansion. Thus, a post-secular paradigm – one that values reason *and* the aesthetic-emotional spiritual response - is composed of several axial tensions: domination-distinction, moral-material, and preservation-promotion, along with, importantly, a continuous impulse towards messianism. The following textual analysis will identify these discursive tensions within the space of le *Musée de l'Amérique francophone* and interpret them through the syntagmes of nostalgia and disavowal, one that has already been argued seeks to reconcile Québec's rejection of clerical domination and its desire to preserve its cultural distinction, efforts made necessary by the perils of homogenizing global capitalism and increased ethnic diversification.

I will approach these as three non-mutually exclusive poles to describe spatial tensions within the three main exhibits which I conceive of as 'chapels.' These chapels, I argue, are each balanced using various equilibriums of the three poles: domination-distinction, moral-material, and preservation-promotion. I situate domination within the modern paradigm because it expresses a popular view of the Church by some of the Quiet Revolution Generation and by many of their children. The Post-Secular paradigm allows for that domination to be renovated to a sense of distinction by placing an agnostic value in some what might have been written off as irrational and infantile by their parents and grandparents. For the moral-material axis, I use the word moral in the sense that it denotes a certain perspective of the Church as a litigious arbiter of morality that in the view of many Baby-Boomers would be out of touch and in come instances antithetical

to an emerging sense of morality determined outside of the catechism. On the other hand, I also conceive of morality as simply a form of value-based didacticism, something which the modern state is equally capable of. Material should be understood as part of the post-secular shift that wouldn't necessarily associate the material culture of the Church with the excesses of *la grande noirceur*, but rather access and appreciate the numinous through it. Lastly, I identify a tension between the impulses to either preserve or promote Québec's religious heritage. Preservation is situated in the modern paradigm because it belies a perspective that religion is a thing of the past which ought to be described, classified and recorded for posterity instead of possessing value for a rationalist society. Promotion of that heritage – as opposed to evangelization - on the other hand recognizes the potential value and living power of Québec's religious semiotics with regard to facing present challenges. Of course both the Modern Paradigm and the Post-Secular Paradigm are both influenced by a temporal sensibility. Not only in the linear time of their academic ascendancy, but also in the way space is conceived by the visitor. The various chapels, I suggest, each possess a certain blend of the diachronic and synchronic, or High and Ordinary Time. It is difficult, if not impossible to isolate each social value, phenomenon or aesthetic to a single location within this matrix. However, I believe it offers a useful tool in sorting out the complex interplay of meanings latent in a museum space which I perceive is seeking to bridge a discourse and popular sense of historic rupture in relation to Québec's religious heritage. In addition, I argue a continuous current of messianism runs through the museum and the project of religious heritage rehabilitation more generally

Method

A general sketch of my method then is one of an interpretive-descriptive approach using an observational-participant perspective that borrows heavily from Dvora Yanow's work on

analyzing museums as organizational spaces that tell specific stories (Yanow, 1998). From this point, following Yanow, I describe what I see (the setting, actors, their actions and interactions), what I feel and what I do. I then proceed to what Yanow calls the descriptive-interpretive method. She writes that “through attentiveness to one’s own body and cognitive, affective-aesthetic, and behavioural responses as a participant, who is also a trained observer, that the researcher attempts to access the knowledge of spatial meanings that is tacit to most other users” (Yanow, 1998, p. 223). Following these observations, Yanow argues that “provisional understandings” yielded from observing and participating in a museum space must be corroborated or refuted by document analysis (Yanow, 1998).

I will draw on the museum’s pedagogical role as framer of national identity to examine the relationship between the promotion of Québec’s religious heritage to inform current negotiations over the nature of its identity-driven secularity. By undertaking a symbolic-narrative spatial analysis through the frames of High and Ordinary time, manifested by the numinous and banal, I will reify this philosophical discussion in the bricks, mortar and objects of Québec’s oldest national institution, one endowed with authority and continuously sacralised either as the ecclesiastical seat of power or through its patrimonialization as the nation’s institutional and educational *berceau*.

Discussing the museum’s sacred, secular and increasingly post-secular social roles is vital to understanding wider knowledge power relations, because “[d]ebates and contests on this field are the means by which ideological positions are articulated, tested and authorised, boundaries between various positions are maintained and new positions and values begin to emerge,” (Knott & Franks, 2007, quoted in Nixon, 2012, pg. 169). Knott advocates approaching these power

relations through spatial analysis, arguing it can yield “the presence (survival?) of ‘religion’ in a ‘secular’ context; religious (and secular) power relations in a ‘secular’ context; the politics of religious identities and the contestation of spaces; the utilisation by religions of capital and their transmission with the flow of capital,” (Knott, 2005, pg.6) Thus, to grapple with the larger questions of Québec’s secular identity, it is useful to spatially analyze its oldest and most sacred museum, le *Musée de l’Amérique francophone*, a place not for the first time endowed with the authority to inform Québec’s social and cultural identity.

Le *Musée de l’Amérique francophone* is located within the still-operating Séminaire de Québec and occupies three main buildings, a former commercial building, the Seminary Chapel, and the former Seminary Art Gallery. Apart from the chapel, and an installation along the corridor that runs to the main museum building, there are three exhibitions, each occupying one floor of the former art gallery. In ascending order these are « *Révélations: La collection des beaux arts du séminaire* », « *La Colonie Retrouvée* », and « *À Partir* ». This chapter will describe the visitor’s journey through the museum space as experienced by the researcher focusing on the exhibition design, paying particular attention to the tensions between the building and exhibits’ temporal affect (High and Ordinary Time) as well as the representations of the sacred and the profane, as well as notably the theme of reconciliation which flows through the main three exhibits relating to religious heritage. Following a description of each installation/exhibition, will be several paragraphs expressing observations of the researcher-participant, beginning with analyzing each space as an authored text. Finally, I situate the space within a grammar, or matrix of religion that expresses the semiotic tensions and narratives I perceive as I make my way through the museum. I interpret the space as a reflection of a wider Québécois discourse of religion and secularism, specifically relating to its representational and symbolic role for Québec’s national identity.

The Chapel:

Image 1: The desacralized Seminary Chapel altar.

Description

The foyer of the museum is located in a former commercial building and is newly renovated with large black walls, and blue lights. Once admitted, the visitor walks through a glass door into the Seminary's chapel, built in 1898 following a fire that destroyed the original chapel constructed in 1750. The transition from the minimalist and geometric foyer to the Second Empire style chapel is at once jarring for the visitor. Baroque music and bass singing transports the visitor to a very different time than that which was just encountered outside the chapel. In addition to the music

and architecture, the dim light shed by two chandeliers, wall sconces along the sides, and sunlight filtered through numerous stain glass windows creates a numinous atmosphere of quiet, sombre and reverent contemplation. Along the walls and above the side chapel altars hang large displays of relics: saints' bones, ashes, locks of hair etc., which are ornately presented in frames of ribbon, gold thread and small gems. Also featured down the sides of the chapel are busts of the apostles, the four evangelists, and two notable paintings on either side of the chapel choir: *The Immaculate Conception* by Pasqualoni and *St. Monica introducing Augustine to St. Ambrose* by Porta. At the front of the chapel stands the main and imposing marble altar, flanked by reliquaries of saints' bones brought from Rome by Québec's first Bishop, Mgr. Laval, whose presence is felt throughout the chapel via his personal heraldic and religious symbols and most impressively, his memorial chapel where he was entombed until 1993.

Images 2 and 3 (from left to right): Examples of the chapel's extensive relic collection.

That was the year the chapel was desacralized and, two years later it, along with the rest of the museum, transferred to the Museum of Civilization. Secularizing the chapel had important aesthetic and affective impacts on the space, most noticeably by the introduction of sound and lighting equipment used for the chapel's new function as a rented space available for concerts, weddings and conferences. The gallery lofts are now filled with large lighting systems and on the altar sits a large speaker, from all of which extend a tangle of extension cords and wires. Below, the altar is bereft of the usual accoutrements of an active place of worship, including the priest's throne, altar server furniture, liturgical candles and crucifix. Moreover, in the rear of the church there is a coat rack and several large recycling bins which appear at odds with the formal setting suggested by the architecture, music and lighting.

Image 4: Musicians setting up for a concert in the chapel while visitors tour the space.

Grammar

With its juxtaposition of past and present, moral–material, and preservation-promotion, the chapel presents a fitting foyer for the thematic tensions presented throughout the museum.

Whereas the syntagmes in the other exhibitions are expressed more clearly, multiple paradigms operating within the chapel compete with one another in a higher register. Conflicting ideologies debated in wider public discourses of secularism, *patrimoine*, cultural identity and distinction are made manifest with the collision of the sacred and profane in the chapel space. This tension is apparent in the way the space preserves the nervous centre of a clerical past many would like to forget on the one hand, and yet on the other, represents the triumph of secular forces over the clergy, for those who might like to recall cultural exceptionalism in a nostalgic cultural light.

Domination-Distinction

The chapel most poignantly represents the tensions this thesis argues the Québec state seeks to reconcile through the curation of le *Musée de l'Amérique francophone*. Specifically, the chapel reflects the axis of nostalgia and disavowal. Panels explain the building's architecture, religious practice and significance. They also emphasize the chapel's exclusive and sacred nature with respect to the religious superstructure that once managed most aspects of civil society, state and social welfare in Québec, not to mention the spheres of identity, nationalism, mass world-view and cultural practice. For example, visitors learn about how each seminarian used the chapel's side altars to privately practice saying Mass every day, are taught about the buildings' relationship to the foundation of the Québec Church; and of course its architecture and collection of relics. For many visitors, especially for Millennials or Generation Y, much of this clerical heritage might seem foreign and exotic, and would likewise be incomprehensible. Church

dominance of society through a pervasive system of clericalism, manifested through the mystic rituals of the nation's most elite seminary, strike a sharp contrast with the contemporary regime of capital and reason as ascendant loci of social and economic power, more suited to banks and stock exchanges. For older visitors however, a chance to penetrate and explore the chapel may trigger difficult memories. Beyond the physical space and artefacts of the chapel, which harken back to a pre-Vatican II, ultramontane Catholicism, the Seminary chapel represents the centre of an institution that many argue retarded Québec's social, economic and cultural development in exchange for a political truce with their English conquerors. The chapel then is a site where the museum acknowledges that feelings of domination and distinction are closely bound up in the collective memory of Québécois people, as well as for other Francophone visitors. However, by profaning the chapel through repurposing it as a secular space for hire, the state sends a strong signal that it has won the power struggle with the church, especially by taking the seminary chapel which was once an avenue to train the conductors of the Holy Spirit, to a space which for the most part now only conducts electricity and music.

Moral-Material

What was once the most sacred of training grounds for the moral arbiters of Québec society was also the repository of some of the Church's most enchanted artefacts. Like the domination-distinction axis discussed above, the Seminary chapel offers competing meanings for its visitors. This tension is arguably most divided along the lines of whether or not visitors are practicing Catholics, but from a wider perspective the pull between the space's moral and material qualities, I argue, transcends belief and disbelief. Many 'secular' visitors may not invest any particular value in the Passion narrative depicted in the Stations of the Cross, or St. Paul the Evangelist presented in bust. However, these visitors might value the influence this moral heritage has had

in leading Québec to a collectivist culture and more egalitarian society compared with the rest of North America.

Despite the tacit moral values that secular visitors may infer, such as a connection to their ancestors and family, national identity and a social project, the museum clearly prioritizes the material aspect of the chapel over its moral function. A guide pamphlet available in the chapel describes its Second Empire Style architecture, the materials used in the art works and the history of the relic collection, as opposed to providing deep insights on the more foreign former liturgical and educational functions of the space. As noted above, information of this nature resides in two inconspicuous boxes filled with information panels, which perhaps serves as a testament to the museum's intention. Notably, the pamphlet is entitled "From Sacred to Secular". This suggests the chapel's interpretational thrust, and in fact is the way many non-religious visitors would read the space. Its moral character is a novel throw-back from the past, whereas the impulse for its preservation and inclusion in the museum is more likely intended as a monumental artefact to Québec artisans and ancestral piety.

The most striking metaphor for how visitors experience and interpret the chapel as an artefact are the reliquaries. Much like the chapel itself, these once extremely sacred and valued objects have lost their inherent power. Instead, these bits of bone, hair and cloth are nothing special in of themselves, except for the gems, ribbons, gilt frames and busts that adorn them. They have become materially significant in the sense that their adornments reflect how material and built cultures were once employed to the glory of God, but now disenchanted, are worthy only so much as their adornment would suggest. These relics, I argue reflect the moral-material balance of how the chapel might be read and understood by certain visitors: a monument to an exotic and now lost morality. One that may trigger a certain nostalgia for its collective and mystic nature,

but on the other hand can be seen to be folkloric and cloaked in a veil of infantile naïveté. From another perspective, the morality (in the dogmatic and didactic sense I describe above) of the chapel space might be the very reason that it has been stripped of most of its enchanting artefacts and profane, to represent the demise of ecclesiastical authority. With the loss of what some might call the chapel's authenticity is the fading of what Benjamin (1936) calls its 'aura'. He writes that social upheavals are followed by changes in the 'sense perception. His argument proceeds to claim that these changes in perception, in this case to the chapel space, speak volumes about modern society's remote relationship to aura. The chapel, it seems, capitalizes on the remoteness of its aura and by doing so might make religious skeptics more open to exploring their religious heritage in a new light. In many ways the chapel has been as Benjamin writes, stripped of its sheath, its aura shattered (Benjamin, 1936, III). I will add though that in an age of post-secularity, aura is increasingly becoming appreciated as many people seek some kind of 'authenticity', or in other words, an aura of difference.

The chapel becomes a safe space to be nostalgic for Québec's religious heritage by emphasizing the architectural and artefactual heritage, and re-inscribing these achievements onto a space to practice a new form of distinction: French language arts and culture. Thus materially, the chapel allows for reconciliation of the previous domination-distinction tension by signalling a material victory for secular forces, forces nevertheless, which are not willing to discard Québec society's religious imprint, but rather situate it firmly in the remote past. Therefore, this material-focused presentation allows for the reconciliation of the domination-distinction tension by weighting the balance towards a post-secular approach to Québec's religious heritage.

Preservation – Promotion

That post-secular balance is integral to our third and final axis, preservation- promotion which is expressed most succinctly by the banners hanging outside religious buildings the state has preserved and restored: “Notre patrimoine, c’est sacré”. By invoking the idea of the sacred within an avowedly secular public culture, the state’s cultural apparatus seemingly attempts to reconcile the rupture narrative of the Quiet Revolution by making the collective as opposed to the faith ‘sacred’. ‘*Notre patrimoine*,’ arguably represents a state-driven public relations strategy to divest the pervasive built and cultural heritage from its clerical roots and to reinvest it with a nationalist quality that not only justifies public expense of religious heritage preservation, but also renders that heritage acceptable and positive in a post-secular national narrative. This strategy manifests itself in two opposing but complementary ways. On the one hand, the state has spent more than \$291 million on preserving religious buildings, many of which, like the museum chapel, have been repurposed for secular uses, and others, like Notre Dame de Québec – across the street from the museum – earn state support in order to continue their evangelical function (Believing, pg. 3).

As has already been stated, the chapel is described in the museum’s literature as a space that has moved from the sacred to the secular, both as a site for material history and contemporary art. Messaging such as this contrasts, in a profound way, with that of the Notre Dame de Québec Basilica-Cathedral next door where in 2014 a banner hangs celebrating the Church’s 350th anniversary and its continued mission of national and spiritual evangelization. Whereas the chapel is interpreted primarily as a material vestige of Québec’s cultural and artistic past, across the street, the cathedral promotes religion as a living breathing fact of Québécois culture. Therefore this tension between preservation and promotion is manifest in less than one block in a

definitional Québec neighbourhood. The location is important because in contrast to the governmental capital complex, this sacred site references what Rapoport calls a ‘sacred precinct’ (Rapoport, 1993). Here “cosmic forces combine with political economic and military into a symbol of national identity,” (Rapoport, 1993, pg. 47). By this I mean, the seminary and its immediate surroundings create a definitional space for Québec’s francophone community. Both because it represents national origins predating the English Conquest (political) while also acknowledging its spiritually sacred nature (cosmic).

What is interesting is that the state has a stake in the success of both aspects. So, while a national institution such as the museum locates Québec’s religion in an exotic past that must be preserved for educational purposes, the Québec Church as a quasi-state-subsidized institution expounds its continued relevance as an informant to Québec identity. Thus, the continuity between preservation and promotion. Although cultural institutions casts its religious possessions as secular treasures that secular nature requires a referent which is located conveniently within the sacred national precinct.

Without visitors being able to walk to the cathedral across the street, and for many into their past, and experience a still-sanctioned sacred space, the difference of the secular might be meaningless and thus secularism as an idea might be incomprehensible. Accordingly, as much as some public officials distance the relationship between the state and religion³, many continue to affirm Catholicism and in particular the Québec Church, as having played, and continuing to play an integral role in national and spiritual stewardship.⁴ Thus, the tension between preservation and

³ Québec Solidaire pledged in their 2014 election campaign to remove religious symbols from the National Assembly

⁴ Both the Parti Québécois and the Parti Libéral du Québec both promised to keep the crucifix hanging in the National Assembly.

promotion of religion in Québec is as much an urge to pull away from one another as it is an expression of closeness. The taught line that inextricably links the material and spiritual Québec identity allows for distance in that there is an urge to divorce a legacy of ecclesiastical domination from Québec culture (pull), but that same urge allows for a tight rope upon which to traverse the gulf and embrace the distinctive and collective qualities that secularism does not reject, but rather requires in its mission to justify an unique and vibrant Francophone culture in North America.

Temporal tension: As noted above, there is an immediate contrast between the museum's modern lobby and the Second Empire architecture of the chapel. That contrast, however, is fleeting. A brochure advertising rental opportunities available online describes the chapel interestingly enough as "a place and a time...to forget the present." It proceeds using the words, 'magical', 'elegant', 'sumptuous', and 'prestige' to advertise the space.

Image 5: A section of a brochure advertising the chapel for rentals.

There is a seeming temporal dissonance at play here. While the 'magic' of the space is profaned into Ordinary time through commodification, it is still billed as a place and time to forget the present. The question then is, what ought people to remember? I argue the chapel does draw

one's thoughts to a previous time, but ultimately it is a synchronic experience of time that highlights the demise of the Church for its own sake. Moreover, there are often events being set up while visitors pass through the space which makes it difficult to forget the present.

Messianism:

Religion and identity have, since the Conquest in 1774 and even more so following the failure of the 1837-38 Rebellions, been intimately intertwined for French Canada and since the Quiet Revolution, Québec. What I suggest, is that the literal Messianism, or divine mission, of propagating a French Catholic civilization in Québec has mutated from its explicit religious nature to a more latent language-based missionary zeal. However, because language and religion have been so enmeshed, it makes more sense to speak of this cultural evangelization as a continuity between modernity and post-secularism as opposed to employing the rhetoric of rupture. The chapel space promotes an understanding of Québec where religion has been relegated to the past but has left a legacy to the present and future that should not be wasted. That legacy, as presented in the interpretation of Québec as a primordially artistic and dynamic society is inscribed in the material focus of the exhibition and the space's present use as a concert hall.

By linking the past artistry of the chapel's construction and decoration to the current thrust of the Québec arts, Quebec culture achieves a sort of missionary continuity by using the space as a cradle where expression and distinction are nurtured by a collective will to establish and preserve a Francophone civilization in North America. Furthermore, the relationship between the chapel and the cathedral – the Church manifest – next door, are made clear through a pamphlet, guide and plaques. It is a relationship which unveils for the visitor how the Church once and in many

ways still does function. Because it is likely that many visitors will also visit the cathedral, in addition to the chapel, they might relate the church and state's mutual and longstanding goals of not only managing a society unlike any other, but of promoting it and protecting it as an inheritance to which all French –speaking North Americans are called to not only embrace, but also to help make flourish in what has traditionally been seen as a vulnerable space.

Qui parle français?

Image 6: A video introduction to “Qui parle français?”

Description:

A similar tension between secularism's seeming opposition to religion, and its requirement of religion as a definitional referent manifests itself in the section of the museum immediately following the chapel. Visitors pass by the sacristy and walk to an elevator which takes them down one storey to a long, wide, concrete corridor that leads to the more secular space of the original seminary art gallery. When the elevator door opens, the visitor emerges into a dark space

illuminated by blue lighting. Dominating the passageway is a video and sound installation which is projected on the length of the wall entitled “Qui parle Français?” A secondary element of the exhibit is a group of three confessional-like booths where visitors are encouraged to describe in video, sound, or writing, their personal relationship to the French language. These sleek white geometric 'confessionals' stand in stark contrast to the ornate carved confessionals in the chapel which are now used for storing sound and light equipment. Apart from aesthetics, these confessionals differ from a functional perspective as living spaces for reflection on the Francophone identity, one mediated not by the clergy but facilitated by the multi-media technology available in the booths.

Images 7 and 8 (left to right): The exterior and interior of the confessional modules.

“Qui parle français?” is comprised of a diverse series of monologues relating to individuals' and families' relationship to the French language and Francophone culture. While the monologues play -sometimes simultaneously – in multi-framed shots, images of iconic Québec landscapes soar across the screen. A voice-over accompanies these repeating the installation's main themes: *une langue pleine d’amour et pleine d’espoir; notre langue commune à travers toute l’Amérique: le Québec constitue le coeur de l’Amérique française.* These seem intended to emphasize

Québec's central role in the creation of a diverse and widespread French civilization in North America, and also perhaps to encourage visitors to feel implicated in the museum's broader mission to present North American Francophone culture as confident, vibrant and most importantly, valuable enough to undertake as an ongoing political project.

When you leave to go outside to cross to the second building, it feels similar to coming out of a dark and solemn church after Mass into the busy and bright outer world. But before emerging from the modern, yet numinous, space of the corridor, I shall outline a brief grammar of “Qui parle Français?”

Grammar:

The dramatic aesthetic and temporal mutation from the chapel to the corridor where “Qui parle Français” is exhibited manifests an aesthetic rupture between the pre and post Quiet Revolution periods. Visitors pass from a space defined by ornate, ecclesiastic decoration, to a stark and barren space reminiscent of the brutalist architecture that would come to define the expanding state infrastructure during the period following the Quiet Revolution. At the same time it evokes the same somewhat terrifying sublime aesthetic employed in the enormous empty spaces of cathedrals. I argue this has the effect of eliciting introspection “because it heralds the possibility...of infinite ‘not-yet-been’ manifestations,” (Fawver, pg.156).

This space collectively casts collectivity and identity in a new light, one that is literally blue as opposed to the golden hues of the chapel upstairs. Indeed, the corridor is a chapel of a different colour, one that unlike the secularized seminary chapel above, continues to embody the sacred nature so long imbued in the Québécois national identity.

Domination-Distinction

As just noted above, the main contrast between the chapel and the corridor where “Qui parle Français?” is exhibited is a shift in what is considered sacred. I have already argued that le *Musée de l’Amérique francophone* involves not only a shifting perspective on the sacred dimension of nationalism, but also a reconciliation of the Quiet Revolution’s narrative of religious rupture in order to rehabilitate the nation’s religious heritage to function as a referent for present efforts to define secularism. A major aspect of these efforts is transforming the disavowal of domination into one of nostalgia and consequently national distinction. “Qui parle Français?” attempts this by consciously employing not only the contemplative reverence of a religious building or its suggestion of infinite future possibilities, but also through the inclusion of the iconic and cultural practice of confession.

Re-appropriating the sacrament of reconciliation by including three individual booths where visitors can discuss their relationship to the French language and identity acknowledges the ritual’s deep and complicated relationship to French Canadian identity. The installation is weighted towards a post-secular distinction that I argue seeks to reconcile the important role the sacraments played in French Canadian society by opening up the practice from one of individual submission to the intermediary role of the clergy. This relates to Foucault’s *Technologies of the Self* in the sense that it creates a secular space for the ritual of confession as a means by which to construct one’s identity. He argues, referencing Rousseau, that “the modern secular confessional ... involves not merely the recital of sins but the enumeration of each and every experience that has made one what and who one is. In the process of examining the division of the self and the world,” (Foucault, quoted in Martin, 1988, pg. 107). In this way reconciliation is not just about submission. Instead, it becomes an act of both self-reflection and also about making sense of

one's place in the world. He continues writing that "[t]he division of the self and the world is much like contemplating one's relationship to community, thus one ponders on their transgressions and contributions to society, like a pilgrimage it is an act of individuality, but also of submitting oneself to community," (Foucault in Martin, 1988, pg. 107). So here francophones, and specifically Québécois are asked to think about their relationship to their distinct society in a manner that mutates the domination of the clergy into the distinction of belonging.

Moral-Material

Unlike the chapel which is filled with sacred relics, art work and symbolism, "Qui parle Français?" creates a very empty space in terms of artefacts. Instead, the corridor exhibit is dominated by a video installation projected onto a large wall. It identifies a moral argument for past work to preserve the French language in North America and encourages continued efforts to personally identify with the project by emphasizing the collective identity's effect on personal narratives. The video's major themes: a language filled with love and hope, our common language across America, and Québec constitutes the heart of French America, reinforce the notion that a Francophone North America is made manifest not through tangible objects, but rather as ideas, ideas of love, hope, collectivity and one rooted in Québec's role as the cradle of a less materialistic form of identification.

Preservation – Promotion

Despite the fact that Québec has placed an increased priority on preserving its traditional religious buildings, I suggest that "Qui parle Français?" represents an effort to promote the relationship between the emotional repertoire of religion and the Québec identity. The video

installation features voices, sometimes spoken simultaneously and other times featuring individual speakers. In concert with the individual experience of confession in the booths, viewing the film bears comparison to the experience of Mass where the congregation is asked to respond in unison or to collectively mutter prayers before mass and following communion. Somewhat like a vocal fugue, the narration emphasizes diversity, while at the same time, insists on a set of collective qualities and values of the French language, culture and (pan)-national identity. This exhibit reiterates the Catholic themes of love, hope and collectivity as likewise markers of a secular Francophone identity in North America. All three of these sentiments are expressed in the *Automatistes*' *'Refus Global'* which was the clarion cry for Quiet Revolution. The manifesto urges Québécois to "make way for love!" and promises "a new collective hope will dawn!" (Borduas, 1948). Instead of preserving that hierarchical dynamic of reconciliation, this exhibit crowd-sources the promotion of the Christian themes cited above. Founder and long-time director of the Museum of Civilization, of which le Musée de l'Amérique is part, Roland Arpin acknowledged while leading the museum that cultural institutions should "redécouverte de la fête, de la joie collective, de la fierté d'appartenance, de la signification profonde des grandes liturgies esthétiques et culturelles," (Sicotte, 1993, pg. 71).

Temporal Tension: Initially, it might seem that the shift from Second Empire religious architecture in the chapel to the brutalism of the corridor would suggest a straight-forward linear progression in time along the lines of chronology. That may even be true on some levels because the difference is at once noticeable from an aesthetic perspective. However, "Qui parle Français?" employs elements of Higher Times. Its barren quality could be any time and any place, in much the same fashion that the French Canadian nation once existed in people's hearts as opposed to any territorial demarcation. Indeed, the quasi-Mass like experience of confession

and the subsequent Homily extend this metaphor because French Canada was anywhere a group of francophones set up parishes and dioceses. Because of this, I argue that “Qui parle Français succeeds in effecting a time warp, to no period in particular, but simply outside of profane time.

Messianism:

While I spend considerable time describing the differences between the seminary chapel and the corridor where “Qui parle Français?” is located, it is important to underscore the continuities I alluded to by describing the exhibit as “a chapel of a different colour.” I have already mentioned several continuities, such as the desire to promote certain ecclesiastic morals such as love, hope and collectivity, as well as Québec as a site of national pilgrimage, and steward of French Catholic minority communities abroad. However, the most striking way in which the exhibit instills a messianic missionary role for the French language, its speakers and their culture(s) is in the contrasting senses of the numinous each space suggests.

On the one hand the seminary chapel creates a sense of material glorification that empowers those who possess it. The clergy wielded its symbolic power to promote a story of divine intervention, believed to be directly responsible for the distinction, preservation and promotion of the French Canadian identity. A space where an elite group of men were responsible for the mediation between God and their Francophone parishioners. Their political power stemmed from economic dominance as evidenced by the opulent treasure on display in the chapel. On the other hand, the asceticism of the downstairs corridor, with its nationalist blue-hued light and state-driven, secular approach to national definition suggests a shift in the sacred. Numinosity in this space comes from absence, and the voices of the people, an approach made more powerful by the ability of any visitor to contribute to the conversation via the confessional booths. In fact, the

digital nature of the confession further underlines the theme of collective *and* personal religion as important threads in the national fabric. I argue this is because the experience of reflecting and recording one's own confession is personal while its collation as part of the overall exhibit reinforces the collective aspect of the personal ritual. A factor which I suggest prepares visitors to understand Québec's clerical past as simply one iteration of Québec and French North American civilization's mission to propagate a different and diverse way of living in the 'New World'. A mission cultural institutions seem to have whole-heartedly taken up over the 12 years by subtly appropriating and recasting many of the pre-existing messages for a secular audience.

Révélations: l'art pour comprendre le monde

Image 9: An example of the confessional grill motif that runs throughout the exhibition.

Description:

“*Révélation*” is an exhibition mounted to celebrate the Seminary’s 350th anniversary and is comprised of 100 selections from the Seminary priests’ extensive art collection which includes paintings, sculptures, furniture, gold and silverware. Artefacts are grouped into three broad categories beginning with works intended for devotion (*Voir et Croire*) such as “The Holy Family at Rest During the flight to Egypt;” education (*Voir et Savoir – Oeuvres Européennes*), made up of more than 900 paintings by European masters which would prove instructive for young Canadian artists; and finally the last section devoted to artists indigenous to Québec who benefited not just from the clergy’s instruction but also its patronage (*Voir et Savoir – Oeuvres Canadiennes*).

When visitors first enter the dimly lit, black-walled exhibition room they first pass into the devotional section where they see an ornate gold-leaf tabernacle, bottom-lit and glowing in severe contrast to the dark environment. The altar functions somewhat like a beacon drawing visitors down a short corridor which is lined with gold-leaf busts, sacred paintings, statues, liturgical objects and the corridor walls are lit through large confessional grill motifs. Small ‘side chapels’ or niches are interspersed throughout the exhibit, the first of which is entitled “*Trésor*”. It features liturgical gold and silverware such as censers, chalices and monstrances among other items. Next to the niche is featured a large silk brocade priest’s cape, once believed to have belonged to Mgr. Laval, again set against the illuminated confessional grill which completes the exclusively devotional section of the exhibit.

Image 10: An example of the four niches present throughout the exhibition.

“*Voir et Savoir*” begins around the next corner with a gallery densely populated with the works of European painters that were used for educational purposes for seminarians during the 19th century. Consciously dense, the gallery is reminiscent of the original gallery in which the museum is housed.

The priests’ art collection burgeoned during its revival almost a century after the Conquest. Religious Renaissance themes such as “Gluttony” and “The Slaying of Goliath” are mingled with studies of a bouquet of flowers and grape vines, demonstrating the fact the priests were not simply interested in religious pieces but rather, more broadly in the craft of art itself. Another niche abutting the gallery further emphasizes, and explains, the priests focus on artistry. Entitled “*Virtuosité*,” this alcove features “The Holy Face” which is an engraving of Jesus Christ made from a single concentric line.

Around the corner is a median space, a *passerelle* between the European and Canadien portions of “*Voir et Savoir*.” This exhibit offers a tribute to the 19th and early 20th century seminary priests’ pedagogy in the form of numerous photographs which illustrate how their students were trained and lived to become the nation’s *savants*. There, photographs depict spaces such as: the chapel, a classroom, the priests’ study, the recreation room, the refectory, parlour and the *Musée de peinture*. On the other side of this gallery is the third niche called “Secret” where more secular art is exhibited which depicts a young maiden, entitled “*Portrait d’une dame*.” Following this

section is where the Canadian “*Voir et Savoir*” begins; featuring artists who learned from exposure to European movements and styles.

Image 11: The European works gallery which functions as a mise en abyme of the presentation style once employed in the Seminary Gallery.

Here there are sculptures, carvings and paintings which continue to reflect the religious themes aforementioned but also take on indigenous French Canadian landscapes and historical events. While religious themes continue to be present, they are subsumed with an obvious feeling of local flavour. For instance, the first two paintings are of the Chutes Momerency and the river Saint Anne. The second is of the landslide at Cap Diamant onto Lowertown. There are also numerous portraits including those of “*Deux Acadiens*,” Édouard Côté, and James Craig. Even the religious themes in this exhibit are less devotional than identitary. Whenever religious scenes are depicted, they reflect a local character as opposed to a religious instructional nature. For

example, the most explicitly religious artefact is the sculpture “Christ the King,” and yet it reflects indigenous culture because it is made out of local wood and traditional carving practices. The rest of the religiously themed art in this section depicts local institutions such as the inner courtyard of the seminary, *Notre Dame des Victoires* or other churches set among a pastoral landscape. Whenever religious iconography is employed in this section of the exhibit it is rooted in national lore or landscape. Otherwise, the art included in this section reflects an increasingly secular turn in the art produced in Québec, albeit, and notably patronized by the Church.

Grammar:

When Lord Durham criticized French Canadians as a “people possessing no literature and no history,” Francois-Xavier Garneau responded by writing a history of the French Canadian people. In 1875, the seminary priests likewise became involved in showcasing the culture that Durham had obviously ignored. The building, which now houses the main section of the *Musée de l’Amérique francophone* was built to store and display the seminary priests’ growing collection of paintings, originally collected for devotional purposes but later used for the edification of the clerical elite. As the *locus* of social and cultural power, it makes sense that the seminary would lead the way in systematically nurturing artistic expression in Québec. The question, I suggest, that, “*Révélation*” seeks to answer is: how did Québec’s history of clericalism affect its unique North American heritage of artistic expression and what role does the nation’s Catholic legacy play in contemporary articulations of national identity? The exhibition stresses the institutional role of the church and especially the clergy who collected the art works. This emphasis is at odds with the popular rupture narrative that places the period preceding the Quiet Revolution squarely in ‘*la grande noirceur*’. That is because even the exhibition’s promotional material stresses the clergy’s avant-garde role and mentorship

relationship with society's cultural *épanouissement*. Indeed, the museum credits the "Séminaire de Québec priests [with] help[ing] open Québec society to the rest of the world and contribut[ing] to its cultural emancipation," (Les Musées de la Civilisation, 2014). As the last exhibit to directly refer to the seminary, that description is telling in the sense that it makes clear the state's intention to rehabilitate its clerical heritage, and bolster public support for and interest in its considerable effort to preserve and promote its *patrimoine religieux*.

Domination-Distinction

Although the narrative of *la grande noirceur* is directly attributed to the nation's domination by the clerical hierarchy, "*Révélations*" emphasizes the positive role the clergy played in nurturing a vibrant and distinct culture in Québec. Unlike the previous two exhibits, which for me, represent a tension of power between the clergy and the state, "*Révélations*" casts the clergy as visionaries who used their wealth and power to amass national treasures for the benefit of the people, both in the sense of spirituality and education. While in many respects the exhibit is intended to showcase the breadth and beauty of these treasures, there is also an active subtext which seeks to highlight the seminary's role as a leading institution in propagating elite-thought and culture in Québec (Service des expositions, 2012, pg. 7).

Belief is at the centre, not only of the institution's power but also literally of the exhibition space itself (the devotional section is surrounded by the educational and Québec arts portions) and likewise prominent in its sub sections, of the European and Canadien "*Voir et Savoir*." I argue then, that this belief represents a sort of social contract which the exhibit attempts to articulate, one where power is derived from a public who trusts it will be wielded for the public and national benefit. Therefore, I suggest that the tension between domination and distinction in this

exhibit can best be described as a benevolent dominance. There is a latent conversation between the sections displaying art and the one that features photographs of how the seminary functioned as a centre for national enlightenment. The corridor dedicated to the seminary's educational history is solely populated by old photographs which contrast markedly with the paintings and treasures of the other exhibits. I suggest this is a way to highlight the seminary's educational role in propagating an indigenous artistic movement, again referencing what I identify as 'benevolent dominance'. So the mid-section, I argue is designed to recall the priests' role as a bridge between education and creation. This too is an act of reconciliation. By valorizing the seminary priests as a source of benevolent domination, the museum sends the message that the state can likewise perform the laudable and even necessary role of steward of the Québec nation's cultural development. Discussing the popular narrative of clerical domination Lemieux suggests a more nuanced approach arguing that

protectrice par excellence, l'église-mère a pu alors se donner pour mission d'encadrer toute la vie de ses fidèles. A-t-elle pour autant été totalitaire? Il faudrait ici nuancer, distinguer entre holisme (encadrer toute la vie) et totalitarisme (imposer ses normes), apprendre à retrouver les dynamismes effectifs de la société de l'époque... Elle présente aussi des croyants en première ligne des luttes sociales, chez les révoltes du XIXe siècle comme chez les Indigènes du XXIe. (Lemieux, 2012, pg. 17).

In this way, domination and distinction are reconciled in "*Révélation*s".

Moral-Material

As the third and final 'chapel,' "*Révélation*s" differs from the seminary chapel and "*Qui parle Français?*" in that unlike the first, it is filled with the sacred objects noticeably absent from the original chapel, and the second, in that it consciously employs traditional religious motifs and spatial organization. The confessional grill lighting, niches, sub-section titles, themes, and spatial design suggest a middle ground between the emphasis on materiality of the seminary chapel and

the moral emphasis of the second exhibit by investing the objects themselves with a moral character – arguably the altruistic dedication of the priests to nurturing a national culture.

In order to better explain what I mean, I cite the title of one of the niches entitled “*Virtuosité*,” where the engraving “*Head of Christ on the Sudarium*” is exhibited. The engraving depicts a detailed portrait of Christ’s head using only one concentric line, a remarkable feat that would have required extreme skill and patience: the work of a virtuoso. The etymology of the word ‘virtuous,’ comes from late Latin, derived from ‘excellence’ and ‘good,’ two words that synthesize aptly to describe the intersection of morality and materialism which the museum attempts to present with its exhibition of the seminary’s art collection. Much like the binary of pre and post Quiet Revolution Québec culture, the dichotomy of morality versus materiality - that of tradition versus modernity, piety versus prosperity and virtue versus pleasure - is convincingly resolved by “*Révélations*.”

Image 12: “Head of Christ on the Sudarium” is an example of how the priests used art to teach both moral and technical virtue.

This is because visitors can marvel at the technical skill, rarity and value of the objects on display and infer their sacred nature due to the exhibit's dim, quiet ambience and use of religious tropes such as the side chapels, inner chapel and culturally resonant religious language such as '*Révélations*,' and '*croire*.' Again the exhibit's planning documents confirm this intention. It describes the reasoning for the black walls, dim lighting and for locating the religious artefacts in an inner sanctum. By "créant un volume dans le volume, ils ont doté la salle d'exposition d'un espace central, sorte de chapelle ou de cour intérieure, entouré d'un large couloir. L'allusion aux corridors déambulatoires qui ceint l'architecture monastique typique est ici évidente," (Service des expositions, 2012, pg. 9). Through the conscious recreation of a monastic environment, it was the design staff's intention to create a mystical ambience for "contemplation and discovery," (Service des expositions, 2012, pg. 9).

But, while symbolism and context may help a secular audience sense the sacred nature of the objects, the exhibit also reconciles the chasm between morality (inherent sacred power of the objects) and materialism by doing the inverse: by rooting the object's significance to their tangible function, worth and role in national history. In this sense, "*Révélations*" both sacralises and profanes, but what it sacralises is not faith in an organized religion, but rather the community of the seeing – the museum voyeur.

The themes, "*Voir et croire*" and "*Voir et savoir*" recall the story of Doubting Thomas, who did not acknowledge the resurrected Christ until he could see and touch Jesus' wounds. Just as Thomas needed to see to believe and to see to learn, so too do today's museum pilgrims in order to understand and relate to a people and period that seem so distant and incomprehensible. Unlike Protestant accounts, which emphasize the superiority of those who believed without seeing, Catholic scholars have tended to emphasize Jesus' willingness to show his wounds as an

argument to encourage tangible experiences such as pilgrimages, veneration of relics and ritual to reinforce Christian beliefs (Schiller, 1972, pg. 24-25). As such, it makes sense for cultural institutions to invoke a paradigm of identity-pilgrimage to reconcile religion and reason so that the exhibit's precious collection and the people's ancestral collectors can continue to offer a moral justification for the material imperatives of maintaining a culturally and economically distinct polity. We shall continue with this theme in the next section which will examine the tension between preservation and promotion below.

Preservation-Promotion

In an obvious way, "*Révélation*s" is part of a province-wide project to preserve valuable possessions of churches and religious houses, such as the restored altar and the paintings rescued from the chapel fire in 1888. While this reflects efforts to preserve the material character of Québec's religious heritage, I argue as noted above, the exhibit more specifically seeks to preserve an awareness of the seminary's role as a nation-building institution and community. The very organization of the exhibit creates an impression that what the visitor sees represents a curatorial effort by centuries of diocesan priests. Because the exhibition is housed in what were the original seminary's galleries and due to the fact individual priests selected, purchased, commissioned or instructed the artists, their presence is felt throughout the exhibit. Therefore, though the institution was preserved by state intervention and ownership, somewhat ironically through the decline of the Church, what is promoted is the impact these people of the cloth left on Québécois culture. Planning documents for the exhibit seem to confirm this. "*Révélation*s" final scenario notes one purpose of the exhibit is to "témoigner du rôle des prêtres du Séminaire de Québec dans la culture artistique au Québec," (Service des expositions, 2012, pg. 7). It

continues emphasizing part of the intention of the exhibit is to “rappeler les efforts constants des prêtres pour mettre en valeur cette collection,” (Service des expositions, 2012, pg. 7).

This is most apparent in the third section of the exhibit which features a series of photos taken of the seminary and its art museum when it was still an authentically clerical institution. These photographs represent a *mise en abyme* in that they are self-reflexive, not only of the former organization and use of the building in which they are displayed, but also of the curation and works of art themselves. For instance, the European educational gallery closely resembles an old photograph of the seminary painting museum. In addition, many objects in the museum are featured either in a quasi-liturgical setting or as artefacts in photos of the original museum. By using photography to bridge the past and present, sacred and secular, “*Révélations*” functions to better represent Québec’s religious past within the frame of its secular present.

While Québécois are used to seeing the outsides of its heritage convents, churches, seminaries, monasteries and schools, the exhibit’s photographs gives them an inside-perspective on the interiors and national role of these institutions. Moreover, by portraying these as institutions which nurtured Québec culture as opposed to what they have increasingly become – derelict, demolished or re-purposed – I argue the museum is attempting to promote a more positive and vibrant image of religious heritage, one that stands in contrast to the ambivalent narrative of the *grande noirceur*.

Temporal Tension:

“*Révélations*” employs several temporal frames at one and the same time. The heart of the exhibit, or the inner chapel, I argue, represents non-time, or a complete saturation of High Time. Because the artefacts and treasures are displayed in an unadorned blackness, and also owing to

the perhaps subconscious ecclesiastic spatial organization, the treasures do not appear to reside in any particular period. The same items, without the context of period-architecture, could be used in Mass today or hundreds of years ago, which enables the visitor to experience them outside of linear time. Visitors are encouraged to appreciate the design and quality of the items which defies liberal progressive views of history inherent in Modernity. Outside the inner chapel, however, there is a clear sense of development, that is, if not exactly a linear sense of time, at least one that is thematic. High and Ordinary time is thus reconciled to one another by acknowledging their symbiotic nature, not just in the central chapel, but throughout the exhibition.

Image 13: A map of “Révelations” illustrates the liturgical arrangement of the exhibit as well as the seminary’s progression to a major patron and cultivator of the Quebec arts

Messianism:

Throughout this discussion of “*Révélations*,” I have argued that the exhibit seeks to tell a story of benevolent dominance, sacralise materiality for secular, yet sacred national purposes and promote the institutional heritage of the seminary and the wider Church as one defined by visionaries and virtue. I argue this exhibit is the culmination in the reconciliatory theme that runs through each of the exhibits: the profaned confessionals of the seminary chapel, the sacred confessional modules where values are defined by linguistic survival and vibrancy in the corridor, and the grill motifs in “*Révélations*.” Here in the museum is where visitors experience the sacrament, where the messianism of the seminary priests and students is causally linked to present cultural and artistic achievements of America’s francophone communities.

As such, the tensions in this exhibit lie in the rhetoric of rupture which tends to deny the positive force of the Church pre- Quiet Revolution and exaggerate the spontaneous development of a post-Quiet Revolution cultural confidence. Messianism manifests itself in “*Révélations*” as a mission, or call to arms to understand the proper place of Québec’s religious heritage in a more balanced manner and to embrace a cultural –Catholicism and a Catholic heritage which serves to define what Québec was, is and how it will develop in an uncertain future. Due to the pervasive narrative of rupture and popular ambivalence to religious heritage this kind of mission is deemed necessary in order to provide today and future generations with a clear referent for their secular identity (Brodeur, 2006, pg. 16). As such, the new post-secular state mission I argue, is to reclaim this heritage for a secular society, but heritage which poignantly reflects the very close relationship between the sacred dimension of Québécois nationalism and the divine mission which has guided their national development for almost 400 years. One only needs to look to the continued presence of the crucifix in the National Assembly to appreciate how close that

relationship is and thus how pressing are state efforts to re-cast its religious heritage for a new generation, of whom many are not prepared how to understand their Church outside of the church.

The rest of the museum

On the second and third floors of the museum are the exhibits “*Une colonie retrouvée*” and “*À partir*” respectively. These exhibitions do not directly focus on a clericalism or the institutionalism and, as such will only be briefly discussed in relation to certain themes such as the contrast between religious dominance in “*Révélation*” with an exhibit that explores the secular colonial state’s role in national development, the continued use of the confessional grill symbol, and lastly, a theme suggested in “*À partir*” of a renewed pan-Francophone project. This represents an undertaking which takes up the torch from the Church who once cultivated a French Canadian identity of the heart and mind as opposed to one based on political borders.

“*Une colonie retrouvée*” is explicitly about unsettling conventional wisdom about Québec’s pre-New France history. The exhibit highlights the story of a six-year archaeological dig at Cap-Rouge, its artefacts, and the little-known existence of a permanent French settlement in North America 60 years before Champlain established Québec. Visitors must pass through an ornate, satin exhibit which resembles a baroque parlour featuring New France’s royal history, including reproductions of French artwork, the colony’s charter, and information panels on King Francis I. Next guests pass through a sound and light show on a silk screen background that tells the story of the logistics, perils, labour and settlement of the small colony.

Following this is the central exhibit which features an interactive dig site which marries the discovery of archeology to the discovery of an unknown history. Returning to the theme of state

development, in contrast to “*Révélations*” themes of clerical national development, the central section reiterates the role of the state through the funding and promotion of its capacity to undermine traditional and thus Catholic-sanctioned histories. At the beginning of the exhibition old French school books display historical arguments once taught as certainty but which the entire exhibition invalidates. This is an interesting assertion of state power given these old books would have been approved by the Church which played a significant role in training historians and guiding historiography. Furthermore, *révélations* of the colony at Cap Diamant reveal that Québec was not founded by a Roman Catholic, but rather a Protestant which destabilizes former national mythology. Once again, the confessional grill motif appears at the entrance to “*La colonie retrouvée*,” except it has mutated from the little white crosses in “*Révélations*” to a pattern consisting of curves, diagonals, and rectangles of various sizes and orientation, which I suggest represent the reorientation of national self-understanding along more ‘secular’ state defined lines, but also signifies the continuities previously discussed in “*Révélations*”. Moreover, the motif is projected onto several semi-translucent curtains which distorts the symbols and might send the message that national historiography can be as layered as the soil excavated by the Cap Rouge archaeologists.

Yet another mutation of the confessional grill is present in “*À Partir*,” on a large red arrow that guides visitors through the exhibition space. The phrase ‘*À partir*’ appears in bold black letters overlaid on a red arrow on the wall and becomes increasingly perforated like the confessional grill. The perforation recalls a growing wind which rips shingles off a roof exposing more and more of what lies beneath, casting the detritus to the wind, much like the subsequent North American diasporas of Francophone communities. Now exposed, the red line, which extends to the exhibit’s conclusion perforates in a similar manner with the line expanding and disintegrating

into an impressionistic image of North America composed of red dots. There are also several video installations which take up the confessional theme. The first is situated at the exhibition's immediate beginning and is comprised of a video where faces are pictured in extreme close-up telling the story of their diaspora, whether as a result of colonization, deportation or exploration. Continuing the confessional motif, chunks of the image are missing in what looks as if one image is composed of many overlapping projections, or otherwise as if visitors are seeing the face through the confessional grill.

Aside from the theme of confession the exhibition chronicles the Church's former role of uniting the French Canadian nation across disparate territories through missionaries and separate education systems, with an exhibit entitled "*Les Vérités Catholiques*" or in English the interesting translation "Eternal Verities" It is designed to resemble both a chapel and a school house with illuminated pew motifs lined down its wall and highlights missionary and educational functions performed by the clergy who played significant roles in spreading the French language across North America and whose "appetite for souls was only marginally smaller than that for beavers," describes one interactive module.

Together, the confessional theme and that of the Church's efforts to buttress the French Canadian identity through evangelization, work in concert to advance what I argue is the state's renewed commitment to securing French Canadian minority community outside of its borders, an effort that I contend relates to the main intention of the museum. That is to reconcile the cultural and heritage functions of the Church in order to benefit from the latent symbolic potency they offer as a means of creating solidarity with and commitment to an imperilled national distinction. Linking the spread and preservation of vulnerable French communities in New England, the North and the Prairies to Church activities and symbols the exhibition allows various emblematic

characters to make their own confession for their reasons for leaving the homeland. As such, perhaps the renewed emphasis on Francophone minority communities presents an effort to once again re-examine how the ‘nation’ is defined and whether or not the state should actively take up the inter-state cultivation of a pan-Francophone movement.

Conclusion:

By undertaking a grammar of the three main exhibits relating to Québec’s religious heritage and the institutional role of the clergy, it was this chapter’s aim to identify a shifting relationship between the museum visitors’ relationship to the state and the nation’s religious heritage.

Through the axes of domination-distinction, moral-material, preservation-promotion and the continuous messianic nature of Québec society, the grammar seeks to acknowledge some of the most contested dynamics involved in what can be argued is a mutating relationship to the nation’s religious past.

I argue that the concept of secular in the modern and post-secular paradigms is changing and to do this I invoke the ideas of the ‘chapel’ and the sacrament of reconciliation. Firstly, I cast the seminary chapel as a space of state-sponsored secular ascendance, rooted in preserving a material legacy that has been both liberated and re-defined by secular state imperatives. Next, I interpreted the corridor as a chapel of another colour, a post-Vatican II unadorned space of reverent reflection but alive in a way that encourages identification with the collectivity and contemplation of one’s own location within or against it. Lastly, “*Révélation*” reconciles the narrative of rupture which balances the ambivalence of the seminary chapel and the nostalgia of the second by investing material dominance with benevolence and foresightedness. Together these spaces allow visitors to undertake the pilgrimage of a Doubting Thomas, where they may

experience the revelation of a more nuanced relationship to their religious heritage and which allows for the state to employ that inheritance to secure not only North American historiographic distinction, but to propagate that difference to acknowledge the continued salience of religious tropes and symbols in the articulation of what it is to be a Francophone surrounded by a sea of Angloconformity.

Conclusion:

The project to re-affirm Québec's collectivity in a neo-liberal and ethnically diverse era is a difficult one. No longer can cultural elites take for granted a cultural Catholicism to act as a moral compass among its citizens, as consumerism, time and global migrations challenge what has been for so long an unspoken social contract. Gauvreau argues that

The older Catholic mentality, which functioned in many individuals as a sort of "automatic pilot" would, when exposed to the solvents of modern civilization, wither away from within, leaving nothing but a morass of consumerist conformity and a loss of faith among the masses. The resulting spiritual void would render nugatory the Catholic reformist project of a civically conscious, Christian social democracy. (Gauvreau, 2000, pg. 826)

This notion of social breakdown without the influence of tradition and common historic cultural understanding is what I argue forms the foundation of elite-driven effort to reconcile, preserve and promote Québec's religious heritage.

I argue this is driven by the dominant narrative of religious rupture, which presents itself not only in popular history, but also in school curriculums, and even as an organizing principle of space in state museums and art galleries (Museum of Civilization and the National Art Gallery).

It is this narrative that for so long legitimated the state's claim to power through an argument of a clean break with the Church. This was possible and strategic because at the time it was popularized the Church was still viable and thus needed to be narrated out of power. I argue throughout this thesis that this narrative may have gone too far, in that it has alienated subsequent generations from the Church, to the point where younger Québécois have become illiterate in an important aspect of their cultural history. In recognition of this, I suggest cultural elite now seek to reconcile the rupture narrative by emphasizing religion's nation-building role in Québec, in order to preserve the raw moral material that informs its distinct social and cultural

project in a period of rapid change. This effort represents the next several themes addressed in the literature review, which were: continuity, loss of distinction and re-memory. The last two themes were museums and post-secularism, which I argue represent the strategy and the context of the efforts to reconcile Québec's religious heritage.

I identified the theme of reconciliation, which runs throughout the main three spaces devoted to religious heritage in *le Musée de l'Amérique francophone*. Based on my spatial analysis and the grammar I employed to articulate it, I noted three distinct temporally located spaces that serve to reconcile disavowal and nostalgia. I argued the seminary chapel represents the ascendancy of secularism over the Church and the state's power, by possessing and de-frocking one of the nation's most elite and sacred sites. At the same time, I suggest the chapel romanticizes the materiality of the Church as a tangible inheritance for Québécois through its architecture and relics, a strategy that encourages the state's role in preserving its religious built-heritage. I cite promotional material that invites patrons to rent the space in order to forget the present, invoking the chapel's numinous qualities while simultaneously co-opting the principles of capitalism. Forgetting the present is difficult when confronted with the privatization of once-public space and the infrastructure of electronic spectacle. On the other hand, the seminary chapel is indicative of the repurposing of religious buildings, and belies an affinity to gather socially in numinous spaces. From the perspective of reconciliation, I argue the seminary chapel is focused on overcoming domination, glorifying materialism and idealizing the virtues of promotion, located in the corridor between the seminary chapel and the museum proper is different. Whereas the seminary chapel bills itself as a place out of time, I argue that without an explicit architectural or artefactual reference to the Church, this space is capable of capturing the spirit of

Québec's practice of its religious heritage. An audio-visual installation that celebrates the intangible merits of French North American civilization and which extols the virtue of the francophone community operates something like a Mass, and booths allow visitors to interact with the subtle ritual on an individual level, much like confession. Thus I argue this chapel's act of reconciliation is less about domination, materialism, and preservation and more about morals, distinction and promotion. Lastly, "*Révélations*" falls somewhere in between the two previous chapels. Exhibiting the seminary's material treasures, yet designed to capture the temporal tension between cultural development and its timeless religious dimension.

In chapter three I identified the theme of reconciliation, which runs throughout the main three spaces devoted to religious heritage in *le Musée de l'Amérique francophone*

Forgiveness is one of the main tenets of Christianity, and this theme runs through not only the museum with its theme of reconciliation, but also the new post-secular policy of the state. There is a popular phrase: "time heals all wounds," and if there is any corollary to a wound it is that of rupture. Though it may seem that the narrative of the Quiet Revolution represents a miraculous and instantaneous healing of the gangrenous '*grande noirceur*', decades later, the wound needs stitching in order for the nation to rally across the abyss of rupture. This heritage needs reconciling, and that is why I argue my theme of the confessional. Whether consciously or not, *le Musée de l'Amérique francophone* employs a narrative of forgiveness, whether in the apse of the seminary chapel, the booths in "*Qui parle Français?*", or the illuminated grills throughout "*Révélations*" and the rest of the museum. Each exhibit, or as I have interpreted them, as chapels, asks the visitor to make their confessions in a different manner. In the seminary chapel, the confession is to one's ancestors, asking absolution for abandoning the Church and letting its beauty decay in their midst. In the corridor one seeks the sacrament to absolve their shame in

belonging to what was for so long a linguistic underclass. By this I mean through offering the sacrifice of one's stories of *la francophonité*. Later, in "*Révélation*s" visitors are asked to contemplate their artistic capacity as francophones and consider the cultural project they have been implicated into by their ancestors. This is where absolution occurs and their penance is given. I argue that the museum asks here that visitors assent to their participation in the project of a French North American civilization, not to bury their talents but rather to lend them to the continuation of the story.

And that really is the point of the museum. That which is popularly remembered as *la grande noirceur* is presented as a period of talents. It is these that I argue are intended to reconcile this history and bring ancestors and heirs into the communion of nation. I have argued through a grammar of Québécois religious history that time and ideology (modern and post-secular) affect the ways in which Québécois interpret their heritage. Until recently, interpretation has been less necessary due to the fact that this history has been lived. But now that the grandchildren of the Quiet Revolution are reaching maturity, while at the same time becoming the stewards of their religious heritage in ways their parents never had to, the time has come, as judged by the cultural elite, to forgive the excesses of the clerical past and safeguard that which made and makes their society unique in North America. It will be interesting to see whether or not the argument made by state institutions, like the museum, will be enough to convince them to do so.

At the same time, the social and political project might all be for nought. Nostalgia may not suffice to remedy disavowal and the current project to protect Québec's religious heritage might be trumpeting the last watch for a type of nationalism no longer resonant among the youth, no matter their apparent openness to 'irrational' spirituality.

What is sure is that cultural institutions' rapprochement to its religious heritage demonstrates a new comfort with the Church-State relationship and a recognition that this heritage represents an inheritance for the Québécois. What is less certain is what it means for non-traditional citizens. This thesis limited itself largely to a discussion of how *de souche* Québécois are implicated in the project of religious heritage reconciliation at the expense of a discussion of how this dynamic affects ethnic and religious minorities. My aim was to investigate the state's cultural outreach strategy to gain support for its efforts to defy the trends of global capitalism and increasing ethnic diversity in order to reinforce Québec's national distinction. I argue that this strategy *does* come at the expense of inclusion, but rather asks the 'Other' to check their own patrimonies at the foyer of their new nation's existential crisis.

I also have not undertaken extensive interviews with the practitioners of the strategy this thesis has identified. My reason for this is that I contend it has been a very subconscious initiative, one where the concept of reconciliation has been more a product of the times than of the intentional mind. More work needs to be done relating to how visitors relate to the museum and more broadly, how they experience the new tourist or 'pilgrimage' complex being built-up by the state. Furthermore, there should be more focus paid to the ways in which Québécois are able to recognize the distinctions between promotion of religion and their religious heritage. What is sacred to them? Is it the buildings or the stories they contain? Is it the sacraments, or the memory of the ancestors who received them? Can these memories be shared with new Québécois, or are they a way of hardening the edges of true belonging? These questions and more need to be answered before we can truly understand why cultural elite are stewarding Québec's religious heritage in this religious-heritage focused direction.

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Index of Images

Image 1: The desacralized Seminary Chapel altar.	52
Images 2 and 3 (from left to right): Examples of the chapel's extensive relic collection.	53
Image 4: Musicians setting up for a concert in the chapel while visitors tour the space.	54
Image 5: A video introduction to "Qui parle Français?"	61
Image 6: A section of a brochure advertising the chapel for rentals.	63
Images 7 and 8 (left to right): The exterior and interior of the confessional modules.	64
Image 9: An example of the confessional grill motif that runs throughout the exhibition.	71
Image 10: An example of the four niches present throughout the exhibition	72
Image 11: The European works gallery which functions as a mise en abyme of the presentation style once employed in the Seminary Gallery.	73
Image 12: <i>Head of Christ on the Sudarium</i> is an example of how the priests used art to teach both moral and technical virtue.	77