Performing History Offstage: The Benefits of using Theatre to
Present History at the Canadian War Museum

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Abstract

This thesis aims to evaluate the Canadian War Museum's (CWM) most frequent use of theatrical interpretation Group Orientations (G.O.s). G.O.s are performed by CWM Program Interpreters (P.I.). Interviews with CWM staff are used to trace the history of theatre programming at the CWM since 2005. The observation of G.O. performances, the scripts and the interaction between P.I.s and visitors demonstrate the pedagogical advantages of the programme. This thesis also discusses the future of the programme by considering the implications of a virtual G.O. This work presents a unique contribution to the field of public history as very few national museums use theatre as an introduction to their exhibition's interpretive themes. The investigation of the CWM's G.O.s, offers a case study on the benefits of theatre programming in national museums. This will provide a valuable example for other national museums thinking about incorporating theatre in their interpretive planning.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Illustrations.....	v
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Group Orientations and the Constructivist Museum	17
Chapter 2: Narratives of Canadian History and the G.O. Scripts	43
Chapter 3: Hyper-Historians and the Shaping of Historical Memory	74
Chapter 4: The Possibilities of Developing Virtual G.O.s.....	95
Conclusion	117
Appendices.....	126
1 Carleton Ethics Approval Form	126
2 Interview Questions.....	128
Bibliography	131

List of Illustrations

Illustration 1 The Canadian War Museum Floor Plan.....	5
Illustration 2 Violet and Claire WWI Factory Workers costume and props.....	29
Illustration 3 Abigail a Survivor of the Battle of 1812 paintings.....	31
Illustration 4 Robert a Carpenter during the British siege of Quebec props.....	35
Illustration 5 Robert's painting.....	35
Illustration 6 The fire bomb artifacts Robert refers to in Gallery 1.....	36
Illustration 7 Robert's cannon ball.....	38
Illustration 8 Madeleine a Nursing Sister in the First World War costume and props..	64
Illustration 9 Catherine a Gulf War Technician costume and props.....	68
Illustration 10 Vincent a journalist in Afghanistan photograph.....	70

List of Appendices

1	Carleton Ethics Approval Form	126
2	Interview Questions.....	128

Introduction

As a former interpretive guide at several historic sites and national museums I have firsthand experience in trying to present history in a meaningful way to young audiences. In the summer of 2011, I worked as a costumed interpreter at Bellevue House National Historic Site (BHNHS) where I offered third person interpretation to visitors.¹ During this experience I came to understand first-hand the value of museum theatre to present history. In the summer months BHNHS offered special programming, including an acting troupe which performed for visitors. The troupe re-enacted different scenes of John A. Macdonald's life and was well received by the public. As these actors performed the past they were able to captivate their audience in a way that was different than the third person interpretation that characterized my historical performances. The performers were able to interpret history as lived personal experience, which in turn evoked emotional responses from the audience. The success of this example of museum theatre inspired my academic interests to pursue other public history sites that use theatre as part of their interpretive programmes.

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¹ Bellevue House National Historic Site is owned and operated by Parks Canada. The Site is located in Kingston, Ontario and is a restored nineteenth century Italian style villa that was the temporary home of Canada's first Prime Minister Sir John A Macdonald. The Site commemorates John A Macdonald and operates from April to October. The onsite interpreters are dressed as domestic servants of the time period and offer third person interpretation. For more information about the Site visit <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/lhn-nhs/on/bellevue/index.aspx>. Third person interpretation can be defined as a generally costumed interpreter who interprets the lives of people the museum displays in a "preterit verb tense: The townspeople who lived here in the nineteenth century used the same breed of cattle for work..." in Scott Magelsson, *Living History Museums: Undoing History through Performance* (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2007), xxii.

The Canadian War Museum (CWM) has used theatre in their children's programming as a means to fulfill their mandate "*Educate. Preserve. Remember.*"² This thesis is focused on the CWM's most common theatrical presentations offered to school groups in May and June: Group Orientations (G.O.). G.O.s provides visitors with a ten minute introduction to the CWM. The majority of the presentation is performed in first person and consists of a costumed Programme Interpreter (P.I.) who enacts a fictional character's experience in war.³ Programme Interpreters are museum staff who work for the Client Services Department who deliver different public interpretive programmes such as gallery demonstrations and G.O.s.⁴ This past season there were eight different characters offered to school groups.⁵ The characters included Robert and Marie who were siblings during the Plains of Abraham, Abigail who survived the War of 1812, Madeleine a nursing sister in the First World War, Claire and Violet who were factory workers in the First World War, Catherine Fowler an air technician in the Gulf War, and Vincent a war correspondent in Afghanistan. The characters performed represent different wars displayed in the CWM galleries. Each presentation included a painting, which sets the scene for the specific war presented. In addition to the painting, most P.I.s used props to describe different artifacts associated with war that the audience would encounter in the

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² Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation, "The Canadian War Museum: Background," (December 2008), 1.

³ First-person interpretation can be defined as interpreters who speak in the first-person when informing visitors of the lives and times they are portraying in historic sites, museums. For example, a costumed African American interpreter would say "Lord Dunsmore has offered freedom to those of us who would take up arms against the colonists..." (Magelsson, *Living History Museums*), xxii.

⁴ Ashlee Beattie, "Performing Historical Narrative at the CWM," Master of Arts, University of Ottawa, October 2011, 130, 158.

⁵ There are additional scripts and characters that were not performed in the May and June 2013 season such as a sailor in the Second World War.

museum. The main objective of these performances is to provide students with an effective and meaningful medium to learn one of the CWM's main messages: that it is a place where we remember the sacrifices of Canadians in war and their accomplishments.⁶

G.O.s are an example of museum theatre. Although there are many definitions of museum theatre, Catherine Hughes' is the most applicable when considering G.O.s.⁷ Hughes describes museum theatre as "the use of drama or theatrical techniques within a museum setting or as part of a museum's offerings with the goal of provoking an emotive and cognitive response in visitors concerning a museum's discipline and/or exhibitions."⁸ The P.I.s ability to make a personal connection with the audience is considered by the museum to be an important way to fulfill their mandate. This is further demonstrated with a phrase that is written in all of the G.O. scripts which is stated at the end of the performance when the P.I. breaks character and switches to perform in third person and explains that "the CWM is the place where we remember ...As you go through the exhibitions try to imagine yourself living in those times and places..."⁹ This statement reflects one of the main themes presented in the CWM's permanent galleries exhibitions, which is to present the narratives of the human experience of war "...told mainly through the personal stories, artifacts and recollections of ordinary Canadians — to engage

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⁶ "The Canadian War Museum Backgrounder," 1.

⁷ In her MA thesis Katherine Lavoie refers to Hughes' definition as an applicable example in describing the different types of museum theatre Lavoie considers. Robin Lavoie, "To Engage and Enlighten: Theatre as an Interpretive tool in History Museums," Master's thesis, Arizona State University, May 2003, 6.

⁸ Catherine Hughes, *Museum Theatre: Communicating Drama with Visitors through Drama* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1998), iii.

⁹ Canadian War Museum, *Wounded Soldier in Doullens, France*, (2012), 5. Third person interpretation can be defined as an interpreter present information in third-person with "preterit verb tense: The townspeople who lived here in the nineteenth century used the same breed of cattle for milk," (Magelsson, *Living History Museums*), xxii.

visitors in a personal dialogue about their country, its past, and its prospects.”¹⁰ The importance of impressing upon visitors that the CWM artifacts and collections represent an individual’s experience of war is the main reason why theatre was selected as a medium to introduce students to the museum.¹¹

The new CWM was officially opened in May 8, 2005 to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the end of Second World War but also the 125th anniversary of the Museum itself.¹² The CWM was first opened in 1880 and was Canada’s first national museum located in the historic building on 336 Sussex.¹³ Veterans played a large role in the opening of the new museum as they raised \$16,500,000 through their nation-wide “Pass the Torch” campaign.¹⁴ The architecture and design of the building represents one of regeneration and reconciliation. The theme was selected by architect Raymond Moriyama, who was a Japanese Canadian interned during the Second World War. The theme of regeneration is presented by the materials used to construct the museum. For instance, the roof is made out of self-seeding grasses and the concrete contains recycled fly ash.¹⁵ The CWM also acts as a memorial as it provides a Memorial Hall located directly outside of the museum galleries. Memorial Hall is free to the public and creates a space for visitors to commemorate the lives of Canadians who sacrificed their lives in

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¹⁰ Canadian War Museum, Backgrounder, 1.

¹¹ Kathryn Lyons, interview by author, personal interview. Ottawa, January 6, 2014.

¹² Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation, “The Canadian War Museum at a Glance—2007,” 1.

¹³ Norman Hillmer, “The Canadian War Museum and the Military Identity of an Unmilitary People,” in *Canadian Military History* 19, 3 (Summer 2010), 20 and Roger Sarty, “The Nationalization of Military History: Scholarship, Politics, and the Canadian War Museum,” in ed Norman Hillmer and Adam Chapnick *Canada’s of the Mind: The Making and Unmaking of Canadian Nationalisms in the Twentieth Century* (Quebec: McGill Queen’s University Press, 2007), 112.

¹⁴ David Dean, “Museums as Conflict Zones: The Canadian War Museum and Bomber Command,” in *Museum and Society* 7, 1 (March 2009), 3.

¹⁵ Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation, “Canadian War Museum Fact Sheet,” 1.

war. Memorial Hall has particular significance on Remembrance Day when the sun shines through a window to illuminate the headstone of Canada's Unknown Soldier.¹⁶ The symbolism of the architectural design and Memorial Hall reveals that the museum acts both as an educational institution and place of remembrance.

Illustration 1: The Canadian War Museum Floor Plan¹⁷

Source: Canadian War Museum, Visitor's Guide

The architectural theme of the museum complements the interpretive messages displayed in the permanent galleries. In the main exhibition space there are four permanent galleries in the museum as illustrated by the above floor plan: Battleground: Wars on Our Soil, earliest times to 1885 (pink), For Crown and Country: The South

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ The ateliers situated to the left of the group entrance and are represented by the colour orange are where the G.O. performances take place. The names of the galleries and their location are identified with the associated colour of the floor plan in brackets in the text.

African and First World Wars, 1885-1931 (beige), Forged in Fire: The Second World War, 1931-1945 (green), and A Violent Peace: The Cold War, Peacekeeping, and Recent Conflicts, 1945-present (blue).¹⁸ In each of the galleries there are four overarching themes: Geography, Politics, Brutality and Survival.¹⁹ Galleries were divided into seven zones and further divided into twenty five clusters to ensure that the visual and textual narratives could be followed.²⁰ The design team ensured that the storylines of each exhibition provided a transition between war and peace, drama and pathos to aid the visitor to easily understand interpretive information in a meaningful way. Each gallery is separated by a public space and the layout of the museum was designed to give visitors the impression of walking into a living archive. Each gallery also contains different audio and visual elements to enhance the messages transmitted in the gallery panels. The overall aim of both the designers and curators was to avoid creating "...a pale or bland experience but an intense, emotional, memorable and, above all, honest presentation of the moments which have helped define Canada's national identity."²¹

The work of designers and curators to plan the CWM with the main intention of encouraging the visitor to make a personal connection to Canadians' experience of war implies that additional interpretive programmes needed to be developed to complement the themes of the exhibit. In particular, the education division was given the task of

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¹⁸ The Canadian War Museum, *Visitor's Guide: The Spirit of Country, the Courage of its People* (Ottawa, 2005). The grey space as depicted in the CWM floorplan represents Lebreton Gallery and the brown space represents Memorial Gallery.

¹⁹ The Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation, "The Canadian War Museum: Design Approach," (May 2005).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid, 4.

creating a unique introduction to instil the museum's messages to students visiting in May and June. This introduction was implemented during the first month of the museum's opening. This is a time when museums in the capital region receive thousands of school groups and there is a large influx of students visiting the CWM. In an interview with a former Education Officer of the CWM who co-developed the G.O. programme, Kathryn Lyons, it became clear that a main initiative of this programme was to promote the messages of the museum to the largest number of school groups in a meaningful way. Lyons mentioned that theatre was selected as it was considered "the most direct and effective way to present visitors with the human story of war that can reach the largest amount of visitors in a short period of time."²² This implies that disrespectful behaviour was not acceptable at the CWM as its contents contain difficult histories, which must be interpreted in a respectful manner, given as noted earlier that the museum also functions as a memorial space. An influence in selecting theatre was the success of other theatre programmes in Ottawa such as the National Capital Commission's (NCC) Capital Quiz, which used an animated interpreter to ask questions to students about Canada's history.²³ Lyons and Alain Gauthier Chief of Education at the CWM met with NCC to discuss the overall feedback about the program. The Capital Quiz provided a framework for G.O.s as it effectively used theatrical interpretation as an orientation for students.

The conception of G.O.s was collaboration between different staff to ensure that Lyons and Gauthier could maximize their resources to provide an interactive and

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²² Kathryn Lyons, interview by author, January 6, 2014.

²³ Ibid.

engaging experience for students. First, it was argued that a G.O. should contain the same visual elements that are present in the museum such as artifacts and historical paintings. The paintings are used to set the scene for the G.O. It was decided that the costumed interpreter would introduce themselves by saying that they were a character in the painting. This proved challenging in that the chosen painting could not have characters that were represented in great detail, nor could they depict a recognizable historical character. In addition to these requirements the selected paintings had to include both men and women, and represent the vast time period featured in the CWM. Lyons mentioned that these specific requirements narrowed the range of paintings available for selection considerably. Once the paintings were selected Lyons and Gauthier consulted the collection team to determine what materials the museum had or could reproduce to integrate into the G.O.s to add tactile experiences to the programme. The final step in the development of the program was to write the scripts for these characters. This process included working with an external contractor Word Image to write the scripts. This was a collaborative effort between the contractor, Gauthier, Lyons and different historians to ensure that the narratives of the scripts were accurate and pedagogical. Together, the script, painting and props were selected to train the first animators at the CWM for the grand opening in May 2005.²⁴

Since the beginning of the G.O. programme there were some structural changes to how the animator position is staffed. Lyons mentioned that animators were hired because

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²⁴ Kathryn Lyons, interview by author, January 06, 2014.

of their ability to perform a variety of interpretive roles.²⁵ For instance, animators worked for the Programs and Interpretation Division and delivered a variety of programmes such as gallery interpretive programmes, curriculum based school programmes and G.O.s.²⁶ This differed from the Guide position, which offered guided tours and answered questions in the gallery space and was staffed under the Client Services Department. In November 2011, the position of CWM Animator was transferred to the Client Services Department under the direction of the Visitor Services Division with a new position title Programme Interpreter (P.I.).²⁷ This change allowed certain P.I.s who used to solely deliver G.O.s to be trained to also provide guided tours. It also allowed hosts in the Client Services Department to intermittently work as P.I.s in May and June to deliver G.O.s. The change altered the staffing priority of the programme to place certain P.I.s in guided tours over performing G.O.s.

Since the creation of G.O.s in 2005 there has been considerable positive feedback from teachers and tour companies that book museums for school groups in May and June. Lyons mentioned that tour operators praised the programme for its effectiveness in being a free programme for the public that introduced students to the museum without taking away from their gallery visit.²⁸ Although this feedback was collected by touring companies, the CWM has never conducted a formal evaluation of the programme. This makes it vulnerable as it is a value added rather than a revenue generating programme

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²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ashlee Beattie, "Performing Historical Narrative at the CWM," Master of Arts, University of Ottawa, October 2011, 130.

²⁷ Ibid, 158.

²⁸ Kathryn Lyons, interview by author, January 06, 2014.

offered by the museum. For instance, a guided tour at the museum is revenue generating as the visitor has to pay an additional cost for the programme, while a GO is value added as it is offered at no additional cost to general admission.

The history of theatre at the Canadian Museum Civilization Corporation reveals that former value added theatre programmes were cut in the past. The CWM's sister museum the Canadian Museum of History (CMH) eliminated one of their value added programmes, the museum acting troupe Dramamuse, in August 2011 in response to federal budget cuts.²⁹ However a significant difference between both programmes is that G.O.s are performed by P.I.s and Dramamuse consisted of trained actors. Still, G.O.s take P.I.s away from performing revenue generating programmes such as guided tours. This thesis works to provide an informal evaluation of the value of the programme and its benefits in teaching history.

There were different research approaches taken in my analysis of how G.O.s influence students' experience of the past which is the focus of chapter one. A performance analysis was conducted by attending each P.I.s performance several times in May and June. Patrice Pavis distinguishes a historical reconstruction from a performance analysis by describing that "an analyst is present at a performance; she has direct experience of it live, whereas a historian is forced to reconstruct performances from secondary sources and accounts."³⁰ This thesis includes both a performance analysis of G.O.s and a historical reconstruction of the G.O. after it was performed. The notes taken

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²⁹ CBC, "Museum of Civilization Closes Curtain on Actor Troupe," (Accessed January 2013), <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/story/2011/08/16/ott-museum-civilization-actors-cut.html>.

³⁰ Patrice Pavis, *Analyzing Performance: Theater, Dance and Film* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 2003), 2.

during the performance highlighted the interaction between the P.I. and the spectator. This included the P.I.s and spectator's dialogue with each other in asking and answering questions throughout the performance. The P.I.s encouragement of providing students with tactile opportunities was another observation that influenced the first chapter to discuss the pedagogical advantages of G.O.s.

In addition to interviewing P.I.s and observing G.O.s to consider the benefits of theatre in teaching history, I have consulted a number of works that discuss the pedagogical advantages of theatre in a museum and classroom environment. The consideration of this literature is important as G.O.s take place in ateliers, which more closely resemble a classroom environment and are situated outside the gallery spaces of the CWM, may operate differently from those that take place in the galleries. Educator and former drama teacher Dorothy Heathcote has written numerous works such as *Drama as a Learning Medium*, which argued that drama over other instructional methods is an effective tool for teaching children as it allows them to use their imagination to learn new concepts. In a public history context, Scott Magelssen has also mentioned its numerous advantages for teaching visitors about the past in living history museums.³¹ Magelssen has also discussed its pedagogical advantages in the classroom. He argues that integrating theatre to discuss historical works can encourage "learner-driven historiography."³² Learner driven historiography refers to implementing lessons in the classroom that

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³¹ For information on the benefits of theatre in living history museums consult Scott Magelssen, *Living History Museums: Undoing History through Performance* (Toronto: Scarecrow Press Inc., 2007).

³² Scott Magelssen, "Performance as Learner-Driven Historiography," in ed., Henry Bial and Scott Magelssen, *Theater Historiography: Critical Interventions* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 2010), 209.

encourage students to re-enact different historical events being discussed to learn firsthand the difficult decisions faced by historical characters. The consideration of theatre used in the classroom reveals that it is encouraged as a means for students to play an active role in their own learning.

The concept of promoting active learning in the classroom is commonly associated with a constructivist approach to learning. There have been many debates surrounding the roles of constructive learning but in particular George Hein has created the useful concept of the "constructivist museum". Hein's *Learning in the Museum* argues that the goal of a constructivist museum is to present information in way that encourage visitors to learn new concepts from museum exhibitions, which is constructed from their prior knowledge.³³ Specifically, Hein mentions that "drama and theater are gripping, powerful media to draw visitors into a scene, make the human connection to objects apparent to some, and allow visitors' imaginations to expand..."³⁴ By drawing on the different concepts of a constructive museum to examine how a G.O. is performed reveals how these performances exemplify this theory and its benefits.

In chapter two, I shift focus to the narrative of Canadian history that is offered by the G.O. scripts. In addition, as a part of the reconstruction analysis, I closely examine how the scripts that were used during a live G.O. were changed by P.I.s in their performances. The P.I.s play a large role in the success of the programme and how well children are engaged in the presentation. One of the main advantages of having live performances offered to the public is that each P.I. is able to interpret history with their

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³³ George Hein, *Learning in the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1998), 155.

³⁴ Hein, 169.

own perspective and share it with the group. Although some P.I.s during the 2013 season performed the same G.O., every performance was different as each P.I. offered their own improvisations to the script and brought their own unique elements to its final delivery. This is an advantage for the audience as it is easier for the P.I. to personally ask a historian for clarification on content of the scripts than have the scripts officially edited. Another advantage of P.I.s improvisations of the script is that their performance tended to be more critical of the past. As mentioned earlier the CWM serves as both a learning centre of Canadian military history and a memorial for Canadian soldiers. This influences how the CWM presents the past in both its interpretive programmes and gallery spaces. In addition to noting the changes to the script during the performance, the interviews with P.I.s also confirmed the reasons why revisions of the script were made during the performance.

The interviews of P.I.s provided a more comprehensive representation of the changes of the programme as it was implemented in 2005. Some P.I.s had performed G.O.s since 2006. The P.I.s are identified in this thesis by the name of the fictional character they performed in G.O.s during the 2013 season. The photographs included in this thesis do not depict the characters they performed. The photographs were provided by the CWM and portray P.I.s performing characters in previous sessions.

Although questions in the interview asked P.I.s to be reflexive about the programme and offer suggestions for future improvements the Consent form as approved by the Carleton University Ethics Board informed participants that “despite this anonymity it is important to remember when answering questions that you are an

employee of the CWM, and thus acting as a representative of the museum.”³⁵ This could have influenced P.I.s answers to withhold criticism of the programme or encourage them to only describe their positive experiences. Their decision not to discuss certain opinions is an issue among all oral history projects as discussed by historian Michael Frisch.³⁶ Frisch terms the knowledge obtained in oral history as a shared authority meaning that both the interviewer and interviewee have different ownership over the interview. The interviewee decides what information to share and the interviewer respects the information given. The interviewer can only use the information that is freely given and consented to be used for research and distribution. Overall, the responses from interviewees offered critical suggestions for improving the G.O. programme. The consideration of the interviews, G.O. observations and different scholarly sources provided a more comprehensive analysis of the benefits of the programme and different recommendations for its improvement.

The interviews were also used to identify which P.I.s embraced theatre as an interpretive medium and the ways in which their performances shape historical memory is the focus of chapter three. I use Freddy Rokem’s performance theory of actors as “hyper-historians” to discuss how certain P.I.s interaction with the audience displayed theatrical energies through their ability to communicate to an audience that they are

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³⁵ Carleton University Ethics Consent Form “Performing History Offstage: The Benefits of using theatre to Present History at the Canadian War Museum.” A copy of the consent form is included in an appendix at the end of the thesis.

³⁶ Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History*, (Albany: State of University New York Press, 1990), xxii.

representing something that has existed in the past.³⁷ The comparison of this theory will be used to consider my observations of P.I.s who were the most theatrical in their interaction with the group. To uncover the theatricality which some P.I.s emphasised as being important in their representations of the past, a performance analysis of the P.I. as an actor was conducted. Pavis mentions that “any theory that claimed to account for the full range of meaning-producing activities involved in acting would be overambitious and rash; for the actions of an actor are comparable to those of human beings...”³⁸ The difference in this analysis is that most P.I.s are not trained actors, thus the performance analysis highlighted which P.I.s demonstrated different acting techniques in their performance and which P.I.s mostly presented in third person. The observations of the P.I. as an actor included descriptions of P.I.s body language, tone of voice (did they adopt an accent) and facial expressions. Following these observations different theatre theories of how an actor’s performance energy can influence an audience’s experience of the past in a historical performance are discussed.

The final chapter discusses the future possibility of expanding the accessibility of the G.O. programme by offering a recommendation for a prospective virtual G.O. Daniel Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig argue that the digital media revolution has led to virtually every museum historic site, museum, re-enactment group to have a website, which is representative of the influence new media in public history.³⁹ As a result, the CWM currently has a website that has several pedagogical resources. The incorporation of a

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³⁷ Ibid, 188.

³⁸ Pavis, 56.

³⁹ Daniel Cohan and Roy Rosenzweig, *A Guide to Gathering, Preserving, and Presenting the Past on the Web*. (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 2.

virtual G.O. would expand the CWM's virtual pedagogical offerings. The possibility of a virtual G.O. would allow offsite visitors the opportunity to have a similar type of interaction as a student in a live G.O. This addition would work to offer an updated interactive medium to the website. It would also encourage a wider audience to be aware of the unique programmes the CWM offers to students since the G.O. programme is not well advertised on the website.

In my conclusion I reflect on the question of how effective museum theatre can be as an interpretive medium. Situating my observational, script, and performance analyses within relevant theoretical works reveals that it is, indeed, an effective way in which to represent the past to museum visitors. Since an official evaluation of the programme has never been conducted it is important to trace its benefits and pedagogical advantages to museum viewers. When former CMCC acting troupes such as Dramamuse were cut, and since, as Lyons mentioned during her interview, the G.O. programme is also vulnerable since it is a value added programme, this thesis implicitly argues that before such decisions are made it is imperative to provide insight on the pedagogical advantages of theatrical performances in museums.

Chapter 1: Group Orientations and the Constructivist Museum

Learning in the museum is a debated topic discussed by museum professionals, educators and public historians. This debate has been influenced by the emergence of the constructivist learning theory.¹ Sociologists and psychologists debated constructivism and its role in learning development. Constructivism is mainly influenced by theories from psychologist Jean Piaget and sociologist Lev Vygotsky.² Constructivism can be defined as a process of learning in which the learner acquires new knowledge by building on pre-existing mental models. The rise of constructivism inspired museum educator George Hein to coin the term constructivist museum in his 1998 work *Learning in the Museum*. The goal of his work is to provide a theoretical framework enabling scholars and practitioners to explore how museums should reform exhibitions and interpretive programmes to enhance learning in the museum. Hein provides recommendations for museum and exhibition content and design, interpretive programmes and other resources. In each of his suggestions, Hein reinforces that constructivist museums must present information to the visitor in a meaningful way, engage the visitor in their own learning and ensure that information is intellectually accessible.³

Hein offers several suggestions as to how museums can adopt a constructivist museum approach by incorporating these three learning objectives of meaningful

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¹ Hein, 150. Constructivism was influenced by several cultural and linguistic turns in the humanities. See Judith Surkis, "When was the Linguistic Turn? A Genealogy," in *American Historical Review* 117, 3 (June 2012): 700-722 and Gary Wilder, "From Optic to Topic: The Foreclosure Effect of Historiographic Turns," in *American Historical Review* 117, 3 (June 2012): 723-745.

² Jackson et al, "The Role of Theater in Museums and Historic Sites," in *International Handbook of Research in Arts Education*, 16 (2007): 686.

³ Hein, 155.

presentation, visitor engagement and accessibility. A particularly helpful aspect of Hein's theory for deconstructing G.O.s as a useful learning medium are "connection to the familiar" and "learning modalities." Connection to the familiar proposes that museum interpretive programmes must be intellectually accessible to the museum visitor. This can be achieved by making sure the interpreter contextualizes the setting of the historical event when introducing a programme or by incorporating familiar objects into their programmes.⁴ For example, at the beginning of G.O.s Programme Interpreters (P.I.) introduce the time period with a historical painting, which depicts the specific war or conflict being presented. Following this introduction, the majority of P.I.s use objects throughout their performance to encourage visitors to make a personal connection with the artifacts they will see in the gallery.

G.O.s also apply Hein's learning objective of learning modalities. Hein suggests that museums should incorporate modalities that use different senses and intelligences. G.O.s fulfill this suggestion as they offer students an interactive presentation that uses visual and material technologies along with first-person theatrical performance to encourage, and enable students to make a personal connection to the past. Also, some G.O.s offer tactile experiences in their presentation, which further illustrate their ability to cater to different learning styles and intelligences. In "The Dubious Inheritance of Touch" Fiona Candlin argues that touching artifacts is different than seeing objects in a museum as it gives visitors an opportunity to learn using their bodily kinaesthetic intelligence. This was conceived by Howard Gardner's multiple intelligence theory. The theory

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⁴ Hein, 161.

mentions that some students learn best through their sense of touch. Students' specific interaction with objects will be discussed later on in the chapter.

The consideration of G.O.s, exhibits and other interpretive programmes at the CWM reveals that the museum adopts several key principles of a constructivist museum. The CWM offers multi-sensory exhibits, with different soundscapes and objects to encourage children's understanding of the experience of ordinary Canadians who participated in Canada's military past. However, visitor studies at different national museums reveal that even in the most multi-sensory exhibits visitors tend to participate in exhibition activities without perceiving the main interpretive messages of the museum.⁵ This is especially problematic at the CWM, which aims to instruct children on the human aspect of war through its G.O.s and other interpretive programmes. One of the goals of the CWM G.O.s is to encourage students to behave respectfully in the museum. This behaviour is important at the CWM because it is perceived as both a history museum and national war memorial.⁶ This objective is difficult to achieve because of contemporary society's association of military artifacts with violent popular culture. G.O.s are implemented with the goal to educate children on the human aspect of war. The G.O. aims to encourage students to associate military artifacts with the human consequences of war, such as the Canadians who sacrificed their lives participating in the different wars

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⁵ Douglas Miller, "The Effect of Interpretive Theatre on Children in the Museum Setting," Master's thesis, Georgia Southern College, 1998, 11.

⁶ David Dean, "Museums as Conflict Zones: the Canadian War Museum and Bomber Command," in *Museum Society* 7, 1 2008: 10.

presented in the exhibition space.⁷ The G.O.s presentation of an individual fictional war story helps students identify with the personal sacrifice of Canadians.

The CWM's decision to use theatre as a medium to achieve their interpretive goals reflects Hein's theory that theatre should be incorporated in museums programmes as it is an effective way to extend learning modalities in the museum. Hein draws on Howard Gardner's 1985 work *Frame of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* to argue for the inclusion of theatre and other visual and tactile opportunities into museum programming. The seven intelligences can be defined as linguistic, musical, logical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal.⁸ Specifically, Hein mentions that theatre is a beneficial addition to a static gallery as it is able to apply interpersonal intelligence by allowing the visitor to make a personal connection with the actor. This actively engages the learner emotionally and intellectually, which in turn expands and deepens visitors' access to the content of the museum.⁹ Hein refers to Catherine Hughes' work *Museum Theatre: Communicating with visitors through Drama* to assert that it is an important learning modality. Hein further expands on the association of theatre as an asset to a constructivist museum, "Drama and theatre are gripping, powerful media to draw visitors into a scene, make the human connection to objects apparent to some, and allow visitors' imaginations to expand and associate rich meanings with the objects

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⁷ Robin Lavoie, "To Engage and Enlighten: Theatre as an Interpretive tool in History Museums," Master's thesis, Arizona State University, May 2003, 5.

⁸ Hein, 165.

⁹ Ibid.

displayed.”¹⁰ Hein’s analysis of theatre in the museum reveals that he is specifically referring to a genre of museum theatre, which is performed in the exhibition space.

Although G.O.s take place in ateliers removed from the galleries, the following analysis will apply Hein’s theory to the observations of G.O.s, which I conducted over the months of May and June 2013. The goal of this comparison is to consider whether P.I.s are able to effectively deliver a theatre programme, which uses a constructive approach. The P.I.s use a painting to transform the classroom into a scene from the historical past, along with the use of both their narrative and props to encourage students to make a meaningful connection to the past. The interaction between students and the P.I. during the presentation further demonstrates the ability of students to be actively engaged in the programme. Together, an analysis of the different elements of a G.O. performance with Hein’s constructivist museum theory demonstrates that museum theatre is an effective way of presenting the past at the CWM.

Public historians and education specialists have been using constructivist theory in both classroom and museum settings. Freeman Tilden’s 1957 work *Interpreting our Heritage* is arguably one of the most influential works in framing museum’s interpretive programmes. Tilden’s monograph was influenced by his employment as a park ranger at the Grand Canyon National Park from 1940 to 1954.¹¹ Tilden reviewed the Park’s interpretive programmes in the 1950s and offered six principles of effective interpretation. Tilden’s principles apply constructivist thinking by encouraging

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¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting our Heritage: Fourth Edition* (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 1.

interpreters to help visitors learn more than just the facts about national parks. In Tilden's view the main role of an interpreter is to "implore visitors to better understand themselves and to find personal meaning and inspiration in park services."¹² To achieve this objective Tilden's first principle is that interpretation must relate to what is being displayed or presented in a way that is meaningful to the viewer. Tilden's second principle differentiates information from interpretation as interpretation is a "revelation based upon information."¹³ Tilden continues to explain interpretation in his third and fourth principle by describing interpretation as an art form that should be presented to provoke curiosity from the visitor. Tilden's sixth principle is the most relevant in the development of school programmes as it recommends that interpretation addressed to children "should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults but should follow a fundamentally different approach."¹⁴ Overall, Tilden's principles reinforce Hein's main learning objective in a constructivist museum that effective interpretation needs to be adapted to the specific audience.

Tilden's principles influenced several education and museum scholars to support theatre as an effective interpretation medium. In "To Engage and Enlighten: Theatre as an interpretive tool in History Museums," Robin Lavoie referred to Tilden's principles to describe their influence in instigating museum theatre programmes in the U.S.¹⁵ Lavoie used Tilden's fourth principle that "interpretation is an art, and this art form's main

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¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid, 34.

¹⁴ Tilden, 35.

¹⁵ Lavoie, 16.

purpose is not instruction but provocation.”¹⁶ This revelation has to be specific for the targeted group and as such Tilden theorizes in his sixth principle that museum programmes should be tailored for children instead of “watered down” adult programmes.¹⁷ Both principles are important when considering the beginning of the museum theatre movement in the U.S., which started with the Science Museum of Minnesota (SMN), which introduced theatre techniques in the early 1970s. The pilot programme encouraged children to interact with costumed interpreters representing different Minnesota Native American customs in the museum’s Anthropology exhibition hall.¹⁸ The beginning of the SMN’s theatre programmes reveals a belief in Tilden’s principles that theatre can be an effective interpretive art form that offer children a separate learning opportunity in the museum.

Although Tilden does not specifically mention constructivist theory to support his six principles, Hein certainly had similar initiatives when he developed his work on the constructivist museum. Tilden’s point that interpretation must be able to make visitors personally relate to the presentation illustrates Hein’s theory that knowledge is created by building on prior concepts. Furthermore, the recommendation that museum programmes should be adapted to a specific audience reinforces Hein’s principle that interpretation has to be intellectually accessible. In this respect, an adult programme is not accessible for children and their specific needs should be considered when developing programmes.

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¹⁶ Ibid, 18.

¹⁷ Ibid, 17.

¹⁸ Ibid, 35.

The G.O.s at the CWM exemplify this necessity as they are only presented to school groups in May and June.

Elizabeth Shores is another scholar who has used constructivist theory. In “Exploring History with Children: A Constructivist Collaboration,” Shores argues that museums and public historians should adopt a constructivist approach to interpret history for children. Shores reviewed the National History Standards Project, which aimed to reform children’s history education in schools in Los Angeles in 1993. Shores determined that children’s history lessons would be more effective in a museum and classroom setting, “if children also had the opportunities to explore, photograph, draw and write about historic sites in their neighbourhoods.”¹⁹ Although Shores’ article was written before Hein’s constructivist museum theory appeared in print, her work reveals that the benefits of using a constructive approach for teaching history was considered valuable in supporting hands-on interpretive programmes.

Literature on museum theatre has used Hein’s approach when discussing the benefits of using theatre to present history. Public historians Catherine Hughes, Anthony Jackson and Jenny Kidd used Hein’s constructivist museum theory in “The Role of Theatre in Museum Sites.” Hughes, Jackson and Kidd define the constructivist museum as a theory which “...concentrates on how visitors interact and converse before, during and after a museum experience, or construct their own learning in the museum environment.”²⁰ The authors argue that Hein’s theory has been a major influence on

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¹⁹ Elizabeth Shores, “Exploring History with Children: A Constructivist Collaboration,” in *The Public Historian* 16, 3 (Summer, 1994): 52.

²⁰ Jackson et al, 686.

changes in educational programmes in museums since 2000. For instance, many museum programmes encourage visitors to actively participate with museum content by incorporating live interpretation in the exhibit. Live interpretation applies the theory of the constructivist museum as it encourages visitors' participation in the performance. The article reveals that there is a link between the growth of theatre and the wide reception of Hein's constructivist museum.

An interest in performance theory and its relevance to interpretation influenced Jackson and Kidd's "The Performance, Learning and Heritage" project. The project took place from 2005 to 2008 and consisted of researchers such as Jackson and Kidd visiting several historic sites to "observe, document and analyse a variety of performance styles, in a variety of settings and to encompass a wide range of audiences..."²¹ Jackson and Kidd published the results in *Performing Heritage: Research Practice and Innovation in Museum Theatre* in 2011. In one of the contributions, "Authenticity and Metaphor: Displaying intangible human remains in Museum Theatre," Anna Farthing draws on Hein's constructivist theory. Interestingly, Farthing questions Hein's notion that constructivist exhibits should include familiar objects to make a meaningful connection to the visitor when museums are displaying difficult and sensitive histories.²² Farthing argues that museum theatre in these contexts should be "...presented in forms that enable

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²¹ Ed. Anthony Jackson and Jenny Kidd, *Performing Heritage: Research Practice and Innovation in Museum Theatre and Live Interpretation*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 3.

²² Anna Farthing, "Authenticity and Metaphor: Displaying Intangible Human Remains in Museum Theatre," in ed. Anthony Jackson and Jenny Kidd *Performing Heritage: Research, Practice and Innovation in museum theatre and live interpretation*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 102.

critical distance as well as close recognition.”²³ Farthing mentions how Hein’s constructivist museum was applied in her own play *Destination Freedom*. *Destination Freedom* was performed at the National Museum of Liverpool in 2007 and depicts a young married couple who escape enslavement from their plantation in Georgia in 1850.²⁴ To provide historical distance with the characters in the play and the audience, the characters break out of their roles at the end of performance to answer questions about abolition. The ability of characters to change their performance from first person to third person creates a historical distance between past and present and allows the audience to actively and critically examine the performance. G.O.s apply the same method by breaking character at the end of the performance and allowing the audience to ask questions about the specific war and time period they represent.

In addition to Farthing testing the values of Hein’s theory, other museum professionals have argued that constructivist museum theory is a useful framework when museums come to reform existing museum programmes. In “Historical thinking in the Museum” exhibition developer Viviane Gosselin uses Hein’s theory to explain the shift in museum practice: “The realization that people do not absorb new knowledge but rather construct it by adjusting existing mental models to accommodate new experiences, forced museums to consider what learning in the museum actually “means.”²⁵ Gosselin’s reference to the meaning of learning in the museum refers to the inability of the exhibition space to offer visitors the same type of historical knowledge as the history

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²³ Farthing, 102.

²⁴ Ibid, 96.

²⁵ Viviane Gosselin, “Historical Thinking in the Museum: Open to Interpretation,” in *New Possibilities of the Past* ed. Penney Clarke, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 247.

classroom. Gosselin distinguished between two conceptualizations of history the substantive and the procedural.²⁶ By the substantive, Gosselin is referring to the “facts of history” such as events, dates and actors, in other words the content and information which is most commonly provided to visitors. By the procedural, she refers to the operations of historical analysis (the perspectives of different historians, continuity and change, the place of the individual in collective history, causes and effects). The exhibition space, she argues, lacks procedural history, which is how historical concepts are constructed.

Gosselin asks: “...does an exhibition ever discuss the how of history...can museums be considered a place for history education when they only discuss the what and not the how.”²⁷ This opens up dialogue between Gosselin and Hein by arguing that without an interpretive programme for younger audiences it is difficult for visitors to make a meaningful connection to an exhibition if they are only presented with the facts of history. By contrast, the visitor plays a passive role of interpretation, which suggests that G.O.s offer the opportunity for active learning. This conversation is supportive of Hein’s theory as it argues that museum exhibits must provide alternate sources of information to make the facts presented meaningful and accessible to the visitor, which is Hein’s main learning objective.

My observations of G.O.s during May and June 2013 reveal how the programme fosters an active learning environment, while also displaying characteristics of a constructivist museum. However, there are limitations of how effective the performance

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²⁶ Ibid, 250.

²⁷ Gosselin, 250.

was in influencing students' behaviour in the exhibition space as the performance was in a classroom instead of in the galleries. Hein's assertion that the main purpose of using theatre is to provide alternative forms of interpretation to complement static exhibitions is still apparent in the consideration of the eight G.O. performances I observed. The interviews with CWM P.I.s and the observations from their performances reveal that G.O.s apply the principles of Hein's constructivist museum theory.

The comparison of how the G.O. observations demonstrate the principles of Hein's constructivist museum will refer to Hein's aspect of the connection to the familiar and theatre as a learning modality. The first principle, the connection to the familiar, refers to how museums should make interpretive programmes intellectually accessible with students by encouraging a personal connection with the narrative presented. Another way to make this information accessible is to present visitors with familiar objects they can identify with. The connection to the familiar is best exemplified at the beginning of the performance when P.I.s use the painting to ask the audience questions of the setting of their fictional life story. This demonstrates Hein's aim of making the content of the museum intellectually accessible. For instance, at the beginning of Violet the Factory Worker's G.O. she asks students what scene the painting is depicting.²⁸ The painting used for Violet's G.O. is *Women Operators* painted by George Reid, which depicts women working in a shell factory.²⁹ Students typically respond that the painting depicts a factory where workers are making shells. Following this question, Violet asked why the workers are making shells. Students either respond with the answer the First or the Second World

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²⁸ This reference was taken from observation notes of Violet's GO on May 9, 2013.

²⁹ Canadian War Museum, *Women Operators Presentation Script*, (2012), 1.

War. Finally, before Violet started her monologue she asked the students to consider what is different about the workers in the photo as a way of introducing them to the challenges the women workers faced. Throughout Violet's presentation she used different replicas of artillery shells to discuss how difficult they were to make. Violet's interaction with the visitors allows them to think about their former knowledge about military history to contextualize her presentation. Violet's initial interaction with the group, actively engaged students to respond and construct new meanings based on their own cultural capital. In this example, this cultural capital refers to their understanding that the shells were made in the First World War and the new meaning is the shell's association with women's contribution to the war effort.

Illustration 2: Claire and Violet's props and costume when they perform "Women Operators Presentation Script," courtesy of © the Canadian War Museum, Corporate Collection.

Violet is able to introduce the painting and encourage students to make connections by drawing on their cultural capital by asking questions relating to the painting. However, other P.I.s had more difficulty in relating their painting to the audience when they were depicting a character farther in the historical past. In these instances, P.I.s tend to encourage historical empathy in their narrative to make a personal connection with the audience. For instance, during Abigail Mackenzie's performance (a woman describing her childhood memories of the Battle of Queenston Heights during the War of 1812) she is unable to identify the battle without asking several questions, which helped the students to contextualize the paintings she used for the performance. Abigail's use of paintings is unique as she is the only P.I. to refer to two paintings to describe the battle. First she refers to *Queenstown Upper Canada* by Edward Walsh to introduce the G.O. *Queenstown Upper Canada* depicts a serene lake with a cottage. In this instance, her interaction with the group is not initiated by the painting as she usually asks students if they know where Queenston Heights is and makes reference to the falls they might see in the second painting.³⁰ The second painting *The Battle of Queenston Heights* by James B. Dennis is used to describe how the serene setting of Queenston Heights changes after the Battle of 1812. The paintings provide a visual aid for students but the P.I. has to ask more questions about the painting to connect the new material with students' prior knowledge.

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³⁰Observation notes taken from Abigail's performance on May 07, 2013.

Illustration 3: The two paintings Abigail uses during her performance. On the left is *Queenstown Upper Canada* by Edward Walsh and the second is *The Battle of Queenston Heights* by James B. Dennis. Photo by author.

Several scholars discuss how visual culture can be used in constructivist learning. In “Historical thinking in Elementary Education” Amy Von Heyking shows how photographs of a classroom a hundred years ago were used in a history classroom to provide students with a visual perspective of the past.³¹ From this visual exercise, Heyking noticed that students were able to draw specific comparisons about the Victorian classroom setting and their own classroom. Some of the most noticeable observations made by students were clothing, the crowding of the classroom and how mean the teacher looked.³² Thus the main goals of a constructivist museum were achieved as the photograph worked as a visual aid in connecting students with the historical past.

In addition to the P.I. using the painting to establish the scene and setting of the performance, G.O. performances also have a desired objective to generate an emotional response from their audiences. P.I.s aim to encourage students to feel historical empathy

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³¹ Amy Von Heyking, “Historical Thinking in Elementary Education: A Review of Research,” in *New Possibilities for the Past: Shaping Historical Education in Canada*, (Manchester: UBC Press, 2011), 175.

³² Heyking, 175.

with each of their fictional war stories. In “History’s Affective Turn: Historical Re-enactment and Its Work in the Present” Vanessa Agnew considers how the popularity of historical re-enactments at museums and living history sites can be attributed to history’s affective turn. Agnew defines the affective turn as “...historical representation characterized by conjectural representations of the past, the collapsing temporalities and an emphasis on *affect*, individual experience and daily life rather than historical events...”³³ Re-enactment is able to make meaningful and interpersonal connections with the audience because a visitor can personally identify with another individual. Lavoie also argued that re-enactment is affective as it promotes historical empathy among the viewer and the performer.³⁴ Historical empathy is important as it “...helps bridge the gap between past and present, allows visitors to compare individual experiences across time and allows visitors to make a connection to the museum’s collection in personal ways.”³⁵ Thus, when historical empathy is achieved Hein’s goal for an effective learning modality is achieved.

G.O.s reflect the affective turn in history as all of the G.O. scripts mention that they (referring to the students) are here to hear a story that represents the millions of “...ordinary Canadians whose lives have been affected by war.”³⁶ A similarity among the G.O. performances is that they focus on how their relationships with other people were affected by their participation in a war. For instance, when observing Sargent Catherine

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³³ Vanessa Agnew, “History’s Affective Turn: Historical Re-enactment and Its Work in the Present,” *Rethinking History* 11, 3 (September 2007): 299.

³⁴ Lavoie, 45.

³⁵ Ibid, 83.

³⁶ Canadian War Museum, *Women Operators Presentation Script*, (2012), 5.

Fowler's performance (a young Canadian air force technician in the Gulf War) she responded that, for her, the most difficult aspect about being in the military is being away from her son.³⁷ Fowler's character discusses the difficult compromises she made to be in the Air Force, such as missing her son's birthday parties and school trips. When interviewing Fowler, she mentioned that most students cried when she talked about her son.³⁸ This example reveals that the audience made a personal connection with her character's relationship. However, this is just one example of the emotional responses I witnessed to a G.O.s performance. A common observation applying to all G.O.s is that visitors displayed emotional responses when performers discussed how war affected their relationships with their friends and family.

In addition to the personal connection facilitated through the performer's interaction with the visitors, objects were used in most of the G.O. performances to encourage visitors to make meaningful connections to artifacts displayed in the galleries. Hein mentions that exhibitions can be more intellectually accessible if unfamiliar objects are displayed alongside familiar artifacts in the museum.³⁹ Robert Gagnon's uses of unfamiliar and familiar artifacts in his G.O. to illustrate Hein's point that this comparison makes the historical content presented meaningful to the audience as they interact with the familiar objects in their present lives. Gagnon's performance depicted a carpenter during the Battle of the Plains of Abraham.⁴⁰ The familiar are the objects which are linked to a specific person in Robert's narrative and unfamiliar refers to the replicas of

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³⁷These comments were taken from observation notes of Catherine Fowler's performance on June 20, 2013.

³⁸ Catherine Fowler, interview by author, personal interview, Ottawa, ON, 20, September 2013.

³⁹ Hein, 161.

⁴⁰ Canadian War Museum, *View of Quebec Script Male*, (2012),1.

military munitions. Robert introduced the cannon ball by holding it and dropping it on the ground to explain that the English dropped 36,000 cannon balls like these during the siege of Quebec.⁴¹ Next, he showed the group a lantern and a pipe to represent the only remains of his mother and father who died during the attack. The use of both the cannon ball and the personal items encouraged students to make a human connection to the cannon ball. This connection aims to facilitate students' connection to other military artifacts they will encounter in the galleries. One of the main goals in Robert's narrative is to create historical empathy for those who suffered losses in the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. This connection enabled students to draw upon this empathetic experience when they are in the gallery and it is further revealed when Robert concludes his presentation by encouraging students to look for larger cannon balls, which are displayed in Gallery 1.

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⁴¹ Observation notes taken from Robert Gagnon's performance May 03, 2013.

Illustration 4: Robert's props representing the remains of his home after the Siege of Quebec. Photo by author.

Illustration 5: Robert Gagnon's painting "Notre-Dame-des-Victoires" by Dominic Serres. Photo by author.

Illustration 6: The fire bombs as Robert referred to in his G.O. which is displayed in Gallery One. Photo by author.

Theatre scholar Freddie Rokem's analysis of staged performances of the past is useful in analyzing presentations such as Robert's. Rokem argues that academic work on history-centred theatre should be less concerned about the authenticity of historical representations and more focussed on the meaning of their historical representations and their effects on the audience. The various authors contributing to Scott Magelssen and Rhona Justice-Malloy's edited collection of essays, *Enacting History*, accept Rokem's invitation by exploring how history is represented to a specific audience. These performances include representations of race, gender, political and labour issues and consider the larger implications for the institution that was responsible for the performance and how it was received.

In addition to the use of objects to make a personal connection with the visitor, there is a considerable amount of research on the benefits of museums including tactile experiences in museums to improve accessibility provisions. This opportunity fulfills

Hein's objective of providing different learning modalities, which incorporate the seven intelligences. In "The Dubious Inheritance of Touch", Fiona Candlin mentions that over the past decade there is an increase in the number of museums that are providing visitors with "touch replicas of artifacts" in both the exhibition and interpretive programmes to provide visitors with different learning opportunities. These replicas also make learning more accessible for visitors with different visual and auditory impairments.⁴² Candlin refers to Gardner's multiple intelligence theory and mentions that providing these tactile experiences offer students who learn best through bodily kinaesthetic interactions a chance to use a commonly neglected sensory experience in the history classroom.

The consideration of P.I.s who use objects to provide visitors with tactile experiences to provide an alternate learning modality or to make their G.O. more accessible reveals that objects play an integral role in the constructivist museum. During Robert Gagnon's performance he typically invited students at the end of the G.O. to touch the cannon ball. When asked to describe the importance of allowing children to touch the cannon ball Robert replied that "the beauty of the cannon ball is that they can actually feel how heavy it is, there is a very good learning process about being able to touch things—that it does represent something tangible."⁴³ The opportunity for visitors to touch and feel the weight of the cannon ball uses the bodily kinaesthetic intelligence. This encourages students to understand through their interaction with the object the amount of

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⁴² Fiona Candlin, "The Dubious Inheritance of Touch: Art History and Museum Access," *Journal of Visual Culture* 5, 2 (2006): 137.

⁴³ Robert Gagnon, interview by author, personal interview, Ottawa, September 25, 2013.

damage a cannon ball could create when it was being used to destroy buildings during the siege of Quebec.

Illustration 7: The cannon ball Robert passed around. Photo by author.

In addition to using the cannon ball as an alternative learning modality, the objects in the performance allow P.I.s to modify their G.O. if they are visitors with different accessibility issues. For example, during Violet's interview she mentioned that one of the ways she uses her props in her G.O. is to adapt presentations to visitors with different accessibility issues: "In a group there was a boy with limited eyesight, and I thought what can I do... So I pulled out an extra piece of shell and instead of pointing to the painting, I explained the shell... and when I explained the shell exploding, I let the kid hold it. It was really nice to adapt it."⁴⁴ Violet's ability to use props to adapt the presentation reveals that G.O.s adopt a constructivist museum principle as they can improve the museum's accessibility provision.

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⁴⁴ Violet, interview by author, personal interview, Ottawa, September 18, 2013.

In opposition to the general observation that G.O.s serve their purpose of instilling respectful behaviour in the galleries, further visitor surveys of G.O. participants would improve the museums' knowledge of whether students think G.O.s are helpful after the presentation. Hein proposes that visitor studies are a valuable contribution to the constructivist museum as they are able to assess the public's responses to their museum's exhibition and programmes.⁴⁵ He concludes that visitor observation is a necessary component to a constructivist museum as learning in the museum cannot be achieved without the consideration of how visitors learn. However, valuable they may be, Gosselin observes that visitor studies continue to be neglected as a form of analysis and therefore remain understudied in museology literature.⁴⁶ There are, however, some works that adopt such an approach. In *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience*, John Falk uses interviews with visitors in the United States as a main primary source to identify the purpose of why visitors attend museums and what they remember from their visit. Falk's work mainly focuses on surveys of visitors attending art museums and science centers.⁴⁷

Museum studies evaluating the effectiveness of interpretive programmes often consist of general findings without focussing on individual visitor responses, and they are rarely connected with analyses of the views of the programme interpreters who deliver the programme in question. This thesis aims to redress this absence by offering observations on visitor experience and combining them with G.O. interviews of the P.I.s who deliver the programme and therefore giving voice to the front line staff that may not

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⁴⁵ Hein, 178.

⁴⁶ Gosselin, 248.

⁴⁷ John Falk, *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience* (California: West Coast Press, 2009), 42.

be considered when evaluating programmes. Of course, it would have been ideal to have been able to examine both of these forms of analysis alongside visitor surveys and interviews, for example by asking them, as did Falk, about their most memorable aspect of their visit, but this was unfortunately not possible for this thesis.

One study which sought to understand audience response to an historical play is David Dean's examination of a production of Vern Theissen's *Vimy*.⁴⁸ Dean offered an online survey "Performing History, Re-Making History: Vimy on Stage" to the audience after they attended the play. The survey asked the audience to describe how a historical play differs from other mediums to present history such as a book or film.⁴⁹ Some of these answers included theatre's ability to make a personal connection with the viewer. A survey of G.O. participants asking a similar question such as whether theatre was an effective medium to introduce students to the CWM could enhance the museum's understanding of how the public views theatre as an interpretive medium. Another important question to ask G.O. participants would be to determine how G.O.s influenced their visit in the galleries. For instance, did they think about the presentation when they were in the associated gallery? Overall, despite that this work and research hints at the effectiveness of a G.O. performance in the classroom setting, further visitor studies should be conducted by the CWM to evaluate how they influence learning in the museum space.

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⁴⁸ David Dean, "Theatre a Neglected Site for Public History?" in *The Public Historian* 34, 4 (Summer 2012): 21.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 32.

This chapter focused on the interaction between students and the P.I. during the ten minute G.O. before students enter the gallery. It has been argued that a G.O. is an effective medium to introduce students to the museum. We have yet to determine how the performance influences learning in the gallery. Do students that received a G.O. spend more time reading the textual panels in the galleries than students who did not? As such, it is very difficult to observe how the performance directly influenced their interaction in the exhibition space because the P.I. who delivered the G.O. does not accompany the group into the gallery. One of the general findings from the interviews of P.I.s is that they are unable to provide specific examples of how G.O.'s performances influence students' visit in the galleries. However, a common response to how G.O.s influence visitors' behaviour in the galleries is represented in Madeleine's response that "...over the years the groups that have not seen G.O.s have been rowdier, it does accomplish the intention of presenting a sensitive and complicated history in a way that other things just cannot be."⁵⁰ Furthermore, the consideration of my observations of Violet's G.O. over the summer reveals that the only school groups that were asked to leave the museum for misbehaviour were those that did not receive a G.O..⁵¹ Despite there being no specific recorded instances of how G.O.s enhanced the students' interaction in the exhibition space; theatre is able to effectively calm groups down before they enter the museum galleries, which is a main objective of the performance.

The application of Hein's theory to G.O.s reveals that constructivism provides a useful framework to support the inclusion of theatre programmes in museums. The P.I. is

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⁵⁰ Madeleine, interview by author, Ottawa, ON, 20, September 2013.

⁵¹ Observation notes taken from Violet's GO on May 21, 2013.

able to encourage students to make a “connection to the familiar” by the G.O.s use of both the painting and objects. The combination of visual and material technologies allows the student to actively identify with the P.I.’s fictional war story. Also, the use of tactile opportunities makes the performance more physically accessible and applies Hein’s recommendation that interpretive programmes should incorporate as many senses and intelligences as possible. Finally, the historical empathy created by the P.I.s narrative which focuses on how war has affected their relationship with other people encourages students to feel historical empathy with the P.I.’s character. This empathy aims to communicate the main message of the museum that the CWM is a place of memory for all ordinary Canadians who were affected by war.

However, much like the criticism surrounding constructivist learning, which concludes that unguided instruction is an ineffective teaching method, the separation from students and P.I.s after the performance can also be criticized. The lack of visitor studies in the field is also represented at the CWM, where no surveys are taken of G.O. participants. There needs to be more visitor surveys of G.O. participants to evaluate the effectiveness of G.O.s on transmitting the museum message of the human aspect of war with students in the galleries. Even without these surveys, it is possible to conclude that G.O.s are effective at controlling behaviour given that the majority of school groups who misbehave are those that did not receive a G.O..⁵² The importance of respectful behaviour at the CWM hints at the role that Canada’s military past plays on influencing the contemporary national narrative.

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⁵² Madeleine, interview by author, Ottawa, ON, 20, September 2013.

Chapter 2: Narratives of Canadian History and the G.O. Scripts

The previous chapter argued that an essential objective of a constructivist museum is to make museum content meaningful and intellectually accessible to the visitor. Consideration of the G.O. scripts reveals that each narrative represents Canada's military history as a shared history that plays an important role in shaping national identity. This identity has been discussed in several academic works such as Ian Mackay and Jamie Swift's *Warrior Nation*. Mackay and Swift argued that the new Conservative government funds initiatives that glorify Canada's military past with the hopes that Canadians will adopt the national sentiment that "soldiers forged the Canada we know and love."¹ This warrior nation marks a shift from Canadians perceived as non-violent peace keepers to militant combatants that must intervene to keep the peace in other nations.² McKay and Swift argued that the warrior nation is propagated and displayed through increasing commemorative government sponsored initiatives since 2000, which includes the yellow ribbon "support our troops" campaign, the establishment of the Highway for Heroes, the branding of Vimy Ridge on the twenty-dollar bill, and most recently the 1812 commemorative programmes.³ This branding of Canada celebrates its military achievements to encourage Canadians to take pride in their rich military past. As this branding is celebratory it does not, according to McKay and Swift, encourage Canadians to critically engage with Canada's military history and the negative consequences of war.

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¹ Ian McKay and Jamie Swift, *Warrior Nation: Rebranding Canada in an Age of Anxiety* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2012), 7.

² A.L. McCready, "Tie a Ribbon 'Round Public Discourse, National Identity and the War: Neoliberal Militarization and the Yellow Ribbon Campaign in Canada," in *TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* 23-24 (2010):33.

³ Ibid, 9.

The seven G.O. scripts highlight Canada's military achievements. The scripts were written by an external contractor but have been revised by museum staff since the programme started in 2005.⁴ The different time periods in history that are referred to are The Seven Years' War (referring particularly to the Battle of Plains of Abraham), the War of 1812 (referring particularly to the Battle of Queenston Heights), the First World War (with references to The Battle of the Somme and the Battle of Vimy Ridge), the First Gulf War and the Canadian engagement in the war in Afghanistan. Each script depicts the heroism of "ordinary Canadians" in different battles or times of conflict, but the scripts tend to overlook the controversial aspects of war. The comparison of G.O. scripts with how the G.O. is actually performed demonstrates that in some G.O.s, P.I.s are able to offer visitors a more critical interpretation of the past. The P.I.s bring their own perspectives on the consequences of war and their own personal experiences with the past and this is representative of how P.I.s adapt the script in a performance. For example, two of the P.I.s have a personal connection to the more recent wars presented: Afghanistan and the Gulf War. This shaped their performance to reflect their personal experiences and opinions on the conflict. Overall, the comparison of the G.O. scripts with observations of how the military past is performed reveals that P.I.s are able to provide students with a more critical representation of war.

The G.O. scripts, which are part of the CWM's interpretive programmes, were written to commemorate the sacrifices of Canadians in war. However, this focus does not include some controversial aspects of war such as questioning the morality of Canada's

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⁴ This information was retrieved through email correspondence with current CWM employees Ashlee Beattie and Sandra O'Quinn on November 25, 2013.

involvement in a particular war. The history of the new CWM reveals that like exhibits in the galleries, interpretive programmes such as G.O.s must be carefully written as the CWM acts as both a museum and a memorial for all Canadian veterans. For instance, other controversies in the museum have revealed that curators can be under political pressure to be cautious when developing exhibitions that reflect on critical representations of Canada's participation in war. For example, in 2007 the CWM was forced to remove a text panel on the orders of a Senate sub-committee called to examine the museum's representation of the Allied Bombing offensive on Germany in the Second World War because of protests from veterans who were offended by the panel as they interpreted it as questioning the utility and morality of the campaign.⁵ This reveals the potential for a museum such as CWM to come under political pressure to limit or at least contextualise carefully any critical representations of Canada's military involvement.⁶ This is a more general issue, for as Fiona Cameron argues, museums with a commemorative role are faced with the added interpretive obstacle to "legitimize stakeholder service, affirm experiences and uphold a positive imaginary, which precludes a deep interrogation of topics."⁷

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⁵ For articles on the issues of Bombing Command consider David Dean, "Museums as Conflict Zones: The Canadian War Museum and Bomber Command," in *Museum and Society* 7, 1 (March 2009), Norman Hillmer, Norman Hillmer, "The Canadian War Museum and the Military Identity of an Unmilitary People," in *Canadian Military History* 19, 3 (Summer 2010), and Roger Sarty, "The Nationalization of Military History: Scholarship, Politics, and the Canadian War Museum," ed Norman Hillmer and Adam Chapnick *Canada's of the Mind: The Making and Unmaking of Canadian Nationalisms in the Twentieth Century* (Quebec: McGill Queen's University Press, 2007).

⁶ Dean, "Bombing Command," 10, Hillmer, "The Canadian War Museum and the Military Identity of an Unmilitary People," 26 and Sarty, "The Nationalization of Military History", 127.

⁷ Fiona Cameron, "Beyond Surface Representations: Museums, "Edgy" Topics, Civic Responsibilities and Modes of Engagement," in F. Cameron and A. Witcomb ed. 'Contest and Contemporary Society: Redefining museums in the 21st Century', *Open Museum Journal* 8 (2006): 2.

The history of the CWM reveals the changing role on the importance of Canada's military history to the national imaginary. The CWM was Canada's first national history museum first established by the Department of Militia and Defence in 1880 and was located in Cartier Square Drill Hall.⁸ The location moved to the Public Archives in the historic building on 336 Sussex where it stayed until the major renovation in 2005.⁹ Roger Sarty described that veterans demonstrated little interest in the museum until the 1980s when the majority of veterans from the Second World War reached retirement age and wanted a better museum to commemorate their military achievements. The increased interest in the museum partly influenced a Task Force in 1991 to review the museum.¹⁰ The Task Force labelled it as an insufficient and embarrassing representation of Canada's military history. It mentioned that the museum lacked the technology and infrastructure to display and present military artifacts. Exhibits also showed little evidence of a cohesive narrative. An example of this was a mannequin displaying a nursing uniform, which was presented in isolation from other artifacts.¹¹ The report influenced the CMCC to allocate 1.7 million dollars to build an additional structure to the museum.¹²

The Task Force report influenced veterans to petition the government for more funding to renovate the museum. In 1995 the Friends of the War Museum, which is a volunteer organization of the CWM mostly made up of veterans, launched the Pass the Torch campaign for a new museum. The campaign started at a time when the cultural

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⁸ Sarty, 112.

⁹ Hillmer, 20 and Sarty, 112.

¹⁰ Sarty, 112.

¹¹ Sarty, 112.

¹² Hillmer, 21, Sarty, 112.

importance of veterans was changing in society. Howard Fremeth argued that the beginning of the 1990s represents a “decade of darkness” of the public opinion on the Canadian Forces (CF).¹³ Fremeth refers to the CF’s controversial involvement in Somalia and their failure to stop the Rwandan genocide. The Standing Committee on National Defence and Veteran Affairs conducted a report about the quality of life in the CF which confirmed that “the feeling among military personnel [was] that they had somehow been forgotten by the nation they had sworn to serve.”¹⁴ As a result of this feeling of neglect from the public sphere veterans started to participate in advocating against different memorialization’s of military history. This provided them with an opportunity to demonstrate their national significance to Canadians about the importance of representing military history in different mediums such as film and museum exhibits.

In 1992 veterans filed a law suit against the National Film Board (NFB) and Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) film makers Terence and Brian McKenna’s docudrama series *The Valour and the Horror*.¹⁵ The docudrama included an episode *Bombing by Moonlight*, which depicts Canada’s participation in the Allied bombing campaign against Germany. The episode displayed the risks the Royal Air Force RAF was exposed to during the bombing and questioned the morality of targeting civilians. The docudrama was criticized by veterans for its misrepresentation of historical facts and the negative image it gave veterans of the Second World War. Although veterans lost the

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¹³ Howard Fremeth, “Searching for the Militarization of Canadian Culture: The Rise of a Cultural Memory Network,” in TOPIA: *TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* 23-24 (2010): 53.

¹⁴ Ibid, 54.

¹⁵ Graham Carr, “Rules of Engagement: Public History and the Drama of Legitimation,” in *Canadian Historical Review* 86, 2 (June 2005): 317, Dean, “Bombing Command,” 9, Hillmer, 24 and Sarty, 125.

law suit they received an apology from the CBC ombudsman and from a report in a Senate sub-committee. Graham Carr considers the controversy in greater depth and argues that the controversy reflects public concern about the ownership of history.¹⁶ Carr argues that the public generally questions the credibility of the stakeholders of history such as politicians, historians, and special interest groups. In the case of the *Valour and the Horror* the sympathetic reaction from the public to veteran's complaints and the official apologies reveal that the public took the view that veterans' lived experience of the historical event provided them with an "incontestable" narrative of history that could well encourage historians, public history practitioners, and politicians hesitant to be circumspect in any critical representation of Canada's military past.¹⁷

In addition to this protest, veterans mobilized to campaign against the museum authorities' proposal to add a new Holocaust wing in 1997.¹⁸ Veterans were offended that they were not consulted about the exhibition idea and many argued that the Holocaust was outside of the museum's mandate as it was not part of Canada's military history. The veterans' campaign was successful and it created a precedent that the CWM should consult veterans for future exhibitions.¹⁹

The veterans' successful campaign galvanized the Pass the Torch campaign which aimed to support the creation of a new museum. The campaign was launched in 1995, a significant year as it marked the celebrations for the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the

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¹⁶ Carr, 325, Dean, 9, Hillmer, 24.

¹⁷ Ibid, 325.

¹⁸ David Dean, "Museums as Conflict Zones," 2, Hillmer, 23.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Second World War.²⁰ The CWM organized commemorative activities for the event in Ottawa, which thousands of Canadians participated in and others watched as it was broadcast across the country. The successful campaigns against the *Valour and the Horror*, the defeat of the proposed Holocaust wing, and the commemoration of veterans in the Second World War undoubtedly generated support for the Pass the Torch campaign which raised \$16,500,000 towards the cost of a new building.²¹ The large role that veterans played in the funding of the new CWM gave them influence over the content of the museum. The importance of veterans as an interest group to the CWM demonstrates that the G.O. scripts would have to be sensitive in the way they present Canada's role in former wars.

The chief executive officer and director of the CWM in 2005 was historian Jack Granatstein who largely influenced the museum's mandate.²² Granatstein's 1998 work *Who Killed Canadian History?* challenged history education arguing that it placed too much emphasis on social and cultural history, stressed diversity over narratives of constitutional achievement and unity, and did not pay enough attention to Canada's military achievements. Granatstein advocated for a chronological teaching of history and encourages teaching the narratives "...that recognizes what men and women, great and ordinary, did to build a successful nation."²³ Granatstein's focus on the accomplishments of ordinary citizens arguably influenced the CWM mandate which is to "educate, preserve and remember... Canada's military heritage [by] preserving historical artifacts,

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²⁰ Sarty, 125.

²¹ Dean, "Museums as Conflict Zones," 3.

²² Hillmer, 23, Sarty, 125.

²³ Jack Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History?* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1998), 103.

and encouraging Canadians to reflect on past sacrifices.”²⁴ The objective of the mandate is to “...ensure that the memory and meaning of Canada’s military past will never be forgotten.”²⁵ Specifically, the museum’s exhibition and galleries have been designed to “...emphasize the human experience of war in order to explain the impact of organized human conflict on...Canadians.”²⁶ The galleries also reflect Granatstein’s opinion on the importance of a chronological narrative as visitors can explore each of the four galleries as a “walk through time” to explore Canada’s involvement in different wars around the world from warfare in pre-contact Canada to conflicts in the present.²⁷ The mandate and the organization of the Permanent Exhibition aims to provide Canadians with a learning institution that offers what Granatstein labelled as a lack of historical sources that provide insight on Canada’s military past.

Granatstein’s belief in the importance of promoting Canada’s military history demonstrates an opposing view to the problems with the recent government rebranding programmes as discussed in McKay and Swift’s *Warrior Nation*. In a direct response to *Warrior Nation* Granatstein described it as having “...some truth... but mostly it’s a lot of hooey. The government built up the military — and is now rolling back the defence budget. Despite my best efforts, polls demonstrate Canadians know very little of their military past.”²⁸ Granatstein acknowledges the increased military spending at the turn of

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²⁴ CWM Backgrounder, 1.

²⁵ CWM Backgrounder, 1.

²⁶ CWM, “The Canadian War Museum at a Glance—2007” retrieved from <http://www.warmuseum.ca/about-us/about-the-museum/about-the-canadian-war-museum/>.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ J.L. Granatstein, “Canada always was a Warrior Nation,” *CDFAI: 3Ds Blog*, September 03, 2013, retrieved from <http://www.cdfai.org/the3dsblog/?p=1402>.

the century but does not view this as a break from the historical past. Furthermore, he does not think that the increased efforts from the government to publicize Canada's historical past has changed the national narrative or increased Canadians interest in learning military history.

Other military historians make the same criticisms of *Warrior Nation*. Martin Shadwick judged Swift and McKay's depiction of the Harper government's commemorative policy as military propaganda to be "...delusional and grossly exaggerated."²⁹ Shadwick referred specifically to Swift and McKay's exaggerated accusation that the Harper government promotes war over peacekeeping, pointing out that Canada's peacekeeping role declined and military spending increased under the Governments of former prime ministers Pierre Trudeau and John Diefenbaker. Shadwick analyses the 2012 Harper budget and demonstrates that the government's reduction of military spending sits oddly if there was a determination to promote Canada as a warrior nation. Although the criticisms of *Warrior Nation* are important to note because they certainly suggest that Swift and McKay's historical claims cannot be taken uncritically, the theory postulated in their book is a useful framework when considering the historical narratives offered by the G.O. scripts. Canada's participation in Afghanistan influenced new cultural representations of war to be inserted into the national imaginary. M.L. McCready argues that the yellow ribbon Support our Troops campaign that started in 2002 to support Canada's presence in Afghanistan "...binds the national imaginary to the contradictory sense that Canada's role in the world has changed, and yet remains the

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²⁹ Martin Shadwick, "Warrior Nation?" in *Canadian Military Journal* 3, 1 (Winter 2012): 70.

same: peacekeeping is a noble but failed project eclipsed by a world riven with terror...”³⁰ In this new national imaginary it is Canada’s role to participate in the wars on terror to ensure global peace and democracy. The campaign was supported by the Department of National Defence (DND) and is an essential cultural representation of the warrior nation. Interestingly, the Support our Troops campaign aimed to celebrate soldiers’ war effort over Canada’s involvement in the war itself. McCready conducted surveys of proponents of the yellow ribbon campaign that stated it was the nation’s duty to support the troops regardless of their opinion on the war. A national survey of Canada’s support for Afghanistan reveals that forty six percent of Canadians support the war but almost eighty percent of Canadians support troops. The yellow ribbon symbolizes the ambiguity for support for the war and support for troops but it is more effective as a symbol as an invented tradition and its role in forming a collective identity among Canadians in their support for a military people.³¹

The suggestion that the yellow ribbon campaign is an invented tradition draws upon Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's collection of essays exploring traditions and nationalism. In their 1983 work, *The Invention of Tradition* Hobsbawm argued that an “invented tradition includes both traditions that are invented, constructed and instituted in an easily traceable manner within a brief and dateable period...that [establishes] themselves rapidly”³² Hobsbawm specified that it is not the duration of an invented tradition that is important but the connection it represents with continuity from a recent

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³⁰ McCready, 35.

³¹ Ibid, 47.

³² Eric Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: University Press, 1983), 1.

historical past. In the case of yellow ribbons and recent commemorative displays of military history in Canadian culture such as new twenty dollar bill commemorating Vimy Ridge and the War of 1812 commemorative coins, it seems clear that this is a case of newly-invented representations which have grown rapidly since Canada's participation in Afghanistan. These invented traditions represent continuity with the past as it uses the same iconic symbolism as Canadians as peacekeepers with the imagery of Canadians as soldiers for peace.

The association of celebrating Canada's military past with its current military involvement in Afghanistan demonstrates a particular emphasis in the shaping of national identity and generating nationalist sentiment. As a result Canadians who support the military are included in what Benedict Anderson has called an imagined community. Anderson discusses how nationalist discourse is shared by the same members of a nation because they believe they belong to the same imagined community.³³ This community is imagined because despite that members of a nation will not personally know each other; they feel a sense of kinship towards one another since they live in the same country.³⁴ These celebrations and commemorations aim to make Canadians feel a connection to one another through their shared military past and present.

Anderson affirms that museums play an important role in providing citizens with an institution that encourages a sense of national belonging.³⁵ If it is too much to say that

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³³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and the Spread of Nationalism* (Verso: London, 2006), 6.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Anderson, 6. David Dean, "Museums as Sites for Historical Understanding, Peace and Justice," in *Journal of Peace Psychology*, 19, 4 (November 2013), 333.

the current Conservative government considers museums as an essential part of rebranding Canada as a warrior nation, there is no doubt that military history and the military past is receiving far greater attention under the Harper government than previous ones. One of the most recent examples of rebranding Canada is the announcement of Heritage Minister Moore on October 16, 2012 that the CWM's sister museum the Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC) will be changing its name to the Canadian Museum of History (CMH).³⁶ The Conservative government is giving 25 million dollars to rebrand the CMC for Canada's 150th celebrations. In addition to the new name, the mandate of the CMC has also been changed to remove the responsibility of the old museum to present critical understanding on the past while placing an emphasis on appreciation and respect.³⁷ The mandate also reduced the museum's former commitment to conducting anthropological, ethnographic and archaeological research.³⁸ The museum's current CEO Mark O'Neill mentioned that the new CMH will include "the touchstones of our history" such as Champlain's Astrolabe, the Last Spike, historical portraits, and relics of national sports accomplishments.³⁹ In response to the new mandate former museum CEO Victor Rabinovitch described it as "deeply worrying, narrow and

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³⁶ Parliament of Canada, 2012, Legislative Summary of Bill C-49: An Act to amend the Museums Act in order to establish the Canadian Museum of History and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, retrieved from:

http://www.parl.gc.ca/About/Parliament/LegislativeSummaries/bills_ls.asp?ls=c49&Parl=41&Ses=1&source=library_prb&Language=E.

³⁷ CBC, "Museum of Civilization to become history," Last modified October 15, 2012, *CBC News*, retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/story/2012/10/15/ottawa-museum-civilization-rebranding-canadian-history.html>

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Canadian Museum of Civilization, "The Canadian Museum of History at a Glance," 2013, *CMCC*, retrieved from <http://www.civilization.ca/about-us/canada-history-museum>.

parochial.”⁴⁰ Rabinovitch expanded this comment by stating that “these proposed changes to the mandate will have the overall effect of reducing the museum's scope of activity and creating an inward focus that turns away from the world and eliminates concern with the here and the now.”⁴¹ The staffing changes in the CMC Curatorial department also reflects this perspective as the areas of archaeology and anthropology reduced their curatorial staff from seven to four while two historians in Canadian history were hired.⁴² The emphasis on celebration over critical representations of the past mirrors the warrior nation sentiment, which conveys Canadians as heroic soldiers and excludes the consequences of war.

Academics such as Miranda Brady and David Dean offer suggestions about how the CMH can critically present the past.⁴³ Brady argues that the “touchstones of our history” omit the darker historical events in Canada’s history such as its Indian Residential School Legacy from the 1870s to 1990s.⁴⁴ At this time approximately 150,000 aboriginal students were placed in residential schools and suffered numerous accounts of psychological and physical abuse. CMC’s refusal to allow the Truth and Reconciliation Committee to include documents on the atrocities experienced by

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⁴⁰ Canadian Museum of Civilization, “Ex-museum CEO Calls Proposed Mandate Narrow and Parochial,” Last modified June 06, 2013, *CBC News*, retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/ex-museum-ceo-calls-proposed-mandate-narrow-and-parochial-1.1365609>.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² CBC, “Number of Curators at Museum Drops by a Third,” Last modified April 26, 2013, *CBC News*, retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/number-of-curators-at-museum-drops-by-a-third-1.1306569>.

⁴³ Also see K. Taylor 2012, “The new Canadian Museum of History: Whose history will it tell?” Last modified December 16, 2013, *The Globe and Mail*, retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/art-and-architecture/the-new-canadian-museum-of-history-whose-history-will-it-tell/article6390494/?page=all>.

⁴⁴ Miranda Brady, “The Flexible Heterotopia: Indian Residential Schools and the Canadian Museum of Civilization,” in *Journal of Peace Psychology* 19 (4): 408.

aboriginal students demonstrates the museum's reluctance to display content that is critical about Canadian history. Dean also offers recommendations to CMH's renovations as he suggests that events such as the Last Spike offer an opportunity to tell difficult stories. Dean mentions that the Last Spike could include a narrative of racial inequality concerning the Chinese workers who built the railway and the horrible working conditions they experienced.⁴⁵ Although, the CMH provides a possibility for critical engagement with the past, a reflection on the celebratory nature of the warrior nation suggest that it will ignore the consequences of the important events in national history to focus on commemorating Canada's achievements.

Certain CWM temporary exhibitions celebrate Canada's military achievements as an essential to the process of peace making. The CWM's advertisement for *Peace: The Exhibition* released the same day of the opening May 31, 2013 promotes the exhibition in the celebratory rhetoric of the warrior nation. The video advertisement features quotes from past Canadian soldiers and prime ministers supporting Canada's participation in war to achieve peace. The video uses this to present the *Peace: The Exhibition* themes "Organize," "Intervene," and "Negotiate." For example, an excerpt of Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden's speech at the House of Commons on August 14, 1914 was included, which stated that "...in the very name of peace we sought at any cost we have entered into this war..."⁴⁶ This narrative follows a debate in "Intervention" about whether war is

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⁴⁵ Dean, "Museums as Sites for Historical Understanding," 332.

⁴⁶ "Peace: The Exhibition at the Canadian War Museum," YouTube video, 2:30, Posted by the Canadian War Museum, June 03, 2013, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BlcDyOvwXpE&feature=c4-overview&list=UUD2nnvHjFOgqmmQLDju-1LA>.

necessary to achieve peace. As a museum whose mandate is to commemorate Canada's military history it implies that war is essential for peace.

Although *Peace—The Exhibition* implies that war and peace are intertwined different public historians have praised the exhibition for its visitor centred approach and its incorporation of different perspectives of war.⁴⁷ In particular Jill Strauss has considered the advantages of the CWM's visitor centred curatorial approach. Strauss considers the three themes and argues that *Peace* offered more critical perspectives on Canada's military past than CWM's former exhibition *1812*.⁴⁸ For instance, "Negotiate" included several aboriginal treaties such as the Great Law of Peace and Treaty 7. In addition to greater representation of aboriginal conflicts in Canada, "Intervene" includes a panel of visitor's comments on Canada's participation in Afghanistan collected by the museum in 2007. This section asked visitors to write their own comments about their responses to the panel and their overall opinions towards the consequences of the war. This made visitors a part of the exhibit and allowed them to be included in a representation of the past. Visitors were also asked to write their comments in each of the three themes of the exhibition.

The history of the different interest groups that encouraged the government to fund a new war museum and the increasing government spending to commemorate war provides an important context in which the G.O. scripts were conceived. The scripts are a part of the CWM's interpretive planning and aim to fulfill the museum's mandate which

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⁴⁷ Dean, "Museums as Sites for Historical Understanding," 334 and Jill Strauss, "Exhibiting Peace in a War Museum," in *Journal of Peace Psychology* 19 (4): 402.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 3.

suggests that they have to be carefully crafted to ensure that they are sensitive to different interest groups. The consideration of the exhibition themes in former temporary exhibitions is important as some scripts were created to promote these exhibits and thus share the same interpretive objectives.

The majority of the scripts demonstrate that Canada's participation in war was necessary to preserve peace. This is present in both male and female versions of the *View of Quebec Script*, which depicts the English siege of Quebec at the Plains of Abraham in 1759. The G.O. characters are brother and sister, Marie and Robert Gagnon who lived in Quebec City during the battle. Although, both male and female versions of the script draw on the fear and anger felt by the French by Britain's bombardment of the city, both scripts end with an optimistic sentiment towards British rule. For example, after retelling the French defeat at the Plains of Abraham, both Marie and Robert's script described their feelings towards the British as "we were all full of fear when our enemy marched through our town gates but the British treated us well enough."⁴⁹ This is one of the last lines of the script before Marie and Robert break character to the audience. The end of the script overlooks the inequality French Canadians experienced as a result of British rule that continues to be a debated issue.

Although both male and female versions of the scripts used the same phrase to describe French sentiment towards British rule, Marie and Robert presented the living conditions of French Canadians after British rule in a different way. In an interview asking P.I.s to reflect on changes to improve G.O.s, Marie responded that the script

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⁴⁹ *View of Quebec Script*, 5.

needed to be revised: “the script takes much longer to perform than ten minutes...and the story is all over the place so I restructure it.”⁵⁰ Marie’s suggestion was shared by the majority of the P.I.s interviewed. As mentioned earlier the scripts were not written by a CWM employee but by an outside contractor for the museum. The scripts have been revised by interpretive planner Kathryn Lyons but there is little information about the last time the scripts were updated. As a result many P.I.s make their own changes to the scripts. For instance, at the end of the presentation Marie does not follow the script in its emphasis that the British treated French Canadians well because they helped pay to rebuild the city after the battle. Instead Marie focused on the sacrifice of war and reflects on her experience as a witness of the victims of war. Specifically, she focused on the young soldiers she treated who were part of the *Canadien* militia as a nurse at the Hôpital General and her happiness that the war is over.⁵¹ Marie concludes her presentation by asking students how old they are—to encourage students to make a personal connection with the young soldiers who volunteered in the militia for battle. The consideration of Marie’s performance with the script is that she provides a more critical representation of war.

Robert’s performance also alters the script to summarize life after British rule. Although, Robert does not conclude his presentation by using the same expressions in the script, he still ended his performance in a celebratory tone. At the beginning of Robert’s performance he introduces the historical context differently than the script by stating that

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⁵⁰ Marie Gagnon, interview by author, Ottawa, ON, 25 September 2013.

⁵¹ Observation notes taken during Marie Gagnon’s performance on June 05, 2013.

“1763 was a good year because the bees came early.”⁵² This introduction is relevant as this is used to describe life after the Plains of Abraham at the end of the presentation. After describing the French defeat, Robert explained that it was a good year because he returned to his former work as a carpenter and it was a good year for the harvest because the bees came early. The connection to the early harvest and life after British rule implies that the French went back to living their lives as they did before the battle. This diminishes the negative consequences the battle had on Anglo-French relations.

Another war of national significance presented is the War of 1812. In an interview with Abigail she mentioned that her character was created in the spring of 2012 to promote the new exhibit *1812: One War, Four Perspectives*.⁵³ The script for the G.O. *Queenston Upper Canada* provides a personal account of a Canadian woman retelling her childhood memories of the battle when she was living in Queenston. Unlike the intention of the exhibit *1812*, the script depicts the consequences of battle in a singular narrative. The script does not explain why the Americans declared war on Britain it simply states that 1812 “was the year the United States declared war on Great Britain.”⁵⁴ The script emphasized the geographic location of the US being just across the river as being the primary cause for attack. Abigail provides greater historical context to the script when she described the causes of war such as the Seven Years War before explaining that when the British navy captured American sailors during the War of 1812 they forced them to

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⁵² Observation notes taken during Robert Gagnon’s performance on May 23, 2013.

⁵³ Abigail Mackenzie, interview by author, Ottawa, ON, 25 September 2013.

⁵⁴ Canadian War Museum, *Queenston Upper Canada* (2012), 2.

fight against Napoleon.⁵⁵ Abigail asked the group how they would feel if someone captured their father and he never came back home. This explanation provides greater historical understanding of the event and offers the war from the American perspective.

Abigail's performance is also more effective than the script in engaging students to think about the past in her ability to adapt the content of her performance to subjects students were taught in their classrooms. This is important as the content of the history curriculum is focused on provincial history. In one instance, Abigail asked a group who is from New Brunswick and if they were familiar with the 104 Regiment.⁵⁶ The group unanimously replied that they knew the story of the regiment. Abigail praised the regiment for their heroic participation in the war by walking from New Brunswick to Kingston in the winter to fight in the War of 1812. After this story was told, the group responded with cheers and applause. This is an adaptation from the script as it only mentions the 2nd Regiment of Lincoln Militia, which was the district regiment for Queenston.⁵⁷ The incorporation of the story of the 104 Regiment provided students with another Canadian perspective of war. Although the G.O. still promotes the importance of the War of 1812 in forming the national narrative and celebrates its achievements, Abigail's adaptation of the script provides another Canadian perspective, which provides

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⁵⁵ Observation notes taken during Abigail Mackenzie's performance May 07, 2013.

⁵⁶ Observation notes taken from Abigail Mackenzie's performance on May 9, 2013.

⁵⁷ Canadian War Museum, *Queenston Upper Canada* (2012), 3.

students with a relevant and meaningful example of how different provinces participated in the War.⁵⁸

The ability for P.I.s to be able to provide more historical details about a particular war demonstrates that they must have considerable knowledge in the subject. The majority of P.I.s answered that the opportunity to speak with a historian on their specific topic was the most valuable part of training. As previously mentioned this training is important as it allows the P.I. to adapt the presentation to the specific audience. This training also helped P.I.s effectively answer questions during their performance. This is important in the P.I.s ability to help students understand the consequences of war. For example, during one of Madeleine's performances who played a French Canadian nursing sister in the First World War a student asked what was the worst wound she ever treated.⁵⁹

There was a time when I was asked in a G.O. about what is the worst wound I ever treated. I had no experience with this subject before I performed as Madeleine. I had a chance to sit down with a historian and ask all types of questions. One of the questions was how amputations were done and how they were treated and because of this I was able to respond to the question with an appropriate answer.⁶⁰

The ability for Madeleine to respond with a relevant and effective answer encourages students to reflect on the consequence of war as it provides a specific and vivid description of a treatment that occurred frequently.

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⁵⁸ For another example of how provincial specific learning can influence teaching national historical narratives consider Meike Wernicke's "Imagined Communities and the Changing Perspectives on Canadian Unity."

⁵⁹ Observation notes taken from Madeleine's performance on June 13, 2013.

⁶⁰ Madeleine, interview by author, Ottawa, ON, 29 September 2013.

Madeleine's script *Nursing Sister in Doullens, France* provides students with a considerable understanding of the consequences of war compared to other G.O. scripts. This is because the majority of the script emphasized the human casualties of war. For instance, the script mentioned Canada's participation in battles that are remembered as the touchstones of Canada's military history without mentioning the heroism of war. Instead the script described how these battles caused several casualties: "during big battles like the Somme and Vimy Ridge, we would get hundreds of badly wounded soldiers arriving every day—sometimes even more. We would work all day to fix them up and then hundreds more would arrive the next day."⁶¹ This follows the main theme in the script that provides details of the casualties of war and its greatest injustice—the sacrifice of human life. This G.O. is performed very closely to the script, which suggests that unlike some of the other scripts it provides a more critical understanding of the consequences of war.

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⁶¹ Canadian War Museum, *Nursing Sister in Doullens, France—Female* (2012), 3.

Illustration 8: Madeleine performing a “Nursing sister in Doullens, France,” photo courtesy of © the Canadian War Museum, Corporate Collection.

The other G.O. performances that present women’s experience in the First World War are Claire and Violet, who are factory workers. The *Women Operators Presentation Script* described the battle of Vimy Ridge and its importance in forming Canadian national identity. The script refers to the battle to explain how Violet and Claire’s fiancé dies: “it was just after Easter in 1917 when news came about how Canadians had captured Vimy Ridge...we were all excited because...we thought the war might end soon...I remember that day...because Vimy Ridge was where my Johnny died.”⁶² The script presents the battle of Vimy Ridge as a significant Canadian contribution to the war but also encourages students to understand that the victory came with a consequence. The intention to choose Vimy Ridge over other battles is because of its role in the Canadian

⁶² Canadian War Museum, *Women Operators Presentation Script*, 4.

cultural imaginary. This is an important event for the G.O. as it ties the Canadian contribution to the First World War as significant, which should be included in the national narrative of Canada's role in the war.

The importance of Vimy Ridge in the national narrative is presented differently in the G.O. performance. Although, both Violet and Claire follow the same script they focus on different aspects of war in their performance. Violet's performance tends to focus on the struggles women faced in working in ammunition factories. Violet starts by describing the positive working opportunity the war provided for women as it paid more than other domestic employment acceptable for women. Violet lists the daily challenges of working in a factory such as getting blisters from lifting heavy shells and the accidents that could happen if hair or clothing got caught in the machinery.⁶³ Violet mentions her fiancé Johnny as the inspiration for working hard but does not always tell the group that Johnny died at Vimy Ridge in her performance, which is how the G.O. ends in the script. In an interview, Violet described the most important element students should get from the G.O. "is that women can do amazing things... independently from men."⁶⁴ Violet's main message that she wants to give the group is the importance of women's ability to extraordinary things without the support of men. As a result of this belief, Violet omits Johnny's story from some of her G.O.s. Violet's presentation reveals how G.O.s' interpretation of what is important in the script influences what critical aspects she presents of war.

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⁶³ Observation notes taken from Violet's performance on June 12, 2013.

⁶⁴ Violet, interview by author, 17 September 2013.

Claire's performance differs from Violet's as it emphasized the character's romantic relationship with a Canadian soldier at the front. Claire's performance omits sections of the script that provide details about the physical challenges women faced in the factories. Instead her performance focused on the love story developed between a factory worker and a soldier at the front.⁶⁵ Claire's performance offered a detailed account of the battle of Vimy Ridge, which emphasized that Canadians captured the Ridge, which was a turning point of the war that helped the Allies to victory. This description is followed by Claire's announcement that this is where Johnny died and that "somehow, I managed to get back to work the day after we heard that Johnny was killed... after that we all worked a little bit harder..."⁶⁶ The comparison of Violet and Claire's performances reveals that different interpretations of the script can completely change the national narrative presented to the audience. Claire's performance highlights Canada's military achievements and how women helped with this goal, while Violet's main focus was women's contribution to the war effort on the home front. The P.I.s personal interests in war over the script influence what aspects of war are celebrated and criticized.

The G.O.s discussed so far in this chapter focus on the importance of Canada's heroic participation in colonial wars. The next two performances reflect a more recent shift in the role of the military in the Canadian national narrative. This narrative starts with Canadians as peacekeepers, which is performed by Catherine a Gulf War technician. This role is played by a P.I. whose father fought in the CF in the Cold War, which

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⁶⁵ Observation notes taken from Claire Robinson's performance on June 12, 2013.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

influenced Catherine's interpretation of the event to strongly support Canada's military involvement. In addition to the Gulf War, Canada's contemporary role in the warrior nation is depicted by a G.O. performance of a Canadian War Correspondent in Afghanistan, Vincent. The P.I. for this G.O. also has a military background as he formerly fought for the CF for three years from 2008 to 2011. The reflection of both performances reveals how personal experiences and opinions of war influenced the P.I.s interpretation of the script.

There are certain similarities between the *Gulf War Technician* and *A War Correspondent in Afghanistan* scripts in the way they simplify the causes of Canada's participation in the war. For example, *Gas Attack Presentation Script* described the causes of the Gulf War as "when the president of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, broke international laws and invaded Kuwait... the UN coalition forces went to force Iraqi troops to leave Kuwait...and that's how I got involved."⁶⁷ The script does not mention the Cold War and its historical significance to the battle, which offers an uncritical representation of the causes of the Gulf War. Although G.O.s are supposed to be ten minutes, the script could describe the fighting that was happening in the Middle East prior to the invasion. The script also portrays the Canadian Air Force as pacifists rather than soldiers in war as it mentions that "our pilots were never involved in much fighting—they spent most of their time flying above the American and Canadian navy ships in the Persian Gulf to guard against enemy attacks."⁶⁸ The representation of

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⁶⁷ Canadian War Museum, *Gas Attack Presentation Script* (2012), 1-2.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 3.

Canada's role in the Gulf War follows the peacekeeping narrative and emphasizes how Canadians played a primarily non aggressive role in military missions.

Illustration 9: Sargent Catherine Fowler performing "A War Correspondent in Afghanistan," photo courtesy of courtesy of © the Canadian War Museum, Corporate Collection.

The *Canadian War Correspondent in Afghanistan Presentation Script* follows the same narrative as it simplifies Canada's role and the causes of war in Afghanistan. The script defines Canada's reason in the conflict by stating that "it was 2002—early in the war in Afghanistan when Canadians had joined the Americans and other allied forces against Al Qaida—the terrorists responsible for the attack on the Twin Towers in New York City..."⁶⁹ The causes of war as described in the script clearly identify Canada's role

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⁶⁹ Canadian War Museum, *A Canadian War Correspondent Presentation Script*, (2012), 1.

in Afghanistan as fighting the ‘war on terror’, which is an essential part of gaining support for Canada’s participation in the war.

Of the wars presented in G.O.s, the Gulf War was the least recognizable for students. Upon observing the G.O. it was evident that most students had not learned about the Gulf War prior to their visit. During Catherine’s presentation she asked students what conflict took place in 1991, in which students commonly replied with the Cold War.⁷⁰ This is when Catherine follows the script and answers that it was the Gulf War and explains how it started with Iraqi president Saddam Hussein invading Kuwait. Catherine mentions how she participated in a Coalition force and then she asks the group to identify what this is. The group typically did not know what a Coalition force was, which prompted Catherine to rephrase the question by asking students what they thought the UN was made up of. Students answered immediately to this request by answering that different countries made up the UN. This identification with the UN and Canada is important as it reminds the audience of Canada’s peacekeeping role in the Gulf War. The comparison of the script and the way this G.O. is performed reveals that the P.I. plays an important role in making the content intellectually accessible to the viewer. This is important as it is able to help students identify the Canadian military with their former peacekeeping role.

As formerly mentioned Catherine’s father served in the military for several years. This is relevant as in the script it briefly mentions the negative consequences a military career has on personal relationships. Catherine’s performance focuses primarily on the

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⁷⁰ Observation notes taken from Catherine Fowler’s performance June 20, 2013.

challenges she faced with missing the upbringing of her son. In the script there is only one paragraph which mentioned this: “while I was gone, my one year old son learned to walk and started talking a lot and I felt bad for missing that.”⁷¹ Catherine follows the script and retells how she missed her son’s first steps but she continued to describe the challenges of missing other events like birthdays and school trips. It is at this moment of the performance when students in the audience would cry. In an interview Catherine referred to this moment and mentioned that “seeing the audience cry would sometimes make me choke up about it because I would remember all the times I was mad at my dad for not coming.”⁷² The P.I.s personal experiences with the military influenced her performance to make the consequences of war as a central aspect of her performance instead of a minor section in the conclusion as it is presented in the script.

Illustration 10: Photograph used in Vincent’s G.O. taken by Stephen Thorne, photo courtesy of © the Canadian War Museum, Corporate Collection.

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⁷¹ Canadian War Museum, *Gas Attack Presentation Script*, 4.

⁷² Catherine Fowler, interview by author, 20 September 2013.

Vincent's own former experiences of being in the military also influenced his changes to the script. Vincent does not provide historical context to Canada's role in Afghanistan. Interestingly by asking students where the photograph was taken to which most students reply Afghanistan, he is able to start talking directly as his role as a war correspondent and the missions the CF are participating in.⁷³ The students ability to easily identify the location of the photograph indicates that Canada's involvement in Afghanistan is still present in Canadian public consciousness. Vincent presented the work of the CF in Afghanistan as heroic and dangerous as the enemy was because the Taliban were dressed as townspeople. His performance does not mention civilian casualties nor does it go into detail about specific missions, instead it portrays the CF's presence in Afghanistan as vital in protecting the Afghan people from factions within their own country This narrative supports what McKay and Swift described as Canada's propaganda for the war on Afghanistan where "there was hope for the locals if they could only be lifted from their primitive ways by the kindly ministrations of forward thinking Canadians."⁷⁴ This propaganda focussed on aspects of the mission such as the CF encouraging Afghan girls to go to school but excluded the consequences for the Afghan people who suffered from different offensives carried out by the CF that caused civilian casualties.. Vincent's description of Canada's role in Afghanistan follows a similar narrative.

Although, Vincent's performance does not provide information about the negative consequences of war for Afghan townspeople, he does provide a more critical

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⁷³ Observation notes taken from Vincent's performance on May 20, 2013.

⁷⁴ McKay and Swift, *Warrior Nation*, 22.

presentation than the script on the consequences for the CF. Vincent's reasons for deviating from the script were discussed in an interview: "all of us take a few things out of the scripts and add things in, this makes it more real. We take out lines like 'we were there to make sure that liberty lives on'..." that cheesy stuff. I perform my G.O. like if you do this you die and if you do this you don't."⁷⁵ Vincent's own personal experience of war influenced how he performed his character. Vincent did not want to present his experience as theatrical—rather his G.O. is a conversation with the audience about the CF's experience in Afghanistan. Vincent's reference to the live or die consequences of war is influenced by the script, which discussed that "at night, we were exhausted and just lay down on the rocky ground in our sleeping bags, fully clothed. We didn't have mattresses or tents and we couldn't even take our boots off in case we came under attack."⁷⁶ Vincent presents this part of the G.O. by mentioning that men who took off their boots at night died when there was a night raid. This is followed by Vincent breaking character and he tells the group that he served with the CF for three years. Vincent concludes the G.O. by telling the group he had friends die in Afghanistan.⁷⁷ This is very different than the ending of the script which mentions that soldiers in Afghanistan sacrificed being with their families to "make the world a little bit safer."⁷⁸ This new ending presents war in a way that is not celebratory but a dangerous event that has severe consequences

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⁷⁵ Vincent, interview by author, Skype interview, Ottawa, September 21, 2013.

⁷⁶ Canadian War Museum, *A Canadian War Correspondent Presentation Script*, (2012), 2.

⁷⁷ Observation notes taken from Vincent's GO May 23, 2013.

⁷⁸ Canadian War Museum, *A Canadian War Correspondent Presentation Script*, (2012), 2.

With the possible exception of Madeleine's script, the consideration of G.O. scripts reveals that they are written to follow the historical narrative that celebrates Canada's military achievements. However, P.I.s deviations from the script offer a more critical and nuanced representation of the past. This interpretation is dependent on the performer and how they choose to present the past. This is because as an actor the P.I.s are witnesses to the historical past they are representing.⁷⁹ As a witness, P.I.'s use their own personal interpretation of events to shape how they perform their fictional war character. This allows the audience to become a secondary witness to a historical past. Performers as historical witnesses are discussed in Freddy Rokem's *Performing History*. Rokem argued that actors performing historical plays become a witness to the historical past by becoming "hyper-historians." A "hyper-historian" possesses theatrical energy through their ability to communicate to an audience that they are representing something that has existed in the past.⁸⁰ The consideration of how each P.I. makes different changes to the script implies that they are retelling their version of their fictional war story. P.I.s personal connection to the war being discussed is what makes their performance believable to the audience. The different responses from the audiences in G.O.s will be considered in the next chapter.

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⁷⁹ Freddie Rokem, *Performing History: Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2003), 192.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 188.

Chapter 3: First-Person Hyper-Historians and Historical Memory

Freddie Rokem has proposed that actors become hyper-historians, participants in and witnesses to the pasts that they perform, a process that occurs through the coming together of theatrical energies. Rokem's argument encourages us to seek to understand the impact of a historical performance on an audience, and he proposes that historical theatre can reinforce or challenge historical understanding, and provoke debate about how the past is remembered.¹ His theories are important in discussing the benefits of G.O.s because he argues that theatre is more effective than other mediums such as historical novels in its ability to "...create an awareness of the complex interaction between the destructiveness and the failures of history...and the efforts to create a viable and meaningful work of art... this awareness is enhanced by the presence of the historical actors on stage."² If actors perform the historical past by becoming hyper-historians, made possible through their application of different theatrical energies (a term which will be defined more fully below), how does this work for non-professional actors performing the past in non-theatrical settings. What theatrical energies are brought into play in the G.O.s? How might they affect visitors? How might they influence visitors' G.O. understanding of the historical past? After all, the audience for G.O.s consists of students who did not decide to view the theatrical performance, and this certainly may limit their ability to become historical witnesses to the past. Although these differences imply that there are limitations to the application of Rokem's theories to G.O.s, his work

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¹ Rokem, 3.

² Rokem, 3. This was also discussed in Scott Magelssen and Rhona Justice-Malloy's *Enacting History* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2011), 6.

nevertheless provides a useful framework of analysis. A close examination of the questions visitors asked during G0s and an observational analysis of the moment when the P.I. broke character; provide clues as to why some visitors felt that seeing a G.O. gave them a personal connection to the past. Indeed in certain instances visitors believed that the P.I. was the character they were presenting a G.O.

Rokem's conception of actors possessing theatrical energies was influenced by previous works that use social energy as a concept to describe performance. In *The Impossible Theatre* (1964) Herbert Blau mentions that "when we grow weary of the disorder of the world...we retreat to or look for energy in the apparent order of art..."³ Blau's work exemplifies popular theatre discourses that discuss theatrical energies to describe how performance is communicated to an audience.⁴ Rokem's *Performing History* has significantly contributed to the meaning of theatrical energies by coining the term "hyper-historian" to critically analyze the concept of theatrical energies. The "hyper-historian" is used to identify actors who represent the historical past. The "hyper-historian" possesses theatrical energy through their ability to communicate to an audience that they are representing something that has existed in the past.⁵ In this process, the actors perform for an audience and become witnesses to the historical past they are representing, which in turn enables the audience to become a secondary witness.⁶ Rokem's work is a progression of his former performance theories, which deconstruct the

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³Freddie Rokem, *Performing History: Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2003), 187.

⁴Ibid, 189.

⁵ Ibid, 188.

⁶ Ibid, 192.

actor's ability to combine both the private and public spheres for an audience. Rokem draws upon literary scholar Stephen Greenblatt's theory on social energies, social theorist Michel de Certeau's theories about history writing, and playwright and theatre theorist Bertolt Brecht's conceptualization of epic theatre. Together these theorists inspired Rokem to brilliantly depict how theatrical performances represent the past. Rokem's theory has influenced numerous scholars in both public history and theatre studies to critically analyze how performance represents the past such as the contributors of the edited anthology *Enacting History*.⁷

The *Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology* defines performance energy as the actor's capability of using their muscular and nervous energy to perform in theatre.⁸ The context of the physical theatre is important as it distinguishes the performer's energy from the energy used by everyday people to perform ordinary tasks. The notion of theatrical energy, which Rokem uses to situate his theory, is primarily influenced by Stephen Greenblatt's *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (1988). Greenblatt uses different playwrights from Shakespeare to describe how the text itself reveals more than the historical context in which it was written, it reveals the author's social energy.⁹ Greenblatt defines social energy as "...verbal, aural and visual traces to shape, and organize collective physical and mental

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⁷ Scott Magelssen and Rhona Justice-Malloy, *Enacting History* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2011).

⁸ Eugenio Barba, *The Secret art of the Performer: A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology*, (New York: Routledge, 1991), 74.

⁹ Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 6.

experiences.”¹⁰ Greenblatt uses social energy to explain how the intention of Shakespeare’s plays, which is to evoke a certain reaction from the audience, is able to affect the present through social energy. The author of the text initializes this social energy, but it remains dormant until the reader experiences it.

Rokem’s work applies the concept of social energy to the actor and the performance itself. Rokem has taught Theatre Studies at Tel-Aviv University since the 1980s where he teaches in the Department of Theatre studies. This work is a logical application of his research to apply Greenblatt’s theory to a performance context. Similar to Greenblatt’s theory, the actor, just as the author possesses energy but it is not created without the spectator observing the actor’s performance. The use of energy to describe the relationship between the actor and the audience is an advancement of Rokem’s previous work *Theatrical Space in Ibsen, Chekhov and Strindberg* (1986). In *Theatrical Space*, Rokem considers the relationship between the public and private space in realistic theatrical dramas in different thematic levels. The most applicable level is “the viewing or watching,” which examines how the spectator’s ability to watch an actor’s performance that represents a private space blurs theatrical space as both private and public. Rokem argues that this space is important because it allows the spectator to identify with the actor’s struggle and feel catharsis. In *Performing History*, Rokem expands on this by using Greenblatt’s notion of social energies to discuss how actors’ theatrical energies facilitate their ability to make a connection with the audience. This connection is possible through their embodiment of the “in between” space of past and

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¹⁰ Ibid.

present. Rokem's *Theatrical Space*'s former discussion on the relationship between the levels of the theatre space as public and private are transformed into spaces of the historical past and present.

The focus of Rokem's work to use theatre as a medium to critically interpret representations of the historical past was largely influenced by Michel de Certeau. De Certeau's *The Writing of History* considers the operation of historical research and writing. In this sense the term operation refers to de Certeau's ability to explain how historical discourse is produced to represent a historical past.¹¹ For instance, de Certeau mentions that there are two positions of the real in the process of making history:

[...] the *known* (what the historian studies, understands, or "brings to life" in a past society), and the real insofar as it is entangled within the scientific operations (the present society, to which the historians' problematics, their procedures, modes of comprehension, and finally a practice of meaning are referable).¹²

De Certeau's discussion of the two positions of the real illustrates that the past is not more valuable than the historical writing of the present. However, it is the relationship between the known and the real, which is the most important as it instigates how historical discourse is created. Rokem's "hyper-historian" applies de Certeau's theory as it looks at how the actor represents the known and performs the past to an audience. Rokem does not place a greater value on the historical past that the actor is interpreting over the present; rather he focuses on the relationship of how the actor is representing the past to the audience and how the audience experiences the past through performance.

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¹¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 37.

¹² Certeau, 35.

Theatre scholar Catherine Hughes considers different visitors' interpretations of the real in historical performances in museums.¹³ Like Rokem, Hughes focuses on the spectators' experience of the past during a historical performance. Hughes' research consists of surveys conducted on visitors who saw historical performances at the Kentucky History Centre and the Museum of Science in Boston. The surveys revealed that visitors "...sense of realness was generally based on a complex awareness of the performance medium, which emerged from individual interpretations grounded in spectators' prior understanding and experience."¹⁴ This demonstrates that visitors considered performances that encouraged participation between actor and spectator in a lively and engaging manner were more important than whether performances were historically accurate.¹⁵ Specifically, Hughes argues that spectators who empathized with the actors' narrative were able to relate the performance with their own present lives. This connection was referred to as what the audience described as what made a performance real.¹⁶ When applied to G.O.s, authenticity and historical empathy are important to the audience. The main difference with G.O.s in comparison to the plays Hughes considers is that P.I.s break character at the end of their performance. This encouraged the audience to question the historical accuracy of the performance. However, the consideration of visitor responses in G.O.s illustrates that historical empathy for the characters had a greater influence on teaching students the consequences of war than whether the facts of the

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¹³ Catherine Hughes, "Is that Real? An Exploration of What is Real in a Performance Based on History," in Magelssen and Joyce-Malloy's *Enacting History* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2011), 136.

¹⁴ Ibid, 134.

¹⁵ Ibid, 141.

¹⁶ Hughes, 147.

performance were based on a true story. Although, G.O.s authenticity was still a recurring question asked throughout different performances, this was of secondary importance to the audiences' understanding of the past and overall enjoyment of the performance.

Rokem makes the process of representing the past visible by referring to Bertolt Brecht's basic model for epic theatre. Rokem uses an excerpt from Brecht's 1938 essay "The Street Scene" to discuss the operation of performance in creating a historical past on stage:

Brecht terms a "natural epic theatre" consists of an incident such as can be seen at any street corner: an eyewitness demonstrating to a collection of people how a traffic accident took place. The bystanders may not have observed what happened, or they may simply not agree with him [...] the point is that the demonstrator acts the behaviour of driver or victim or both in such a way that the bystanders are able to form an opinion about the accident.¹⁷

Rokem changes the context of the traffic accident to a historical event. Thus, the actor is the eyewitness to the historical past, which in turn allows the audience to assume the role of bystanders or secondary witnesses of the past. The application of the process to explain performing history is relevant to Rokem's theory of the actor as hyper-historian, as he is able to attain theatrical energy through his ability to act as a witness to the past.

Furthermore, the use of Brecht's discussion of epic theatre to explain performance is a continuation of his earlier work, "Acting and Psychoanalysis: Street Scenes, Private Scenes, and Transference."¹⁸ Although "Acting and Psychoanalysis" considers Brecht's epic theatre and its representation of public and private spaces; it does not investigate

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¹⁷ Rokem, *Performing History*, 8; Ashlee Beattie, "Performing Historical Narrative at the Canadian War Museum," 131.

¹⁸ Freddie Rokem, "Acting and Psychoanalysis: Street Scenes, Private Scenes, and Transference," *Theatre Journal* 39, 2: 175.

how it can be used to illustrate the process of performing history. Rokem's analysis of Brecht's theory and practice of theatre influenced his latest published book *Philosophers and Thespians: Thinking Performance* (2010), which combines theatre theorists (thespians) such as Brecht with philosophers such as Walter Benjamin to discuss a different discursive interaction: theatre/performance and philosophy.¹⁹ The comparison of Rokem's use of Brecht reflects both a continuation of his earlier work and a future framework for his latest book.

Since the publication of Rokem's *Performing History* many scholars have accredited his unique contribution to the field of performance historiography, as he is one of the first theorists to discuss the process of actor's creating the historical past in theatre. Susanne Winnacker who is responsible for the artistic development policy and dramaturgy at Dasarts Amsterdam, discusses the success of Rokem's theory of theatrical energy as it offers "...a new approach to old questions by way of the new voice..."²⁰ Winnacker specifically discusses how Rokem answers the question of how theatre affects both the actor's and the audience's experience of the historical past. Winnacker's positive reception of Rokem's theory is demonstrated by other scholars who have applied his concept directly in their work.

Rokem's work played an influential role in instigating a collection of essays *Enacting History*, published in 2011. The anthology was edited by Scott Magelssen and Rhona Justice-Malloy. Magelssen argues that "Rokem holds that theater and performance

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¹⁹ Freddie Rokem, *Philosophers and Thespians*, (California: Stanford University Press, 2010), 1.

²⁰ Susanne Winnacker, "Review of Performing: Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre," *The Drama Review*, 47, 3 (Fall 2003): 192.

more forcefully participate in historiographical procedures than other forms of discourse...enacting history [can] reinforce cultural identities...and challenge dominant ideologies.”²¹ In particular Rokem’s theory is useful in analyzing different performances as his theory is less concerned about the authenticity of historical representations and is focussed on visitors’ interpretation of the performance. Magelssen refers to Rokem’s discussion of historical performances representation of discourse as a cultural representation of society as a framework for choosing the essays in *Enacting History*. These essays discuss performances that consider historical representations of race, gender, political and labour issues. *Enacting History* discusses the dominant and opposing discourses in performances in local communities such as battle re-enactments, renaissance festivals, living history museums and different tourist plays. Magelssen and Justice-Malloy’s reference to Rokem’s work reveals that his theory is applicable to other historical performances outside of professional theatre.

In addition to *Enacting History* several public historians have used Rokem’s work to discuss how it can be used to explain the benefits of using theatre to present history in different mediums other than professional theatre. For example, public historians such as David Dean mention that:

Rokem’s suggestion that professional actors not only animate the past but are witnesses to the past they create, that “theatrical energies” turn them into “hyper-historians,” is a proposition that offers opportunities for collaborative research between theatre and other forms of historical representation.²²

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²¹ Magelssen and Justice-Malloy, *Enacting History*, 6.

²²David Dean, “Theatre: A Neglected Site of Public History?”: 37.

Diana Looser's work on living history interpreters uses Rokem's "hyper-historians" to compare the representation of Hawaii's historical past in the plays of Victoria Nalani Kneubuhl. Living History performances can be defined as a performance that takes place in a living history museum, which is an institution that practices costumed interpretation within reconstructed or restored sites that depict a particular time in history.²³ Looser considers two genres of Kneubuhl's theatrical performances: historical theatre and living history performances.²⁴ She mentions that "...although present in all of Kneubuhl's historiographical works, these [living history] programmes perhaps illustrate most effectively the concept of "hyper-historian," forming a connecting link of the "then" of the past and the "now" of the theatrical event..."²⁵ Looser argues this by considering the purpose of the productions of these performances. For instance, historical theatre's main purpose is to provide the audience with an artistic representation of the past. As such, the role of the "hyper-historian" becomes of secondary importance to the aesthetic representation.

However, the role of Kneubuhl's living history production "January 1893," was to educate the public on the violence which took place in Hawaiian history as a result of U.S. annexation. The interpreters perform a first-person interpretation of the violent overthrow of the Hawaiian Queen Lili-uokalani in the recreated setting of the Iolani Palace. Looser's work illustrates that the audience's ability to identify with a historical

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²³ Scott Magelssen, *Living History Museums*, xxi.

²⁴ Diana Looser, "Our Ancestors that we Carry on Our Backs": Restaging Hawai'i's History in the Plays of Victoria Nalani Kneubu," *The Contemporary Pacific*, 23, 1 (2004): 73.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 92.

past is more important when the main purpose of the production is to recreate the past to educate an audience of a particular event.

In addition to Looser's work in living history museums, Scott Magelsson draws on Rokem's work to emphasize the importance of the audience's ability to connect with third person interpreters at living history museums. The interpreter's role in the museum is to facilitate different historical activities that represent the period they are portraying such as heritage cooking, weaving or musket loading.²⁶ Magelsson uses Rokem's theory to argue that third person interpretation can be more effective than first-person interpretation in living history museums because "...the similarity between the performed and the original event is not as important as the *relationship* between the two."²⁷

Magelsson employs Rokem's theatrical energies to describe this relationship:

Theatrical performances presenting historical events on the stage strive to create a particular kind of intensity through which the actor...becomes "hyper-historian" functioning as a witness of the depicted event. The theatre performing history summons a certain kind of energy, which validates the authenticity that is depicted on stage as historical events.²⁸

Magelsson uses Rokem's concept of theatrical energies to support his assertion that although second person interpreters are not acting in the first-person, they still represent the past by emphasizing the difference from their present lives. It is this differentiation that makes the historical past important to the audience and encourages them to interpret the past. In this sense, Magelsson's approach is interesting in the operation of representing the historical past and its influence on the audience.

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²⁶ Scott Magelsson, "Making History in the Second Person: Post-touristic Considerations for Living Historical Interpretation," *Theatre Journal*, 58: 291.

²⁷ Ibid, 305.

²⁸ Ibid.

In comparison to the works of Dean, Looser and Magelsson who consider Rokem's theory to historical representations of the past, my thesis will apply his theory to interpretive programming at the CWM: G.O.s. First, to provide context to this discussion it is important to identify the previous acting experience of P.I.s and how this influenced their ability to become "hyper-historians." Second, the specific visitor responses to when the P.I.s break character and the questions the visitors asked will also be considered to demonstrate how effective each P.I. was able to represent the historical past.

Madeleine and Claire were the only P.I.s who had formal acting training prior to their work as a Programme Interpreter at the CWM. In particular, Ashlee Beattie wrote an M.A. thesis "Performing Historical Narrative at the Canadian War Museum: Space, Objects and Bodies as Performers," which draws on her experience of performing Madeleine "A Nursing Sister in Doullens, France." Beattie described that "...everything that I did when I pretended to be Madeleine as an animator [P.I.] performing a first-person interpretation was done to impress upon spectators a certain emotion or idea regarding Madeleine, not myself."²⁹ Beattie's former acting training influenced this perception and this attitude was also demonstrated in her performance. As Madeleine, Beattie adopted a French Canadian accent, and portrayed certain nurse behaviours such as adjusting her nurse's veil. Beattie performed with an "attitude of ram-rod military determination tinged with weariness."³⁰ Beattie's performance as Madeleine demonstrates that she was able to separate her own personal opinions of the war to enact

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²⁹ Ashlee Beattie, "Performing Historical Narrative at the CWM," Master of Arts, University of Ottawa, October 2011, 137.

³⁰ Ibid.

this other character. The distinction between Beattie the P.I. and Madeleine is evident in her performance, which illustrates that she displays Rokem's objective of historical actors performing as witnesses to the past. This in turn made her performance convincing and her narrative a part of her audience's historical memory of the CWM.

Beattie performed Madeleine in first person as soon as visitors entered the atelier. In an interview Madeleine mentioned that "I start in first person as soon as I walk in—I stand at the door and welcome them in an accent...it eases me into her [referring to Madeleine]...and when I reach the front of the room, I gain everyone's attention..."³¹ A mannerism that is used to start the performance is when Madeleine walks to the front of the room and removes her veil. This is a way to show the group that she is ready to share her traumatic story. Madeleine described this as a natural behaviour that symbolized "...someone loosening their tie, a way to portray anxiety and a readiness to share a difficult experience that I would normally keep to myself."³² This gesture was well received by the group who was silent when Madeleine removed her veil.³³ The attentiveness of the group was consistent in the three performances I observed. Madeleine's mannerisms demonstrated that she used her body to display theatrical energies to convey to the audience that she is a nursing sister from the First World War and not a P.I. Her former experience in acting influenced her ability to perform these gestures to represent the personalities of Madeleine.

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³¹ Madeleine Nursing Sister, Interview by author, September 20, 2013.

³² Madeleine, Interview by author, September 20, 2013.

³³ This comment is based on the observation notes from Madeleine's performance taken on June 13, 2013.

In addition to Madeleine adopting a French Canadian accent, Marie Gagnon also performed in a French accent. Marie did not have acting experience prior to working at the CWM but was comfortable to adopt the accent because she is French Canadian.³⁴ Marie and Madeleine break character by losing their accent and telling the group in third person that they are not the fictional war character but work at the CWM as a P.I. This always provoked a surprised reaction from the group. The change of voice was a way for the audience to consciously identify Marie and Madeleine as P.I.s at the CWM. The P.I.s who performed their G.O.s with an accent or in a different tone tended to be more effective in getting a response from the group when they broke character.

However, the ability to perform a G.O. in an accent is difficult and is not possible for some P.I.s. For instance, Robert Gagnon mentioned that he is not comfortable performing his G.O. in a French Canadian accent because of his lack of acting training.³⁵ The G.O. training consisted of a day of acting lessons where P.I.s learnt different stage techniques and rehearsed their scripts in front of their colleagues.³⁶ This demonstrates the limitations of P.I.s who perform roles that require more training. This could be improved if they received more acting training or if the CWM hired professional actors to deliver G.O.s. It also reveals the challenges in comparing P.I.s to “hyper-historians” when they do not all have the same acting experience. This complicates comparing certain G.O.s with Rokem’s theory as he analyzes trained actors performing in professional theatre.

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³⁴ Marie Gagnon, interview by author, September 23, 2013.

³⁵ Robert Gagnon, interview by author, September 24, 2013.

³⁶ Claire Robinson, interview by author, September 21, 2013.

Still, G.O.s are important in engaging students to ask questions about the historical past presented. Interestingly, Madeleine and Marie do not break character until after they asked students if they had any questions about their stories. Some of the students' questions revealed their belief in the fictional war story. For example, a student asked Madeleine if she ever married after the war. Students also asked Marie if her brother survived the battle of the Plains of Abraham.³⁷ These questions reflect the belief in the fictional war narrative of Madeleine and Marie. Other questions implied that the P.I. was an expert witness to the past such as when students asked Madeleine why a church was changed into a hospital in the First World War.³⁸ These questions reflected the confidence of the audience to trust the P.I. to provide them with historical information. Although this kind of interaction is similar to a P.I. and a visitor in the galleries it is different because questions are answered from the perspective of someone who "lived" the experience rather than an interpreter who described a historical event in the past.

In addition to the questions asked by visitors, their responses to when Madeleine broke character also reflect their former connection with the historical past. In Beattie's thesis and in an interview, she mentioned that one of the most memorable reactions during a G.O. was when she broke character and a boy raised his hand while standing up and asked "so that was like a play?" Beattie reply, "yes it was", was followed by a moment of silence before the group burst into applause.³⁹ The boy's reaction to the

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³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Observation notes taken during Madeleine's performance taken on June 13, 2013.

³⁹ Beattie, 137.

performance illustrates how he perceived Madeleine's presentation as a real historical narrative. The importance of historical accuracy was demonstrated in the questions students asked Madeleine after she broke character. For instance, spectators generally asked if she was retelling a story based on a real historical character and where she got this story. This concern with authenticity reflects the importance the group placed on the accuracy of Madeleine's historical narrative once they realized she was a P.I. Breaking character complicates the P.I. as a "hyper-historian" because in a play the actor does not reveal their own personal identity.

P.I.s performing characters depicting wars in the later twentieth century mentioned that at times the audience demonstrated that they were disappointed when they learned that the P.I. was performing a fictional character. As previously discussed in Chapter Two there were certain P.I.s whose experience with the military influenced their performance. Although Catherine Fowler, a Gulf War Technician, did not have acting experience prior to performing her character, she presented her G.O. in an authoritative tone and enacted the role of a military sergeant. Catherine's own experience growing up in a military family influenced how she interacted with the group. As soon as students walked in, she introduced her character by saying she was Sergeant Catherine Fowler and that "I should be the only one talking unless I give you permission, is that clear?"⁴⁰ This commanding tone was followed consistently throughout the presentation until she broke character. Catherine reflected on breaking character as very difficult because "of the feeling of betrayal she would get when she looked into the audience's eyes as if she had

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⁴⁰ This is based on the observation notes taken from Catherine Fowler's GO on June 20, 2013.

lied to them...this turned when I told them it was based on my own life experiences.”⁴¹

Catherine’s response to the group revealed her feeling to add a non-fictional explanation of her performance to defend its authenticity.

P.I.s depicting Canada’s recent military past faced a challenge not experienced by those performing characters from wars long gone: audiences were more ready to believe that the P.I. was telling their own personal war story and were disappointed, even felt misled, when they broke character P.I. In one instance, the audience’s reaction of when a P.I. broke character influenced a P.I. to change her performance. In an interview with Abigail who used to perform “A War Correspondent from Afghanistan” in previous years, she described that:

...at times I felt very guilty—I broke character at the end and people told me you should not have told us because we actually believed you. They wanted to believe I was a correspondent sharing my story. They relished the idea that they met a reporter from Afghanistan and wanted this to be part of their experience...I also felt uncomfortable performing in front of former soldiers from Afghanistan as I was play acting something they had lived through. What I did was perform the G.O. in a less exciting way of storytelling. I described what a reporter in Afghanistan would see and I did this mostly in third person.⁴²

Abigail’s decision of performing her G.O. in third person demonstrates that she changed her role from actor to P.I. to be able to tell the story of a war correspondent. In this instance, she no longer embodies a “hyper-historian” or uses theatrical energies other P.I.s displayed when they performed in first person. This example demonstrates the limitations in using Rokem’s theory to every G.O.

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⁴¹ Catherine Fowler, interview by author, September 20, 2013.

⁴² Abigail Mackenzie, interview by author, September 20, 2013.

Interestingly, when “A War Correspondent in Afghanistan” was performed in the 2013 season, Vincent performed the G.O. as a conversation shared between him and the visitors, a very different scenario than a theatrical performance. Vincent described his decision for choosing to present history in a less theatrical way: “...I personally don’t like the extent that we have to be theatrical about it—my G.O. was like a conversation it was not a performance and others saw themselves as actors—I don’t like that...I was myself.”⁴³ Vincent still performed as a war correspondent in the first person but his attitude and opinion towards war are reflected in the changes he made to the script. Vincent also broke character by sharing his experience of working for the CF. The overall response from the group from Vincent’s performance was very silent. Unlike the other performances where students frequently approached the P.I. to ask questions, Vincent’s groups tended to avoid asking questions or applaud. Teachers had to typically ask the group to stand up to leave the atelier for their museum visit.

The hesitation of spectators to ask Vincent questions at the end of the performance reveals their recognition that the P.I. was retelling their personal memory of war instead of performing a fictional war story. It is difficult to apply Rokem’s theory of hyper-historians to Vincent’s performance because he is not acting a character. It is unclear at the end of his performance whether he was presenting the G.O. as Vincent or recounting his own personal memories of war. He is a personal witness to history, which appears to have made the students less comfortable to ask him questions about the military past.

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⁴³ Vincent, interview by author, September 21, 2013.

The comparison of Vincent's performance with other G.O.s reveals that a more theatrical performance encouraged the audience to ask questions and interact with the P.I. For instance, Claire Robinson was more theatrical in how she depicted a factory worker in the First World War. This acting experience was apparent when she showed the group a photograph of her fiancé and read a telegram that he died at Vimy Ridge. At this moment the group tended to avoid eye contact with the P.I. because it was difficult to hear someone share a difficult story.⁴⁴ This emotional connection with the P.I. invited the audience to ask questions about whether the picture of Johnny was of a real soldier when she broke character. Groups almost always interacted with Claire at the end of the performance by asking questions about shells or wanting to take a picture with the P.I. Although the attentiveness of students during Vincent's G.O.s demonstrates that students understood the serious consequences of war—their reluctance to approach the P.I. about the content of the G.O. implied that they were intimidated by Vincent's real life story to ask him questions about Canada's role in Afghanistan.

Observational analysis of other G.O.s that were very theatrical reveals that they received higher participation from the audience. Student's found the character Abigail Mackenzie very approachable due, at least in part, to the P.I.'s performance. P.I. Abigail described the personality of her fictional character as "...mother goose who is telling children a story... everyone no matter what age wants to sit down and listen to a story, [as] it reminds them of the earlier years of their childhood."⁴⁵ The costume for this G.O.

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⁴⁴ Claire Robinson, interview by author, September 21, 2013.

⁴⁵ Abigail Mackenzie, interview by author, September 21, 2013.

also helped the P.I. get into this character of “mother goose,” as she wore red bonnet and yellow dress. Abigail always started her performance by asking the group to sit down so she can share her story. The students were attentive and quiet during her performance. Abigail is the most theatrical when she retells the story of how a bullet came crashing through her window and she shows the bullet and the cannon that went through her window. Abigail described the sound that this explosion made “crash, boom, pow!” which captured the attention of her audience.⁴⁶ At the end of Abigail’s G.O. students often took pictures with her or asked to touch the cannon ball she was holding.

Abigail does not always break character at the end of the presentation and invites students to take pictures of the painting or touch the artifacts. The students’ behaviour with Abigail reveals that she was able to enact a fictional character that encouraged students to interact with her at the end of the performance. The intention to perform as “mother goose” reveals that she performed her role as Abigail in first-person and not as a P.I. who discussed the War of 1812 in third person. Rokem’s theory could be applied to this G.O. as she presented a historical past that did not necessarily make students believe she was telling her own war story but allowed students to experience the historical past.

Although Abigail’s performance was effective at engaging the group, she mainly performed her G.O. in May. One of the main criticisms of G.O.s is that due to the operational requirements of P.I.s there were certain G.O.s that were only performed a few times throughout May and June while others were performed almost every day. This is based on which P.I.s are trained on guided tours. For instance, Abigail, Madeleine and

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⁴⁶ Observation notes taken during Abigail Mackenzie’s GO May 09, 2013.

Catherine only performed a few times in the 2013 season. This makes it difficult to provide teachers and students with a variety of G.O.s. Interviews with P.I.s who delivered G.O.s for numerous seasons mentioned that in past years there were more P.I.s available to offer different performances.⁴⁷ Another constructive criticism of the programme is that “...[since] the G.O.s are important in teaching visitors the human experience of war so they should be offered to the general public as well.”⁴⁸ A possible solution to expand the variety of G.O.s and improve their accessibility to the public is to provide online videos of G.O.s on the CWM’s website. This would complement the online teaching resources the museum offers. However, there are certain consequences by placing these G.O.s online. For instance, how would an online G.O. affect the P.I.s ability to use theatrical energies to represent the past? Also, would their online accessibility take away from a visitor’s experience of watching a live G.O. at the CWM? The possibilities of offering G.O.s online will be discussed in the next chapter.

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⁴⁷ Violet, interview by author, September 17, 2013.

⁴⁸ Abigail, interview by author, September 20, 2013.

Chapter 4: The Possibilities of Developing Virtual G.O.s

In the majority of the interviews conducted with P.I.s, theatre was considered an effective medium to present history because of the human interaction the P.I. had with their audience. Cary Carson argues that museum visitors in the twenty-first century “...expect to be transported back into another time...they are fully satisfied only if they live it—feel it—experience it.”¹ Carson’s argument is relevant to the consideration of G.O.s as it reflects the main objective of these performances, which is to allow visitors to meet a fictional person from the past to learn history by listening to their personal story. This experience is enhanced by the paintings and props presented in each performance that offer visual and tactile opportunities to visitors. In addition, a G.O. is able to provide the audience with a unique interpretation medium as P.I.s can adopt certain theatrical energies to perform the past. This chapter considers to what extent these identified benefits can be recreated in a virtual environment.

The challenge of placing G.O.s online is to offer remote visitors a virtual experience that has similar learning opportunities otherwise only available during a live museum visit. One obvious possibility would be to simply offer G.O. performances online by filming them and offering them online through the CWM's website or on YouTube. However, research shows clearly that it is much more effective to offer G.O. performances in real time so that visitors can interact with the P.I.² The consideration of

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¹ Cary Carson, “The End of History Museums: What’s Plan B?” in *The Public Historian* 30, 4 (Fall 2008): 18.

² Real time can be loosely defined as when an online program is happening live. For instance, the earliest applications of real time are instant messaging. Its main goals are to provide communication between two people and provide an online presence of when someone is available to communicate online. For more

literature on digital pedagogy suggests that developing a 3-D virtual learning environment has many advantages and offers museums with an interactive platform that can simulate some of the visitor experiences that are usually only offered during a live visit.³ For instance, Carleton Virtual (CV) is a simulated learning environment developed by different professors and researchers at Carleton University that created a virtual environment of parts of the Carleton campus. There were three different projects that used CV: a simulated digging site, virtual Powwows and a virtual classroom for teaching English as a Second Language for Academic Purposes (ESLAP). The virtual classroom for ESLAP is the most applicable in providing a useful framework for a prospective Virtual G.O. at the CWM. The virtual environment for a Virtual G.O. would be a simulated atelier of the CWM. In this virtual atelier students and P.I.s are represented by avatars and meet in the atelier at a scheduled time. Each atelier contains a virtual representation of the props and objects used in a performance. The communication between P.I.s and G.O.s would be possible through headsets. Ideally, students in their classrooms would be able to use the arrow keys on their computers to express their responses to the performances such as clapping. A Virtual G.O. provides an enhanced social virtual learning opportunity over a YouTube video of a G.O. performance and aims to provide a meaningful interaction with visitors. The purpose of this chapter is not to

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information about real time consider Jonathan Finkelstein's "Real-Time Learning, Outreach and Collaboration," in ed. Herminia Din and Phyllis Hecht *The Digital Museum: A Think Guide* (Washington: American Museums Association, 2007): 79-81.

³ The main idea of creating virtual 3-D CWM was based off of Carleton Virtual, which will be discussed later on in the chapter. For more information on Carleton virtual consider Ali Arya et al., "Collaborating through Space and Time in Educational Virtual Environments: 3 Case Studies," in *The Journal of Interactive Technology and Pedagogy* 2 (2012): 1-31.

argue that a virtual representation of a G.O. can replace a theatrical representation of the past, rather it aims to provide a framework for the future of the programme and its ability to improve the museum's accessibility to remote audiences.

The importance of providing visitors with an interactive virtual space is demonstrated by a survey “Canadians and Their Pasts” conducted by Margaret Conrad, Jocelyn Letourneau and David Northup and others, whose findings demonstrated that Canadians were more likely to use the Internet to access historical information than visit a museum.⁴ The opportunity of creating a Virtual G.O. will increase the ability of the CWM to provide remote learning possibilities. It will also enhance their accessibility to the general public and teachers across Canada to implement Virtual G.O.s into their lesson plans.

However, one of the shortcomings of placing these performances online is the possibility that it could lose its authenticity as a lived experience of history and its representation of the past. The “Canadians and their Pasts” survey revealed that forty percent of respondents rated museums as the most trustworthy source of information.⁵ In comparison only eight percent of respondents answered that the Internet provided a trustworthy source of information. Specifically, a theatrical performance in a museum complicates whether the public considers it as trustworthy representation of the historical

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⁴ “Canadians and their Pasts” http://www.canadiansandtheirpasts.ca/pasts_survey.pdf (accessed December 18, 2013), Margaret Conrad, Jocelyn Letourneau and David Northup, “Canadians and their Pasts: An Exploration of Canadian Consciousness,” in *The Public Historian* 31, 1 (2009): 28. Conrad et. al.'s survey was influenced by Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998). For the significance of the survey in relation to its implication for the public's engagement in historical theatre consider David Dean's “Theatre: A Neglected Site of Public History?” in *The Public Historian* 34, 3 (Summer 2012): 21-39.

⁵ Conrad et al., 31.

past. However, the observation of live G.O.s revealed that the interaction with the P.I. at the end of the performance was imperative in reassuring the audience of its authenticity. For example, at the end of Madeleine's presentation visitors asked where the P.I. got this story in addition to other questions related to being a nursing sister in the First World War.⁶ The student and P.I. interaction is important in instilling the message that although the stories presented are fictional characters of the past they represent the experiences of real people, which are depicted in the museum. The consideration of the importance of the interaction between the audience and the P.I. plays an influential role in choosing that Virtual G.O.s be performed in real time.

Before a discussion of the different virtual possibilities to create a Virtual G.O. it is important to consider the shifts in the digital humanities that have inspired the creation of digital projects in museums and universities. Tara McPherson traces the shifts of digital humanities scholars. First, she described that the field started with "computing humanists" who aimed at the end of the twentieth century to improve the accessibility of historical resources on the internet. For instance, their work included developing and expanding digital databases for archival collections.⁷ Second, McPherson refers to the "blogging humanists" who emerged in the early 2000s and started to work collaboratively on digital projects and communicate their research with peers. McPherson argues that the future of the digital humanities is to combine both approaches and embrace a multimodal approach to researching history. The multimodal humanist "...brings together databases,

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⁶ Observation notes taken from Madeleine's performance taken on June 13, 2013.

⁷ Tara McPherson, "Introduction: Media Studies and the Digital Humanities," in *Cinema Journal* 48, 2 (Winter 2009):119.

scholarly tools, networked writing, and peer to peer commentary while also leveraging the potential of visual and aural media that so dominate contemporary life.”⁸ The digital projects of multimodal humanists influenced museums to collaborate with different institutions and researchers to develop new interpretive media online.

Multimodal humanists’ contribution to virtual interpretive programmes for museums demonstrates that digital storytelling plays an important role in digital humanists work.⁹ This type of digital storytelling follows a historical narrative. Steve Anderson defines an aspect of narrative in Digital Humanities (DH) projects as a “genre [that] may deploy a wide range of familiar elements of storytelling. These include the characters that have a particular point of view, a conflict resolution structure, temporal progression, emotional arcs etc.”¹⁰ Although, Anderson discusses digital narratives, some scholars such as Lev Manovich have argued that new media projects do not have a narrative as they use a database to present the viewer with information.¹¹ Manovich argues that narrative and database are cultural enemies as “...database presents the world as a list of items and refuses to order it and a narrative creates a cause and effect trajectory.”¹² In response to Manovich, Katherine Hayles argued that narrative and database work together in a symbiotic relationship, “because database can construct relational juxtapositions but it is helpless to interpret or explain them, it needs narrative to

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⁸ Ibid, 120.

⁹ The discussion of multimodal work and its relationship with the emergence of the narrative in the digital humanities is influenced by Christine Shannon Mattern, “Evaluating Multimodal Work, Revisited,” in *Journal of Digital Humanities* 1, 4 (Fall 2012):

¹⁰ Steve Anderson, “Regeneration: Multimedia Genres and Emerging Scholarship,” in *Institute of Media Literacy*, 8.

¹¹ Lev Manovich, *Language as New Media* (Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2001).

¹² Ibid.

make its results meaningful.”¹³ The following examples of different museum virtual interpretive programmes illustrate that both narrative and database work together in DH projects to make both an accessible and meaningful experience for the viewer. A prospective Virtual G.O. would use a database that would facilitate the P.I.s ability to tell a historical narrative.

A Virtual G.O. offers a unique representation of digital narrative. Nick Montfort discusses the implications of narrative in online interactive digital storytelling.¹⁴ Montfort describes different ways that digital media uses narrative: “in narrating, computers represent events...by directly outputting narrative text, graphics and sound... [and] in simulating, computers determine what happens in some model world, using a system of rules.”¹⁵ The prospective Virtual G.O. will mainly use narrative incorporating live chat, graphics and sound. Montfort’s reference to computer simulation refers to storytelling that is specific to video games. This demonstrates that a user’s decision to follow one choice will lead to a specific outcome such as reaching the next level. The main focus of narrative in a Virtual G.O. will be the communication between virtual P.I.s and the audience. The representation of the spectator in the virtual environment as an avatar will also influence their ability to be their own narrator in the simulated environment.¹⁶ For instance, the ability for the user to display how they react through the arrow keys such as clapping alters others interpretation of the effectiveness of the presentation. The narrative

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¹³ N. Katherine Hayles, “Narrative and Database: Natural Symbionts,” in *PMLA* 122.5 (2007): 1603.

¹⁴ Nick Montfort, “Narrative and Digital Media,” in ed. David Herman, *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 172.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Montford, 178.

of each Virtual G.O. will change with both the virtual P.I. and the audience, which aims to simulate a similar learning environment as a live G.O.

The collaboration of different multimodal humanists has resulted in museums offering real time interactive programmes online. Jonathan Finkelstein has discussed the importance of the development of these programmes:

whether they are leading tours, answering questions, conducting gallery talks...performing...people are what breathe the life into every aspect of the museum mission...to take the museum onto the Web and focus exclusively on objects and collections, therefore, ignores a great component of the museum experience, the part brought to life through real time interacting with museum professionals and the experts and storytellers they embrace.¹⁷

Finkelstein's mention of real time interaction refers to his argument that museums should offer two way interpretive programmes on their websites as it aids to provide remote visitors with an essential part of the museum experience. He argues that an interpreter who presents different historical information to the public and answers questions could provide a similar experience by providing a virtual tour for visitors thousands of miles away.¹⁸ This is relevant to the consideration of G.O.s which use visitors' personal interaction with a P.I. to learn about the human experience of war.¹⁹ Finkelstein's work is based on several case studies of museums that use real time to provide interpretive programmes to virtual visitors.

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¹⁷ Finkelstein, 79.

¹⁸ Ibid, 83.

¹⁹ Claire Robinson, Interview by author, September 21, 2013.

An applicable virtual programme that Finkelstein considers is the New York Transit Museum's virtual classroom.²⁰ The Museum is physically located in a decommissioned subway station in Brooklyn and uses the virtual classroom to provide school groups with a live interaction with museum professionals. In one instance, students from Brooklyn, Philadelphia and upper state New York City logged in at the same time to learn more about a temporary exhibition on a collection of subway car advertisements. Before the real time discussion, students had consulted the museum's online sources to learn the historical context of the session and to encourage them to ask questions about the particular topic at the end of the presentation. The real time session consisted of a question-and-answer period with the students and the museum staff. A survey of the session concluded that students were more likely to ask questions in these sessions than on a regular museum visit because they were given specific research material.²¹ The interaction with museum professionals encouraged participants to ask questions and generated a learning community. The Museum's use of the virtual classroom provides a useful framework for the possibilities of creating an online interactive environment for a Virtual G.O. A virtual classroom environment would ensure that the live interaction between the P.I. and the audience continues online.

The overarching theme in the case studies Finkelstein considers is the importance of recreating the social spaces in museums online. The importance of virtual social interaction on museum websites is discussed by Areti Galani and Matthew Chalmers.

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²⁰ Finkelstein, 83. For more information on the different virtual programmes offered by the New York Transit Museum visit <http://www.transitmuseumeducation.org/fbu/>.

²¹ Ibid, 84.

Their research on visitors studies concluded that going to a museum is a social activity, whether visitors are interacting with other visitors or museum staff—the discussion of the artifacts and the interpretive activities offered at museums was rated as an integral part of the museum experience.²² This has inspired numerous museums to develop websites with interactive media to provide online visitors with a virtual social experience. For instance, collaborative virtual environments (CVE) used on the Van Gogh Museum website and the Virtual Leonardo project encourage social experiences with visitors and museum staff.²³ Visitors were represented in the environment by an avatar and were able to hold objects, access information about artifacts and interact with strangers. Although, both museums have not conducted visitor surveys of the effectiveness of these programmes in creating a social museum space it offers a promising framework for a Virtual G.O. For example, a Virtual G.O. could include the development of a virtual environment where visitors can interact with each other and view paintings and objects in 3-D.

In addition to these benefits users can also experience historical empathy for avatar historical characters.²⁴ Juan Leon and Matthew Fisher developed an online interactive exhibit *Abraham Lincoln Crossroads* for the National Constitution Center (NCC) and found that students tended to feel historical empathy with the avatars they

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²² Areti Galani and Matthew Chalmers, “Blurring the Boundaries for Museum Visitors,” in ed., Paul F. Marty and Katherine Burton Jones, *Museum Informatics: People, Information, and Technology in Museums* (New York, Routledge: 2008), 159.

²³ To view both websites see Van Gogh Museum www.vangoghmuseum.nl and the Virtual Leonardo project [www. Museoscienza.org](http://www.Museoscienza.org).

²⁴ Juan Leon and Matthew Fisher, “Interactive Educational Storytelling: The Use of Virtual Characters to Generate Historical Moments,” in ed. Jennifer Trant and David Bearman *Museums and the Web* (Toronto: Archives and Museum Informatics, 2006), 151.

interacted with on the site.²⁵ *Crossroads* was created to promote the NCC's first travelling exhibit in 2005 *Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War*, which was launched in 2005.²⁶ The main educational purpose of the interactive exhibit was to provide students with information about the historical period in which Lincoln made influential decisions that shaped U.S. politics. The main aim in creating an animated Lincoln avatar was to encourage students to make a personal connection. The interactive aspect was divided into thirteen chapters, which consisted of dramatized presentations of Lincoln discussing political questions with his advisors. Students were asked in each chapter to give their opinion on the different questions being discussed and act as an external advisor. The interactive exhibit was evaluated by fifty-three eleventh graders in Philadelphia who participated in a survey after viewing *Crossroads*. The results of the survey concluded that *Crossroads* did not necessarily increase the students' knowledge of historical facts; however, they learnt that "...history is not pre-ordained, but that real people in the past weighed various points-of-view and facts to make a decision that had lasting consequences."²⁷ Leon and Fisher argue that students' connection to the animated Lincoln reveals that students will respond to virtual characters as if they were human actors. The use of avatars in a virtual G.O. could be beneficial in providing a virtual representation of historical characters with whom users can make similar personal connections to those they have made in the actual performance.

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²⁵ To learn more about the exhibit view <http://www.constitutioncenter.org/lincoln> (Accessed December 18, 2013).

²⁶ Leon and Fisher, 152.

²⁷ Ibid, 154.

The use of avatars as a learning tool in a classroom setting has also been discussed by several academics who have been experimenting with Carleton Virtual (CV) for different courses. In “Collaborating through Space and Time in Educational Virtual Environments: 3 Case Studies”, Ali Arya, Peggy Hartwick, Shawn Graham and Nuket Nolan discuss their experience with integrating CV in the classroom. CV consisted of a three-dimensional virtual environment (3-DVE), which simulates the quad area of Carleton University Campus. The 3DVE was created by designers at Carleton University and used the web.alive to develop the programme, which allows the user to create avatars in a virtual environment.²⁸ CV provides space for lectures, presentations, collaborations and social interaction. Both students and professors can be represented by avatars and meet in different locations on campus for group meetings and presentations. CV includes 3D spatial audio, which means that the sound level can change based on what the avatar chooses such as local discussion or a conversation.

Although there are three different case studies discussed in the article, Peggy Hartwick’s project on developing a virtual classroom for teaching English as a Second Language for Academic Purposes (ESLAP) to international students is the most applicable when considering a relevant framework to creating a virtual G.O.²⁹ CV was Hartwick’s first attempt of integrating digital media to teach ESLAP. One of the main goals of CV for language learning was to increase the amount of verbal participation, which was lacking in the course. The pilot project aimed to allow students to practice

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²⁸ Ali Arya et al., “Collaborating through Space and Time in Educational Virtual Environments: 3 Case Studies,” in *The Journal of Interactive Technology and Pedagogy* 2, 2.

²⁹ Ibid, 14

communicating with the teacher and classmates in a “risk free environment.”³⁰ The students in the course were given a choice of signing up for a normal group presentation or a virtual one. The virtual groups met and were represented by their personalized avatars for three hours a week before the presentation. Observations of the virtual group work revealed that students’ oral interaction increased. The oral participation was possible by students using a USB headset. They were also able to control the avatars gestures by using the arrow keys. The user had a choice of four different gestures: hand wave, head nod, clap and bow. These gestures could be beneficial when considering how avatars interact with the P.I. in a Virtual G.O. and demonstrate the benefits of using CV as a useful framework for designing Virtual G.O.s.

The learning outcomes of the pilot project revealed that overall students enjoyed learning in a virtual classroom.³¹ Students mentioned to the professor that CV specifically appealed to their generation as it adopted a technological approach to learning English. It also provided students with an opportunity for a simulated face to face interaction with their peers, which they enjoyed over other social media. The negative feedback of the activity is also relevant when considering the setbacks of developing a Virtual G.O. These included problems with internet access and other technical problems. These problems may pose a challenge if G.O.s were integrated into classrooms with different software and connection capacities. Students also commented on the lack of facial expression avatars displayed. This would also take away from a remote visitor’s

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³⁰ Ibid, 15.

³¹ Ibid, 19.

experience of a Virtual G.O. as facial expression played an important role on the P.I.s ability to make a personal connection with their audience.

The consideration of different interactive virtual learning media such as CV and other virtual museum programmes provide a framework for the development of a prospective virtual G.O. Before discussing what a Virtual G.O. would look like it is important to identify the possible learning objectives of the prospective programme. The main objective of a Virtual G.O. is to impress upon visitors that the CWM is a place where we remember the sacrifices of ordinary Canadians in war. However, this virtual activity is not meant to replace the G.O. experience; rather, it is to provide remote visitors with an interactive learning opportunity. Also, Virtual G.O.s used by teachers in the history classroom should not replace their formal lectures or class discussions.³² For instance, a Virtual G.O. should be integrated into a teacher's lesson plan on Canada's military history. Together these learning objectives aim to provide students across Canada with a unique and interactive learning opportunity, which is usually only available to students who visit the CWM in May and June.

Among the different examples of interactive virtual programmes, CV provides the most relevant example of how to develop a virtual G.O. that could provide a simulated 3DVE environment of the CWM's ateliers. Each atelier would represent a different historical character and include the P.I.s props and paintings. The P.I.'s would be represented by avatars in the virtual environment and would be dressed in the historical

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³² For more information regarding best practices in integrating a virtual pedagogic teaching interactive see Nicoletta Di Blas and Caterina Poggi's, "3D for Cultural Heritage and Education: Evaluating the Impact," in ed., Jennifer Trant and David Bearman *Museums and the Web* (Toronto: Archives and Museum Informatics, 2006).

costumes they wear in a live performance. Teachers would arrange with CWM staff when students would log onto G.O. virtual to plan when the P.I. would give their presentation. Students and teachers would also pick their avatars for their virtual representation in the simulated environment. The use of the Avaya software would allow both the P.I. and the learner with the ability to use the arrow keys to choose different relevant gestures such as clapping and bowing. The communication between the P.I. and students would also be possible through the use of USB headsets. The duration of the G.O. would vary and depend on the level of interaction displayed by a particular group.

One of the main benefits of a Virtual G.O. is allowing teachers to decide which historical character they would like to present to their students. This would help engage students as they would be familiar with the historical context of the performance. In the G.O.s performed in the 2013 season, students who attended performances on the War of 1812 and the Gulf War had greater difficulty understanding the historical context of the performance as it was rarely taught in the classroom. Also, teachers can avoid viewing performances that emphasize historical lessons that are repetitive in history curricula. For instance, before Robert's G.O. he mentioned that he had trouble with French students from Quebec as they were tired of hearing the same historical narrative of the British's siege of Quebec.³³ The pre-selection of G.O.s promotes active student participation and aims to enrich the historical lessons taught in the classroom.

The interaction of the P.I. and the learner is still possible through Virtual G.O.s. This interaction is imperative to the learning experience of students who participate

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³³ Conversation with Robert Gagnon as a part of his GO on May 3, 2013.

throughout the real performances. In particular, it would be interesting to observe how students' questions change when the virtual P.I. would break character. How would this influence student questions? Would younger audiences still ask questions that implied they believed in the narrative of the fictional character? Presumably there would be a significant decrease in questions that demonstrated a belief in these characters but questions about whether the virtual performance was based on a real person's experience of war are probable. The question-and-answer session at the end of the Virtual G.O. would allow remote visitors to experience one of the main benefits of the live performance, which is to socially interact with the P.I. to learn Canada's military history.

Another advantage of developing a Virtual G.O. instead of simply providing videos of the performance online is the ability for the P.I. to adapt each performance to a specific group. Lyons mentioned in her interview that they decided to choose a more interactive medium than other sites by creating G.O.s.³⁴ A Virtual G.O. adopts a similar approach by adding a virtual interactive element instead of a YouTube video. P.I.s tended to tailor their performance to an age specific audience. For instance, Marie Gagnon tended to ask a group how old they were at the end of performances where the audience appeared to be in their early teens.³⁵ This question was followed by telling students that if they were the same age during the Battle of the Plains of Abraham they would have most likely volunteered to be part of the militia. When students were younger Marie did not break character or would ask the group if she was actually representing a woman from

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³⁴ Kathryn Lyons, interview by author, January 06, 2014.

³⁵ Observations taken from Marie Gagnon's performance on June 13, 2013.

1759. This adaptation to each group also demonstrates another advantage of creating a Virtual G.O. over a YouTube video of the performance is that P.I.s would still be able to make alterations to the script for different spectators. As discussed in Chapter Two the majority of performances make several changes to the script. If the performance was video recorded and posted on the CWM website P.I.s would not have the same flexibility in making changes to the script to improve the performance. This would decrease the effectiveness of the P.I.'s ability to make a personal connection with the audience.

Although the opportunity of interacting with the P.I. is possible with a virtual G.O., P.I.s lose their ability to perform using theatrical energies. As mentioned in Hartwick's study, CV did not enable students to make eye contact or show facial expressions.³⁶ This plays an important role in the actors' ability to connect with their audience. The importance of seeing the facial expressions of the audience was mentioned as an integral part of evaluating the group's emotional response during a performance.³⁷ For instance, Claire mentions seeing tears in students' eyes after telling the group that her fiancé died at the Battle of Vimy Ridge.³⁸ This interaction with the group not only reveals that the P.I.'s were effective in the way they performed their narrative but also illustrates how it is creating a personal and meaningful experience for the visitor.

Although there were no surveys to reveal how students felt about the performance, other surveys of historical performances revealed the importance of a live theatrical performance as an effective medium to present history. David Dean's online

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³⁶ Ali Arya et al., 19

³⁷ Interviews with PIs Catherine Fowler, Abigail Mackenzie and Claire all specifically mentioned eye contact as an important interaction in assessing the emotional response from the group.

³⁸ Claire Robinson, interview by author, September 21, 2013.

survey completed by audiences of a performance of Vern Theissen's *Vimy* included a question specifically asked spectators about the advantages of seeing history on stage "as compared to reading a popular history book, seeing a history film or visiting a museum."³⁹ ⁴⁰ Respondents answered that theatre made them feel as if they were part of the experience and helped them identify the actors' personal stories with issues in their own lives. One respondent answered that: "you feel it as opposed to watching or reading. You're there on stage with the actors experiencing."⁴¹ There are parts of this response that may be applicable to the change of visitors' experience when viewing a Virtual G.O. Although students viewing a G.O. would have different experiences than viewing a historical performance on stage their reactions to believing certain historical characters reveal that they feel as though they live a part of the past like the P.I. presenting the performance. The survey did not ask correspondents to compare theatre with a virtual performance of the past. However, certain aspects of placing a G.O. in a simulated environment are similar to watching a movie as it is not a face to face interaction with the P.I. This implies that if a virtual pilot project is developed it would be beneficial to conduct surveys with participants and to ask students directly if they connected to the avatar P.I.s and if they preferred using this medium to learn history and how it differed from other forms.

The other aspect of a G.O. that would be changed in Virtual G.O.s is visitors' interaction with the props and paintings in each performance. In the prospective Virtual

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³⁹ For more information about the survey and Dean's findings consider David Dean's "Theatre: A Neglected Site of Public History?" in *The Public Historian* 34, 3 (Summer 2012): 21-39.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 32.

⁴¹ Ibid, 33.

G.O. P.I.s would discuss the painting and the objects provided in a live performance. As described by Robert Gagnon "...you show the painting to provoke students imagination into a time and place that no longer exists, words are not enough."⁴² This would not change in a virtual environment, however viewing a painting online instead of in person has an impact on the spectator's ability to imagine the past. Lianne McTavish considers different virtual art museums such as the Louvre and the Rijksmuseum virtual galleries.⁴³ McTavish argues that the main disadvantage of viewing online artwork is that "the texture of the image is barely represented even when projected by the most sophisticated computer system. Sometimes the details of a particular painting are blurry, with the zoom function revealing pixels instead of more precise views."⁴⁴ These considerations are relevant if the paintings used in a live G.O. were the actual painting. In the performance they are reproductions of paintings the museum has in the collection. This limits the ability of the viewer to determine the texture of the painting. Also, because of the time constraints during high season when G.O.s are performed it is rare that students have a chance to closely examine the painting in great detail; it mainly acts as a back drop for the G.O. In a Virtual G.O. students could spend more time with the painting as the P.I. does not have to stay in the virtual classroom with the group the whole time.

Notwithstanding McTavish's misgivings, a virtual representation of the painting in a Virtual G.O. might allow viewers more interested in subject matter rather than aesthetics to zoom in to explore the painting in more detail. The virtual environment

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⁴² Robert Gagnon, interview by author, September 24, 2013.

⁴³ McTavish, Lianne. "Visiting the Virtual Museum: Art and Experience Online." In Ed. Janet Marstine *New Museum Theory and Practice: An Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 227.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 230.

could allow viewers to follow links to other paintings that share similar subjects or themes, to art works made by the same artist, or to other media (photographs, drawings, objects). P.I. This could also increase the duration of the G.O. as students could stay in the Virtual G.O. classroom to get a closer look at both the painting and the secondary artifacts.

The opportunity for students to physically manipulate objects in a live G.O. is difficult, but certainly not impossible, to recreate in a Virtual G.O. It is also important to note that not all of the P.I.s allows students to touch objects in their performance. Vincent initially passed out objects in his performance, which included a helmet and a bullet proof vest but later on in the season stopped doing this as he found it distracted the group from the performance.⁴⁵ Madeleine also rarely included objects and tactile opportunities for the group because she feels that “I am enough.”⁴⁶ Still, a Virtual G.O. could not provide the same tactile opportunities that are encouraged in Robert Gagnon’s G.O. As discussed in Chapter One, Robert encourages children to hold a cannon ball to feel the its weight in order to provide the students with a clearer understanding of the consequences of war. The VG.O denies the learner a sensory experience that is proved to be beneficial by several museums that are increasingly offering tactile opportunities.⁴⁷ As mentioned earlier, the objective of a Virtual G.O. is not to replace the real experience of viewing a live G.O. By providing a 3-D visual image of the objects used in performances it allowed

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⁴⁵ Vincent, interview by author, September 21, 2013.

⁴⁶ Madeleine, interview by author, September 20, 2013.

⁴⁷ For more information on the importance of tactile opportunities in museums consider Fiona Candlin’s, “Dubious Inheritance of Touch: Art History and Museum Access,” in *Journal of Visual Culture* 5, 2 (2006):137-154.

the viewer to see the objects closer than they would in a regular performance. This denied tactile opportunities for all spectators but still allows visitors who would not see these objects up close to interact with them and learn their significance to Canada's military history. Moreover, there is of course the obvious opportunity to offer more objects to view in a Virtual G.O. than a G.O.

After considering how a Virtual G.O. could change a spectator's experience it is important to review existing online content of the CWM to evaluate how a Virtual G.O. could fit on its current website. In addition to providing virtual galleries of former temporary exhibits such as *1812*, the CWM offers ample learning resources to history teachers.⁴⁸ One of the first activities available to teachers is to allow students to participate in a historical game *Over the Top: An Interactive Adventure*.⁴⁹ *Over the Top* is an interactive game where users are represented by an avatar of a Canadian soldier in the fall of 1916. The game is divided into sections where the user selects the soldier's decision before he can move to the next level. The game is recommended to teachers as:

a pedagogical learning tool whose main purpose is to allow students to better understand and appreciate the nature of the trench warfare during the First World War...students will also gain a better understanding of the difficulties and perils faced by frontline Canadian troops...and a greater appreciation for the bravery and sacrifice of Canadians that fought overseas.⁵⁰

The CWM's decision to include an interactive learning tool to teach students about the First World War suggests their possible interest in adding an additional learning tool such

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⁴⁸ To view all of the CWM's educational offerings visit <http://www.warmuseum.ca/education/> (accessed December 23, 2013).

⁴⁹ To learn more about "Over the Top" or play the game visit http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/games/overtop/index_e.shtml.

⁵⁰ "Over the Top—For Teachers and Students," (accessed December 23, 2013), http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/games/overtop/teachers_e.shtml.

as a Virtual G.O. As mentioned from the description of the game above the main learning objective is to teach students about the human sacrifice of war, which is the main objective of a prospective VG.O. Also, *Over the Top* only tells the story of the First World War. The opportunity for the CWM to provide an online learning interactive that allows students to understand Canada's participation in four different wars provides teachers with greater selection of interactive programmes they could integrate into their lesson plans.

The popularity of *Over the Top* demonstrates that a Virtual G.O. would be a beneficial and widely used contribution to the learning resources on the CWM website. Creative Developer of the Canadian History Museum Kathryn Lyons mentioned that although *Over the Top* was created in 2003 it "...is consistently the third most visited module in the entire corporation...Once teachers have something that works they go back to it and this increases visitation."⁵¹ Lyons explained this further by highlighting the uniqueness of the *Over the Top* as it is an interactive educational resource on Canadian history, which is free to the public and bilingual. The popularity of the visitation of *Over the Top* illustrates that a Virtual G.O. would be embraced by teachers who are looking for another accessible pedagogical medium to integrate into their lesson plans. As with *Over the Top* a Virtual G.O. would offer live presentations in French or English and provide historical lessons on Canada's history.

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⁵¹ Kathryn Lyons, interview by author, January 06, 2014.

The development of games such as *Over the Top* requires collaboration between different museum researchers, web developers, archivists and other staff.⁵² Collaboration is an integral component to both public history and digital projects. Many digital humanists such as Lisa Sporo have mentioned it as one of the core values in the digital humanities.⁵³ The creation of *Over the Top* reveals that the CWM has an interest in offering virtual pedagogical platforms to remote visitors. This implies an interest in pursuing similar projects such as a Virtual G.O. in the future. When asked whether a Virtual G.O. would benefit CWM's remote visitors Lyons responded yes and explained that the popularity of *Over the Top* reveals that "...there is a hunger for accessible pedagogical platforms for teaching Canadian military history and there is not enough educational material availability to meet this hunger."⁵⁴ In addition to a Virtual G.O. providing this lack of educational opportunities to visitors it could also help improve the few visitor studies that have been conducted on live G.O.s. CWM staff could determine how often the site is used or ask teachers to provide feedback as a condition of free use of the programme. Overall, these initiatives offer to improve remote visitors' interpretive experiences and spread awareness about the G.O. programme.

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⁵² Canadian War Museum, "About over the Top," (last accessed on January 6, 2014), http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/games/overtop/about_e.shtml.

⁵³ Lisa Sporo, "This is Why we fight, Defining the Values of DH," in ed. Matthew Gold, *Debates in the Digital Humanities*

⁵⁴ Kathryn Lyons, interview by author, January 6, 2014.

Conclusion

An analysis of the visitor and PI responses reveals that both consumers and producers considered museum theatre to be an effective way of presenting history at the CWM. By drawing on interviews and observational analysis, this thesis makes a unique contribution to public history; analyzing responses from the PIs delivering the program aims to fill a gap existing in current visitor studies as noted by numerous authors in Jackson and Kidd's *Performing Heritage* and Gosselin's work. This is partly due to the absence of visitor responses, which until recently was overlooked in different critiques on controversial exhibits or museum educational programs.¹ This thesis draws on visitors interactions with the PI. The overall attentiveness of school groups to G.O. performances and their emotive responses to the PI's narrative revealed that the G.O. provided a meaningful introduction to the museum. This interaction set the tone for the rest of the students' museum visit, encouraging them to understand that the CWM is more than a history of war but a history of the impact of war on individual Canadians.

In addition to the uniqueness of the research approach, the G.O. programme itself is a new adaptation of museum theatre. G.O.s collaborative approach between curators, historians and educators reveals the advantages of an interdisciplinary approach to interpretive planning. After a performance, students are introduced to the museum's art collection, secondary artifacts and most importantly they are encouraged to acknowledge the association with these objects and the individual life stories of war. The result is a powerful interpretation medium that encourages students to understand the personal

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¹ Jackson and Kidd, 685.

stories of war but also allows them to create opportunities to understand the relevance of these stories with their own personal lives. The G.O. programme is an innovative adaptation of museum theatre used for a brief introduction to a national museum that is one of a kind. As Lyons mentioned in an interview the purpose of creating the programme was to distinguish the CWM from other museums in the capital region that might show an introductory video or simply have staff discuss the rules of the museum.² The development of the programme since the opening of the CWM in 2005 reveals that it does add value to visitor experience and marks the CWM as the only national museum in Ottawa to incorporate theatre as an introduction to the museum.

Although the attentive responses from visitors illustrates that theatre is an effective medium in teaching students the meaning of history, as formerly mentioned the CWM has never conducted an official survey of the programme. However, the expansion of the programme and the development of the programme over time reveal that it is perceived by museum staff as an important interpretive tool to promote new exhibit themes. For instance, two G.O. characters were added after 2005 to teach students about new themes of specific temporary exhibits. First, the War Correspondent in Afghanistan G.O. was added in 2007 to promote the former temporary exhibit *Afghanistan: A Glimpse of War*.³ The script for this G.O. mentions that the P.I. should identify the photographer of the photo used in the G.O., Stephen Thorne, which is a real photo displayed in the

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² Kathryn Lyons, interview, January 6, 2014.

³ Canadian War Museum, "Museum Lecture puts Human Face on War," Last modified May 15, 2007, <http://www.warmuseum.ca/media/news/museum-lecture-puts-human-face-on-war-in-afghanistan/>.

temporary exhibition space.⁴ A second character was also added in 2012 to promote the exhibition *1812*. The script of this character, Abigail, includes multiple perspectives of the different groups who fought in the War of 1812, reflecting the curatorial-driven approach to the exhibit itself which told the story of the war from four perspectives. The creation of new G.O. characters to promote the museum's temporary exhibits reveals that the programme is perceived as an effective medium in presenting new exhibition themes to visitors.

Another aspect of the importance of the programme in delivering the museum's interpretive messages is the consideration of a new school programme that was developed in part from the success of G.O.s. In conversations with Learning Specialist Sandra O'Quinn, she mentioned that the success of the G.O. programme instigated the creation of a new school program that used theatre to teach history. The school programme "1812: One War, Four Perspectives" allows students to role play and enact different historical characters that were involved in the War of 1812. The P.I. who played Abigail in the May and June 2013 season delivered the 1812 school programme for the first time. Abigail described the programme as including six different boxes that included props and a skit of different perspectives of the war of 1812.⁵ Students were given time to rehearse the scripts and would perform their skits in chronological order to tell the story of the War of 1812. For example, one skit included the meeting of Sir Isaac Brock and Tecumseh. Abigail encouraged students to use accents to help students get into character. Abigail

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⁴ Canadian War Museum, "A War Correspondent in Afghanistan Presentation Script," 1.

⁵ Abigail, interview by author, September 20, 2013.

along with Learning Specialist Britt Braaten mentioned that the programme received positive reception from teachers and students. Braaten discussed that the school programme was being improved for the 2013 to 2014 school season.

The influence of G.O.s on other school programmes at the CWM reveals that the success of theatre in engaging the audience has encouraged the use of theatre in other interpretive programmes, demonstrating that the pedagogical advantages of theatrical representations of the past have been recognized more widely. The observed displays of historical empathy from the spectators at the end of the performance revealed that the audience members were able to identify with the P.I.'s fictional character. This historical empathy is an important part of the audience's introduction to the museum. The interviews with the P.I.s are integral in evaluating how students learn and respond to the programme. Furthermore, as almost all of the P.I.s noted, the G.O.s were very successful in achieving the respectful attitude which museum staff sought among the student visitors: those school groups asked to leave the museum because of inappropriate behaviour in the galleries were rarely those who had attended G.O.s. Although spectator surveys would represent a more detailed analysis of how the G.O. programme influences students' interaction in the gallery space, the observation of the school groups that have most frequently displayed inappropriate behaviour in the galleries reveals that it does attain one pedagogical incentive: it convinces the group to remain calm and reflect on the seriousness of the themes they are about to explore in the museum galleries.

The ability of students to understand and learn about Canada's individual sacrifices throughout our military history is influenced by the P.I.s ability to adapt the

script and tailor each performance to the specific needs of a group. For instance, the scripts are about five to six pages in length and ideally the G.O. is only supposed to last ten minutes. This often results in P.I.s selecting which parts of the script to include in their presentation. Interestingly, after comparing the scripts with the actual performance P.I.s tend to offer a more critical representation of the past than the official scripts. For example, P.I.s will include personal stories of war if it is applicable to their fictional war story. As previously discussed in chapter three this included a P.I. who previously served in the Canadian Forces and who chose to share his personal stories of war at the end of his performance. As well as PIs sharing their personal stories, they also became subject experts in the topic they were presenting. P.I.s were given the opportunity to speak with CWM historians on their particular subject. The P.I.s provided visitors with information that is not included in the script during the performance. This is an important aspect of the performance, fulfilling one of the main objectives of the G.O., which is to encourage spectators to ask questions about the historical past. If a student asked a question a P.I. did not have the answer to during their performance this would compromise the audience's ability to trust the historical information presented to the group. The observation of the interaction between P.I.s and students during GOs revealed that P.I.s were almost always able to answer questions. These observations were imperative to the assessment of the learning benefits of the program.

The P.I. plays an important and vital role in the success of the program. The application of Rokem's theory of actors as "hyper-historians" provided useful insights to how the P.I.s former acting training influenced the interaction of the group with the P.I.

This is why the theory was problematic to use as a framework to evaluate certain P.I.s performance as some performed the G.O. as a presentation over a performance. The majority of P.I.s are not trained actors. They receive advanced reading time, a day of training for the programme, which includes lessons on acting techniques, and practice time. Some P.I.s mentioned that a possible improvement for the programme is to hire professional actors to perform G.O.s, which might well enhance the performance as trained actors would be more experienced in performance strategies. They could incorporate various acting techniques such as adopting accents, using dramatic facial expressions, body movements and change the tone of their voice to express emotion. This is not to undermine the current programme as this thesis has argued that P.I.s are effective in performing the past but it would ensure that each G.O. was performed by an experienced actor who used theatrical techniques to represent the past.

Although hiring trained actors would enhance the theatrical techniques use to present G.O.s there is a disadvantage to hiring actors that are unfamiliar with performing in a museum theatre. For instance, in traditional theatre, the actors rehearse a script and perform for the audience. An alteration to the script with the approval of the director or dramaturge is not encouraged and the performance should be consistent, regardless of the audience. To perform G.O.s the P.I. has to adapt the content of the performance to meet the needs of the audience. As school groups range from grades one to high school, the P.I. has to adapt the content of the performance. As previously mentioned, one of Tilden's main interpretive principles is that the content must relate to what is being displayed or presented in a way that is meaningful to the viewer and that programmes

addressed to children should be tailored to their specific needs.⁶ Museum interpretation is a skill that professional actors may not have. An ideal PI candidate for the performance would have a combination of interpretation experience with acting training.

Another issue with the program delivery is the availability of experienced P.I.s to perform G.O.s. Only experienced P.I.s are trained in guided tours at the CWM. Since G.O.s occur during high season, P.I.s have to be available to deliver guided tours *and* G.O.s. In the 2013 session, the most experienced P.I.s rarely performed in May and June as compared to more recent CWM employees. This is problematic for two reasons: it left school groups with fewer options of which performance they would like to see and second it denied skilled P.I.s who deliver effective G.O.s a chance to perform. A possible solution is to train more P.I.s on guided tours to increase the availability of staff to perform G.O.s. The consideration of the importance of P.I.s delivering guided tours, which generates extra revenue for the museum over a value added program, demonstrates one of the main concerns of the programme, namely, that it will no longer be offered as it is a value added programme.⁷ Thus, a main objective of this work is to demonstrate that the programme is important and should be a staffing priority.

The future of the programme lies in increasing awareness of the unique introduction the CWM offers to school groups. This includes creating an interactive online presence for promotion of the programme. The current CWM website describes G.O.s as "...an exciting and interactive orientation program. Hosted by a costumed animator, this introduction to the Museum's themes and galleries combines war art,

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⁶ Tilden, 35.

⁷ Kathryn Lyons, interview by author, personal interview, Ottawa, January 6, 2014.

hands-on artifacts and compelling personal stories to relate the human experience of war.”⁸ This brief description does not emphasize the important role the introduction plays in introducing students to the CWM. The lack of information of the programme instigated the last chapter of this thesis to provide a framework for creating Virtual G.O.s. The current website features a popular online interactive *Over the Top* which is one of the most popular modules accessed in the entire CMCC.⁹ The objective of creating Virtual G.O.s has a double initiative, which includes creating an online presence for the program and increasing its access to remote visitors. Virtual G.O.s would allow remote visitors to learn the importance of personal stories told at the CWM without physically visiting the galleries.

The overall enthusiasm expressed by CWM P.I.s and G.O. spectators reveals that although there are no official visitor surveys to demonstrate the popularity of the programme it has a strong support system by museum staff and is generally well received by students. The G.O. programme has consistently replaced school programmes in May and June since the opening of the museum in 2005. The growth of the program to include new G.O.s to promote temporary exhibitions reveals that it is perceived by museum staff to be a valuable pedagogical tool in delivering new museum content. As both a public historian and former interpreter at several museums and historic sites my own observations of the effectiveness of the programme influenced this thesis’s defence of the existence of G.O.s. It is the most effective museum introduction that I have witnessed that

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⁸ Canadian War Museum, “Group Orientation Program,” <http://www.warmuseum.ca/education/programs/school-programs/group-orientation-program/>, Last accessed Feb 6, 2014.

⁹ Kathryn Lyons, interview by author, personal interview. Ottawa, January 6, 2014.

not only encourages students to personally identify with the past but also allows them to identify how their present lives are affected by these contributions.

Appendix 1 Approved Ethics Application

Carleton University
Research Office
Research Ethics Board
1325 Dunton Tower
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6 Canada
Tel: 613-520-2517
ethics@carleton.ca

Ethics Clearance Form

This is to certify that the Carleton University Research Ethics Board has examined the application for ethical clearance. The REB found the research project to meet appropriate ethical standards as outlined in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*, 2nd edition and, the *Carleton University Policies and Procedures for the Ethical Conduct of Research*.

X New clearance

☐ **Renewal of original clearance**
clearance:

Original date of

Date of clearance	28 May 2013
Researchers	Christina Stokes, Master's student
Department	History
Supervisor	Prof. David Dean, History
Project number	14-0008
Title of project	Performing History Offstage: The Benefits of using theatre to Present History at the Canadian War Museum

Clearance exP.I.res: **31 May 2014**

All researchers are governed by the following conditions:

Annual Status Report: You are required to submit an Annual Status Report to either renew clearance or close the file. Failure to submit the Annual Status Report will result in the immediate suspension of the project. Funded projects will

have accounts suspended until the report is submitted and approved.

Changes to the project: Any changes to the project must be submitted to the Carleton University Research Ethics Board for approval. All changes must be approved prior to the continuance of the research.

Adverse events: Should any participant suffer adversely from their participation in the project you are required to report the matter to the Carleton University Research Ethics Board. You must submit a written record of the event and indicate what steps you have taken to resolve the situation.

Suspension or termination of clearance: Failure to conduct the research in accordance with the principles of the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 2nd edition* and the *Carleton University Policies and Procedures for the Ethical Conduct of Research* may result in the suspension or termination of the research project.

Andy Adler, Chair
Carleton University Research Ethics Board
Ethics Board

Louise Heslop, Vice-Chair
Carleton University Research

Appendix 2 Interview Questions for CWM Staff

10.1 “Performing History Offstage: The Benefits of using theatre to Present History at the Canadian War Museum”: Sample Questions for CWM Staff

1. I would like to ask you some questions about your work at the Canadian War Museum:
  - a. How long have you worked at the CWM?
  - b. How long have you participated in General Orientations?
  - c. Did you have any theatre experience prior to performing General Orientations?
  - d. Have you obtained any theatre experience after you began performing General Orientations?
  - e. What is your character?
  - f. How long have you interpreted your character?
  - g. Have you performed other characters? If so, who?
  - h. What are some of the changes that have occurred in the programme since you started doing General Orientations?
2. How do you think your training at the CWM has influenced your ability to perform General Orientations?
3. Could you tell me in general terms the process of performing a General Orientation?
  - a. Do you start the performance in first or second person interpretation?
  - b. What is the general duration of a General Orientation?
  - c. What types of props are used in the performance?
4. I would like to ask you some questions about the painting associated with your fictional character.
  - a. Do you find that the painting is an essential part of the General Orientation? Why?
  - b. Do you notice that some students are distracted by the painting during your performance?
  - c. Do you feel that the painting enhances their experience? If so, in what ways?

5. I would like to ask you your opinion about the overall reception of the audience to General Orientations.
  - a. Do most groups seem interested and attentive to performances?
  - b. What is the general emotional response of the audience to the fictional war story?
6. I would like to ask you your opinion about the student reaction to the moment when you break character at the end of the General Orientation.
  - a. Do students generally ask questions about the fictional war character at the end of the performance?
  - b. Are there some instances when students believe that you are representing a real live character?
7. After the General Orientation, do you find that there is a noticeable difference in the way students who have received a General Orientation interact with the galleries compared to those students who have not?
  - a. If yes could you please provide specific examples?
8. In your opinion what value does the General Orientation add to the audience's experience?
  - a. Would you say that theatrical performance is an effective tool for engaging the audience?
    - i. If so, why, and in what ways?
    - ii. If not, why not?
  - b. Would you say that the General Orientation is successful in promoting students ability to identify that the CWM is a museum that represents the stories of ordinary Canadians?
    - i. If so, in what ways?
    - ii. If not, why not?
9. Are there any changes you would make to the General Orientation programme? For example:
  - a) Do you feel that the performance should be longer or shorter?
  - b) Do you feel that it would be more effective to perform General Orientations in the associated gallery?
  - c) Do you agree with breaking character at the end of the presentation?

10. Drawing on all of your experience at the CWM, do you feel that theatre or theatrical performance is an effective way of representing the past in a national museum? For example:
- a) How in your view does the response of the audience in a General Orientation differ from giving a guided tour?
  - b) How in your view does this experience differ from gallery animations?
11. Finally, what are some of the other ways the CWM has incorporated theatre as a part of its programming?

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