Disclosing the Tacit Identity in Majority Cultures

by

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Abstract

In this dissertation, I introduce the notion of tacit group identity as a central element in the identity construction of majority cultures, and as a source of influence in their conception of and interaction with otherness. Indeed, I argue that exploring the tacit identity of majority cultures reveals the presence of unreflective biases and assumptions that translate into normative statements where institutions and official discourse reflect a majority culture back onto itself.

My approach is based on a phenomenological understanding of identity, which highlights the dialogical aspect of identity-construction between the self and its context, and from a societal application of Polanyi's tacit knowledge, which emphasizes the unreflective and contextual elements that contribute to the shaping of one's identity. In establishing the inescapability of a context and its multi-layered influence on individual perspective, I propose a re-conceptualization of agency in identity construction as affected by the tacit aspect of identity and by its context.

I also articulate what a tacit element of group identity looks like through the examples of Québec's attachment to Catholicism and the underlying racism present in the United States. I argue that in both cases, the majority culture's relationship with otherness is influenced by a tacit identity which contradicts the explicit identity and the associated values it officially promotes. I claim that the tacit dimension of identity challenges the view of identity at the root of Western political theories by bringing to question the majority culture's assumptions of universality from which these theories emerge. Thus, not only is this aspect of identity important to better understand tensions between minority and majority cultures, it is also central to evaluate the theories explaining those relationships.

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Introduction—Bringing Forth the Tacit

In spring 2015, Canada's Supreme Court ruled against the city of Saguenay and its Mayor Jean Tremblay, stating that the mayor's insistence on beginning all city hall meetings with a prayer was in breach of state neutrality. According to the ruling, "If the state adheres to a form of religious expression under the guise of cultural or historical reality or heritage, it breaches its duty of neutrality" (Mouvement laïque québécois *v.* Saguenay (City), 2015). Thus a state cannot use its powers "to promote or impose a religious belief" and the court considered the religious practice to have no place in a city hall. In light of this ruling, Françoise David, then spokesperson for the political party Québec Solidaire, saw the Supreme Court ruling as an example to follow and called on her colleague members of parliament to finally agree to remove the crucifix from the wall in the Blue Chamber of Quebec's National Assembly. Ms. David's appeal, however, has been ignored.

This is not a new issue in Québec. Debates over the crucifix in the National Assembly became heated back in 2013 when the Parti Québecois proposed the establishment of what was dubbed the "Quebec Charter of Values[1]" which came as a direct response to France's own initiative[2] in the same year, and aimed to ban any and all conspicuous religious symbols for those working in governmental institutions, as well as in hospitals and schools. Inevitably, the opponents of the Charter were quick to point to the crucifix, arguing that applying different rules to Catholic symbols would reveal the Charter

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[1] Bill 60, "Charte affirmant les valeurs de laïcité et de neutralité religieuse de l'État ainsi que d'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes et encadrant les demandes d'accommodement." 40th Legisl.,1st Session, Québec, 2013. Sept. 2013. Web. 3 Dec 2013.

[2] Circulaire NOR/MENE1322761C n° 2013-144, "Charte de la laïcité à l'École et aux valeurs et symboles de la République." Paris, 2013. 6 Sept. 2013. Web. 3 Dec 2013

as the PQ's hypocritical and underhanded way to ban non-Christian religious symbols, more specifically, the Muslim veil. The argument was quickly eschewed by the Parti Québecois representatives who chose to hide behind the claim that the crucifix, while being a traditionally religious symbol, is in this case a historical symbol, and thus has its place in the Blue Chamber as a reminder of Québec's religious heritage[3].

Questions over the acceptable range of religious plurality have become central in societies like Québec, which rely heavily on immigration to counter its declining birth rate. Quebecers have demonstrated in numerous instances their reticence to accept the cultural and political adaptations that become necessary to integrate this needed immigrant population. 'Old-stock' Quebecers reject the critiques that define them as xenophobic, but they find themselves largely in favour of a clear establishment of rules concerning religious practices (implicitly non-Christian), if not entirely in favour of the PQ-led project of a charter of secularism.

Tensions over religious accommodations are not a new occurrence in Canada. In Québec, however, cultural and religious plurality is a very sensitive issue and regularly the cause of tensions and clashes between the majority and its minority populations. How can we explain this phenomenon? How can a population that, almost overnight, turned away from its religious connection and built an identity, a language, and a culture that embodies this break, remain so protective of the symbols from this past it proudly rejects? Why does this ambiguity come to the fore when the preservation of Catholic symbols is contrasted to

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[3] However, the religious heritage the Government wishes to commemorate through the crucifix is associated with the "Grande Noirceur", a period when all aspect of people's lives were lived under the yoke of the Church. Maurice Duplessis put the crucifix above the chair of the speaker of the House in 1936, not to symbolise the province's religious heritage, but as a symbol of the new and tighter relations his government aimed to have with the Catholic Church at the time.

the hostility with which it receives demands of religious accommodations from its non-Christian population? I believe the answer lies in the elements constitutive of Québec's specific context—its historical, religious, cultural, even its geographical context—which tacitly and unreflectively influence the perspective, and the perception, preferences, decisions, and actions of its people.

Québec's religious past has been a founding force in its history and, unlike the official discourse claims, there is more to its attachment to Catholicism than a simple historical acknowledgment. Québec has a connection to a religious past, only a more emotional and spiritual connection than the mere recognition of a people's history and an attachment Quebecers have been only too keen to denounce and reject half a decade ago. Catholic religion has been an important source of meaning and a crucial part of Québécois identity in various forms for generations. Such connection to a part of a people's identity cannot disappear from their self-concept over a short period of time, as church attendance did during the Quiet Revolution. I claim that this identity is still deeply important as provider of meaning and as part of Quebecer identity: it has become part of the background, it has a tacit presence and, therefore, it unreflectively affects Quebecers' outlooks. I believe the discord over religious accommodations largely stems from Quebecers—as a majority culture[4]—grappling with a tacit context that has caused and continues to cause tensions with the identity they want to have and project.

The case of Québec reflects the larger issues over living with diversity in culturally plural countries, which are also affected by background assumptions and biases that shape,

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[4] For the purpose of this project, I understand the term culture as the consensus into which a person is born, raised and socialised. Majority cultures thus represent a consensus as a source of socialisation that is shared by a majority of people in one society.

not only their perception, but also the proposed solutions to those issues. Multicultural perspectives try to contend with the relationship between majority cultures and the minorities present in modern societies, trying to find the best way to frame accommodations and to harmonize between group rights and individual rights (Kymlicka 1995, 2000; Taylor 1995; Pettit, 1997; Eisenberg 2007). There is a consensus among multicultural theorists that a state must accommodate its minorities—through politics of difference, politics of recognition, or identity politics, for instance—because it cannot be neutral about its conception of the good and its preference towards one culture and, thereby, causes some of the inequalities that minorities experience. Although there is an acknowledgment in Western multicultural discourses that a state reflects contextual biases and that its preference over one culture can translate in under-representation of minorities, the solutions proposed are largely premised on assumptions assumed to be common-sense and universal. In other words, whereas multiculturalists may be aware of the cultural bias of majorities that cause needs for accommodations, they are, however, largely unaware of the unreflective biases upon which their proposed solutions are premised. For instance, and briefly put, liberal egalitarians like Kymlicka, Dworkin and Rawls take the universality of liberal values for granted and propose accommodations premised on those liberal values, thereby reproducing the inequities they try to remedy. Communitarians like Sandel take their interpretation of values like recognition and reciprocity to be neutral and, as a consequence, fail to see the majority culture's own bias in interpreting and promoting these values. Non-domination theorists such as Pettit and Young, however, are aware of the subversive aspect of domination within a state and acknowledge that the aim of reducing domination should be the role of the state. Yet, without taking into account the

preconceptions present in cultures of the majority, they miss out on pervasive notions of domination that affect minority cultures. Finally, the view of cultures as hybrid that comes from cosmopolitan theorists like Nussbaum and O'Neil takes for granted that the evolution of cultures they promote is essentially the unilateral spread of liberal values and the interpretation minorities make of that influence. Most of these theories miss out on the insight that accounting for the unreflective biases in majority cultures could bring. The aim of the present study, therefore, is to draw attention to the non-reflective—or tacit—aspect of our experience as part of a group, specifically pertaining to identity construction and to its effect in our understanding of ourselves and others. In what follows, I indicate where that unreflective part resides in identity and how it affects our actions and the way we conceive of the political.

To begin, identity is much more than a series of statements that describe a person: our identity orients us in the world and gives our world meaning. For instance, my identity may include being a woman, a daughter, a sibling, a partner, a graduate student, an illustrator, an intellectual, a Québécoise, a Canadian and I could keep adding to this list. My point of view will be shaped by all of these elements that define me in various degrees. In addition, in the context of these traits, my outlook on the world will never be identical to that of another person. For instance, a carpenter would not apprehend the world the same way as a lawyer would. It is similar with a group identity (whether cultural, political, national, or religious): a devout orthodox Jew, for instance, will not view the world the same way as a person who believes in the healing power of Reiki. Hence, from context comes identity, and from identity springs values, expectations, practices, traditions and even myths, which, in turn, shape identity. Nevertheless, there are aspects of our identity

(individual or collective) that remain tacit, in the background, but that paradoxically still inform our perception, behaviours or reactions to various events. The controversy over whether or not to take down the crucifix in the Quebec National Assembly illustrates this paradoxical place the Judeo-Christian heritage still holds in Quebec society: while we can give reflective justifications to keep the crucifix where it is—tradition and the preservation of cultural heritage—the intensity of emotions on both sides of the issue suggests that there may be more behind the controversy than we may consciously assert.

This project, as its title announces, seeks to draw attention to the tacit aspects of identity. Yet, the tacit, by definition is something that is beyond words. In the context of identity construction, its tacit aspect is largely unreflective and exists alongside its more reflective aspects. Still, the tacit is significant to the making of our identity but is difficult to articulate for two reasons: firstly, it can be unreflective to the point of failing to be noticed, and secondly, it can be meaningful for such a varied set of reasons that it would be impossible to list them all. I will argue, for instance, that part of the tacit or unreflective aspect of Quebecers' identity is an emotional connection to its religious heritage as a source of meaning that has never been replaced, which is where the tensions over religious plurality come from. Thus, the meaning one personally sees in that heritage, how it affects one's identity, and how it will shape one's actions will not be identical for every person.

Before we begin our account of the tacit identity, however, we must frame identity construction as a dialogical process between us, our world and others, which involves the presence of the unreflective in this construction. Our identity provides the outlook through which we understand the world, but this identity itself is constructed through our condition as being embedded in our world. As such, the complexity of our connections with the

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world, with others, with our past and how we interpret these relationships are all contributors to our identity. This myriad of connections and influences may or may not be reflective, that is, we may or may not be aware of being shaped by them. Our embedded nature means that a change in our world—or context—may come with a different way to understand ourselves, how we view and judge our world and others. Being embedded in the world, we have an emotional attachment to what defines us and to what gives us an orientation in our life: any change in our self-understanding will not occur unnoticed. As a people, our context also influences our outlook on the world and will inevitably affect how we understand, structure, regulate ourselves politically. Thus, our shared tacit identity comes to influence certain decisions and actions in a society and I contend it is important to take this aspect of identity into account, not only to explain a people's choices and decisions, but also to begin to understand seemingly dissonant tensions within a society. The goal of this project is therefore to inquire about the role of the tacit aspect of identity in identity-construction processes and what may be its influence on cultures of the majority, who often define power relations within a society.

Getting a better understanding of the relation between identity and its contextual framework—especially with its tacit aspect—can give a richer insight into a people's choices, values, and priorities. In addition, being better aware of our own biases, we may approach discussions and conflicts with the Other from a less rigid and righteous perspective. Indeed, drawing attention to this tacit element of identity will challenge assumptions of universality in cultures of the majority that result from an unreflective identity trait.

Tacit influence and tacit agency

The human propensity to live with others has forced us to deal with numerous challenges throughout recorded history to find the best way to live together. The field of political science has proposed numerous avenues with various views of the necessary and desirable political aims, suited to varied conceptions of human nature. However, the tradition has failed to adequately address the place and importance of the unreflective[5], especially how

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[5] My understanding of the unreflective is, as we will see below, inspired by a combination of Polanyi's tacit knowledge and phenomenology, especially Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty's conception of embeddedness. Therefore, I distinguish my interpretation of the unreflective from similar terms in psychoanalytic and sociological discourses and their possible applications in political theory.

   The unreflective that interests me exists in the tacit aspect of group identity. Thus, while I stress the importance of a personal connection to a group identity, my focus is not to delve in the specifics of what that personal connection might be: I believe personal meaning is too complex and comprises too many elements—conscious and unconscious—to list, not only for one person, but also for the totality of a population. I will expand on this in Chapter 2. Thus, a conception of the unconscious akin to Freud's id— which comprises the unadulterated desires that influence our actions, and which the ego and the super-ego must hold in check—while helpful in looking at the personal unconscious, is not as helpful an avenue to explore a collectively held identity. Freud's work (1995) also assumes the presence of a certain range of motivations lurking in our unconscious (such as the death drive or the Oedipus complex) that he uses to explain certain behaviours. However, my view of the complexity and diversity of personal meaning eschews any attempt at a thorough and accurate description. Similarly, Nietzsche's *ressentiment* (2003, 19), which he claims underlies Liberal society's notions of morality and the good life (Solomon 2004), posits another general claim about group motivations, which, again, abstracts the personal meaning that I claim must be there in order for an identity to have a collective importance. Whereas I agree with the principle that what a people can express may hide an unreflective motivation that has a different aim than the people may claim, I do not believe that the motivations behind such phenomena can be the same across the board.

   Also, because I look at the unreflective from a political perspective, and therefore focus my work on the group identities of majority cultures, I must also distance myself from Harold Garfinkel's ethnomethodology. Although Garfinkel challenges the existence of objective social facts based on what he sees is our contextual nature, he, however, focuses on specific examples of social behaviours and at ways to subvert them in order to bring out the tacit expectations in some social practices (1996, 18). My interest in the unreflective goes beyond specific social practices and looks at an aspect of identity that shapes our understanding of the world and thus influences our decisions and outlook on ourselves and others. As such, I do not look at the unreflective as a predictor of specific behaviours, but rather as a broad indicator of dispositions, the enactment of which will differ for each person. I therefore also disagree with Pierre Bourdieu whose habitus emphasizes social elements of class, gender and other instances of power-relations. Unlike Bourdieu's look at culture and social habits from a class perspective (1986, 42) (Caro, 1980), I approach culture and political behaviour from an identity perspective, especially with regard to the identity of the culture of the majority, which will inevitably comprise several levels of power-dynamics. As a result, and for the purpose of introducing my conception of the unreflective, which I refer to as the tacit aspect of identity, I must restrict the variables shaping my understanding of identity. Consequently, I situate

it plays out in our conception of the good and in our decision-making process. Even a political thinker like Hannah Arendt—who champions a plural society with radical diversity—takes for granted and consequently fails to account for the tacit sharing of an identity, for the culture that arises in living with others, and for how the need for intelligibility in action inevitably restricts the breadth of diversity possible in one society.

In general, the Western political approach to cultural diversity and pluralism is one that has taken for granted a self-constructed and mostly reflective conception of identity, which I consider unhelpful to explore any tacit notion connected to identity: it fails to contend with the influence of a people's context in defining and finding meaning in certain myths, practices, traditions and beliefs, and in determining how challenges to them will be received. Focusing on agency as the sole determinant of identity ignores the unreflective part of human nature, which, as we will see below, we must contend with as a premise to tacit identity. Whereas this focus on agency, being more manageable because less complicated, may pave the way to simple, one-size-fits-all solutions to the inevitable

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the influence Bourdieu identifies in class socialization under the level of identity concerning significant others (I further elaborate on this notion of "levels of identity" in Chapter 1).

In the field of political philosophy, Immanuel Kant took the unreflective in consideration when he noted that human motivation may not be entirely reflective and may lead us into unethical actions, all the while thinking we are acting rightly (2012, 22). Whereas our reflective mind may give an altruistic reason for an action, Kant realised that it may have been our reflective mind justifying an unreflective motive with what we perceive as a rational and valid reason. Humans, he saw, cannot be fully aware of the influences leading to their actions, and thus attempted to bypass this uncertainty by finding an alternative that would avoid the treachery of our background motives. While obeying a set of universal rules is an efficient way to avoid endless deliberations as to the proper way to act and whether a person's motivations are pure, it also abstracts the unreflective and dismisses it as a hindrance. In addition, Kant ignores the unreflective motives that are embedded in, and shape what he assumes to be universal rules. The unreflective as Kant conceives of it is closer to my own but, whereas he attempts to avoid its influence, I try to point to it and to the impossibility of circumventing it entirely in the political.

By the unreflective, therefore, I refer to elements that we take for granted, either because keeping them in the background enables us to focus on more complex things, or because it is shared by so many people that it can easily escape our notice as contingent. I will elaborate on my conception of the unreflective in Chapter 2 when I define the tacit.

tensions involved in living with others, it fails to account for the more accurate but less practical complexity of the human experience and its valuable insights.

Our changing conception of the individual has reflected the changes to our conception of the world over time. Whereas the first Western philosophers recognized the uneasy, yet complementary relation of reason, passion, and desire, the neo-Platonic, emphasis on the preponderance and universality of reason has created a dual individual, split between reason and emotion, and between a public and a private sphere. The diversity of the human character, once considered essential to its pursuit of the good, has been gradually undermined by a modern, binary rendering of the world: the emotional and largely contextual aspect of the human character having a place almost exclusively in private life. However, considering our emotional attachment to certain people and to parts of our world (religious, historical, cultural, traditional, and so on), to the extent that they are constitutive of our identity and that they can be unreflective, gives a more complex portrait of human nature and demands a closer inspection of what constitutes our identity.

My account of the tacit is premised on a conception of agency different from both the view of an atomistic self, devoid of any connection to its context, and the identity dependent on its community to define itself. I bring up the notion of unreflectiveness and of the tacit in identity to give a more nuanced rendering of identity that not only allows for a connection to one's community but also makes possible individual agency. Thus, I challenge the liberal ideal type[6], which claims that we are agents when we are cognizant of being influenced and are able to make purely unencumbered decisions, thereby rejecting the possibility that one's agency is influenced by one's context in a way that may be explicit

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[6] For the purpose of this introduction, I refer to an ideal type of liberalism and of communitarianism in order to better situate my own conception of identity construction.

but that may also be unreflective. Critiques of liberalism—labeled under the communitarian ideal type—emphasize the influence of one's context on one's identity and choices and the claim that community is prior to individuality. Whereas I also consider the influence of our context as shaper of our identity, I believe that a part of our context is reflective and enters into dialogue with us so that we can embrace or reject those influences, make our own decisions and thus exert our agency as individuals. There are also aspects of our context, however, that remain unreflective and that, as a result, shape our decisions without our awareness. I also claim that we still use our agency even if our unreflective context influences our decisions simply because we willingly do so and are able to give explanations for our decisions and actions even if our true motives are unknown to us. I further develop my conception of the self in the next chapter when I discuss its multifaceted and interconnected nature. For now, I turn to Michael Polanyi whose work on the tacit provides a framework from which I can begin to articulate my conception of identity as a sort of hybrid between the liberal and the communitarian conception of the self.

Michael Polanyi's work on the tacit rejects positivist conceptions of the world and brings to the fore the importance of intuition, practice and meaning in knowledge. It will serve as a starting point for what follows. As Polanyi's work focused on changing the way we think about scientific knowledge and how we conduct science, it has brought attention to an aspect of our life that is largely beyond our ability to articulate. He tells us that scientific knowledge relies on the tacit to form a Gestalt within which our knowledge makes sense. I believe our identity benefits from a similar inarticulate whole within which the world makes sense to us. The tacit, in characterising our interpretation and our coping in the world, has a presence and an import that can enrich our knowledge of natural science

but also our self-knowledge. It is by understanding where Polanyi situates the tacit that we can look for it in identity-construction.

Polanyi has a famous example of balancing on a bicycle as a clear instance of tacit knowledge, where "we can know more than we can tell" (1966, 4). Indeed, we cannot provide useful instructions on how to keep one's balance on a bicycle that would replace the knowledge we acquire by watching someone do it, and then attempting it ourselves. What Polanyi emphasizes throughout his work is that a great deal of our knowledge is rooted in intuitive or non-reflective perception and is demonstrated in a similarly unreflective and intuitive coping.

Some thinkers whose work was influenced by Michael Polanyi have taken the bicycle example as an indication that Polanyi solely focused on the tacit knowledge rooted in the body and some have embraced the primacy of the body, linking bodily experience as a conditioner and source of meaning and rationality (Johnson, 1987). Others, like Harry Collins have critiqued Polanyi's tacit as incomplete and have shifted the source of the truly tacit in collective knowledge. Indeed, Collins argues that Polanyi's bicycle example is merely a somatic tacit knowledge (Collins 2010, 85-6), which is to say that it depends on the features of the human body, and is merely tacit because of the speed at which our brain and our body work to attain proper balance on a bicycle (100). He further argues that should we ever find ourselves in conditions of near zero gravity, where our movements would be slowed down, we could, in theory, explain the mechanisms involved in balancing on a bicycle. He also claims that, since a machine can be built which can approximate (not the processes, but the end result of) somatic tacit knowledge, it follows that Polanyi's tacit knowledge is not truly tacit (100).

Collins claims that it is the collective knowledge involved in activities like negotiating traffic on a bicycle or in a car where the truly tacit can be found. Such activities involve absorbing social rules from the society in which one is born and he supports his argument with a comparison of the American driving style with that of Chinese or Italian drivers (121). Collins explains such cultural differences with what he calls a social Cartesianism, which describes individuals as merely sharing the collectivity's knowledge (131). Indeed, he states that humans are "able to learn how to make use of the contributions of all the elements [present in a society] in ways that act in concert *with what other humans are doing* as a result of our mutual participation in the larger organism of society" (165, emphasis in the text). Yet, Collins' conception of the connection among members of a society—especially regarding knowledge transmission—is one that minimises this "mutual participation."

The individual brain, for Collins, is a microcosm of the collectivity of brains in society: "the collectivity of brains is just a large-scale version of my brain—it is just a bigger collection of interconnected neurons" and language is that which links all those brains into "one big neural net" (132). This perspective on collective knowledge has serious implications about knowledge transmission, human agency and about the context of a society. Firstly, Collins refers to humans as "social parasites" (131) and describes learning to become a functioning member of the society one inhabits as "sucking up social knowledge" (133). This analogy suggests that knowledge—whether scientific or social— is some external entity that humans only have to discover and internalise. In this case the accumulation of knowledge depends on the individual's ability to receive it—or to "suck" it from its source. Secondly, the parasite analogy removes the human factor in shaping the

social. For Collins, humans receive knowledge in a similar way and the extent of their participation in the social is limited to its perpetuation for the next generations (165). Therefore, it is not simply that Collins does not see human agency at work in shaping society (through collective, but also sometimes through individual action); he also fails to acknowledge the diversity implied in multiplicity. Thirdly, Collins overlooks the plurality of human perspectives and interpretations of received knowledge, which suggests that he considers the social as rigid and unchanging. Yet, how does he account for revolutions or for changes in mores within a society?

For instance, driving implies expectations, risks, skills, and reflexes that are different in many countries. Collins acknowledges that such differences may have to do with the context of a particular society when he notes that the ad hoc and chaotic driving style in China may have to do with a recent and drastic increase in motorized vehicle traffic (122). Nevertheless, Collins provides no explicit connection for the shaping of the social by living in it. Drivers in China do not merely suck up the social in this case: they have made the chaotic driving style what it is as a result of their context, which in this case involves the quick increase of motor vehicles on the streets. Yet, in calling humans social parasites who suck up the social, such contextual particularity seems disconnected from the behaviours of those humans living in the social.

Collins does give language the role of binder between the collectivity of brains that form his "neural net" and I believe this is connected to his social parasite claim because he, once again, fails to see the input humans have in their use of language, especially with regard to the specifically cultural meaning implied in certain words. For Collins, language exists outside of us and we learn it through learning from those people around us who use

that language. Yet, Collins does not account for the mutually altering character of language, where we may be changed by using it, and our very use of it contributes to changing it in turn.

His description of language as the social may explain why Collins believes in the minimal embodiment thesis (135) which claims that as "a social parasite only a minimal body is necessary but the human brain is vital" (138). Collins here supports his claim by giving examples of scientific and technical expertise, which can be approximated by being familiar with its respective jargon (137). Collins minimises the customary ways of being in the world adopted by various cultures by stating that anthropologists can get substantial insights into a culture by observation and learning the language, even if they are not participating in the culture (136). What is lost in passive observation and non-participation, however, is the tacit dimension of a culture, including aspects of its identity that may not be accessible through linguistic communication only. Collins suggests that one can approximate the study of another's collective knowledge by learning its language and that it would be sufficient to get an accurate insight into that culture. While a lot can be learned from this minimal level of 'embodiment,' this is an argument Portuguese and Brazilians, or Beninese and French would be keen to reject. Collins critiques Polanyi's overlooking of the collective tacit knowledge, but his own attempt to define the truly tacit knowledge as collective reveals his underestimation of the role of the tacit in a culture, and the inconsistency of his understanding of the social.

Collins' critique of Polanyi centres around his misunderstanding of Polanyi's concern with the "personal element of tacit knowledge" which he sees as indicating a disregard of the collective element (148) and a focus on the somatic tacit knowledge.

Contrary to Collins' assertion, however, Polanyi is aware that the tacit permeates other aspects of knowledge, and that inevitably includes a cultural—I would say contextual—knowledge. Indeed, in *Meaning*, Polanyi concentrates on giving an account of the centrality of the social in meaning-making, which he considers the base of our approach to knowledge.

Indeed, contrary to Collins, Polanyi acknowledges individual perspectives and their unique interpretation of information, thus positing knowledge as something that may be collectively shared, but that is also interpretive and imbued with personal meaning. He posits that our imagination is crucial in making connections between seemingly unconnected things, which is how we can feel pride and patriotism when looking at our country's flag (Polanyi 1975, 73)—we know that the importance of the flag is not the fabric that makes it but what it represents—or how we can be moved by a play even as we know that what is taking place on stage is not reality (87). Our imagination bridges the gap between seemingly disconnected notions and can add personal associations to objects, symbols or events presented to us. Our country's flag may not only bring up to mind our nation's existence and our "diffuse and boundless memories of our life in it" (73), but these elements become embodied in the flag, hence giving both a collective meaning to it and a deeply personal one as well. Thus, for Polanyi, imagination, since it is unique to people, allows for the interpretation and personal meaning of something collectively held as important. As Paul Richard Blum points out, Polanyi understands the notion of "personal" knowledge, not simply as private or intimate, but connects it to personhood, referring to the German root of the word (2010, 198). The tacit, then, defines and becomes part of us, even as part of a group identity, a notion to which Maben Poirier also points (2011, 217).

Culture is the result of consensus and unconscious habituation over time and among those who share it. It teaches one how to behave and the tacit is learned, not because a learner gets an explanation, but because the learner must believe, and thus, imitate before they can know (Polanyi 1962, 208). Thus, for Polanyi all learning is preceded by an acceptance that the knowledge we seek to learn is sound and he gives the example of an infant learning to speak who must assume that the sounds he is repeating have a meaning (207). This learning of the children from the adults forms a sort of authoritative way of being but one's participation in a society-based consensus implies its modification. As Polanyi states: "submission to a consensus is always accompanied to some extent by the imposition of one's views on the consensus to which we submit" (208), which is what Collins fails to include in his definition of the social. Polanyi also asserts that this consensus is not only altered by our personal interpretation of it and our participation in it, but it also retains the context within which a rejection of that same consensus can occur.

Polanyi's work on meaning focuses on the particulars of meaning-making, that is, how something can become significant to people but not in an identical way and for identical reasons. Yet, the place of cultural, or more broadly, contextual diversity and its role on interpretation and meaning-making is not Polanyi's concern. Thus he offers us an entry point to a discussion of the tacit in terms of a conditioned point-of-view. We however need to look elsewhere for an insight into what transpires in Polanyi's work but is not articulated, namely the importance of a person's context on his or her perception and interpretation—or meaning-making.

The discussion in *Personal Knowledge* about the personal input individuals provide to the consensus by simply internalising and perpetuating it brings forth an important

implication for identity-construction: being socialised into a consensus, making it one's own—even rejecting it—occurs within and in terms of that consensus. For example, a child whose first language is Italian will only speak, think and dream in Italian. Any other language is nonsensical to her until she learns to speak them. The child is embedded, as it were, in the linguistic context in which she was born and learned to speak. Polanyi's consensus, however, is a cultural one and includes art, technology, history, etc. Similar to the language example, a person born, raised, and socialised in a specific social lore will have an outlook on the world that is restricted to the consensus they know, and it will influence their interactions with others. Polanyi's discussion of social transmission via consensus implies that knowledge is not only transformed through learning and transmission, but it implies also that we are conditioned by our world, and we also condition it through our mere presence in it[7]. Thus, not only are we embedded and conditioned by our world, we are also dialogically involved in it and as such we can shape it through our perceptions and interpretations. The following sections will elaborate on these claims.

Polanyi's insights on the tacit have made clear that the tacit—not only in terms of knowledge but also in terms of culture, that is, meaning-making—is largely shaped by the receivers and the propagators of the knowledge and culture. As receivers of cultural lore,

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[7] This reciprocal relationship between the agent and its world is what I consider an essential premise to studying tacit identity and constitutes a halfway point between the conception of the unencumbered self (as Sandel describes in 1982, 87) and the socially constructed self (Sandel 1982, 172). In living in our world we also interpret it and shape it, thereby making it dynamic. Polanyi's understanding of learning gives a new perspective on the question of agency that my conception of identity raises: although we might be submitting to a consensus, our mere participation in that consensus contributes to changing it. We are not, therefore, simply repeating some practice, or some language, but we are in fact, through our interpretation and our expression, altering it along with everybody else who uses or refers to it. Polanyi calls the kind of learning that requires our input indwelling, and Hans Georg Gadamer frames it as a fusion of horizon but it essentially means that we make what we learn meaningful to us, we blend it with our own perspective, thereby being changed by it and changing it in return.

people find themselves immersed into a culture that defines the terms from which one's personal perspective will spring. As propagators of our culture, we connect others to the cultural consensus as we interpret it, effecting changes to it by inputting our personal perspective into it. The organic shaping of the social consensus by the receivers and the propagators itself conveys a deep connection between humans and their world and Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty are insightful sources to begin to explain it.

Embedded and Conditioned

According to Heidegger, we are thrown into the world and this world is not one towards which we stand aloof (1962, 174). Indeed, he views humanity's condition as being inextricably connected to its environment, meaning that whatever perception one has is never free from a context. In other words, our view of the world can never be apprehended from a purely objective perspective. Maurice Merleau-Ponty takes up and rephrases Heidegger's position by defining humans as being in and towards the world, that is to say, our embeddedness shapes our nature as well as our perceptions of the world: we cannot understand ourselves outside of the world (Merleau-Ponty 2012, lxxiv).

Merleau-Ponty departs from Heidegger's work by focusing on how this embeddedness affects our body and its perceptive abilities. Indeed, Merleau-Ponty depicts the world as the background to our perception, thereby highlighting our conditioned human nature as the sum of our context. This context, however, also depends on our remembrance: our emotional reactions to events also shape us and leave a lasting impression. Merleau-Ponty gives the example of the first time we see a great painting and how, even though we

may forget about what the painting actually looked like, our aesthetic sense was changed forever (416). This example tells us that the context within which one is born and has grown is a source of influence one cannot ignore or reject.

Our physical particularities (for instance, humans generally stand upright, can see a certain range of the light spectrum and have a rather underdeveloped sense of smell) and our embedded nature shape the way we apprehend and interpret the world. In turn, the context in which we exist provides the framework within which we will evaluate our context, others and ourselves. Our context, therefore, is not merely conditioning of our perception but also of our interpretations, evaluations and judgments. As Merleau-Ponty states: "our body…insofar as it is inseparable from a perspective and is this very perspective brought into existence, is the condition of possibility…of all of the expressive operations and all of the acquisitions that constitute the cultural world" (408). Our world and culture are a product of our contextualized perception.

Our embedded condition comes with the conviction that our point of view is a universal one and we tend not to realize that others, existing in a different context will inevitably have a different perspective, different values, customs, traditions and judgments on the world. Some particular aspects of our embedded condition are easier to notice than others because they are more ingrained in our assumptions about the world and appear to us without plausible or rational alternatives. In countries of Western tradition, for instance, we take as given the plausibility and universality of capitalism, liberalism, and Christian values. Such taken for granted assumptions become largely tacit, not only because people are embedded in the context that generates these values, but also because they might not have sources of legitimate challenge to their outlook. Heidegger terms this unreflective

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embeddedness the enframing[8]. Essentially, the enframing of the world is an inevitable consequence of our thrownness and embeddedness: we are immersed in the world and thus incapable of apprehending the world from an objective point of view.

John Russon interprets the enframing thus: in our embeddedness, we tend only to perceive whatever confirms our own understanding of the world. This confirmation bias occurs because we understand the world holistically, with parts having a place and a meaning within the whole, which is conceived of our own meaning-making and of our own understanding (Russon 1995, 519). Thus we often fail to see the subjectivity of our perception.

According to Heidegger's early work, becoming aware of the bias of our perception is achieved in being-towards-death, that is, in the awareness of our mortality and of our own unique Dasein, in opposition to the "they," which distracts us from Dasein by making us focus on others and on fitting in (1962, 299). The concept of the 'they' makes Heidegger's work rather unsympathetic to our social nature: it focuses more on the individual perception of the world and on the attainment of authenticity by grasping our Dasein and turning away from the collective. Heidegger's later work, however, considers the meaning-making character of cultural groups, especially through the construction of works of art that provide us with an insight into the context of a people, that is, the blend of earth and world (Heidegger 2008, 168). In *On the Origin of the Work of Art*, Heidegger discusses the disclosing power of the unfamiliar that can take the form of non-linguistic communications and how such communicating media can reach us and disclose our world

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[8] Heidegger means by that a "challenging forth in ordering" (1977, 24) that is associated with seeing the world as a standing reserve but what it illustrates is a forcing of the world to be how we see it, which is why I use that term.

in unique ways. Yet, the work of art, as Heidegger describes it, is either the product of a whole society—which partly reflects its context—or is the work of an individual representing a common context shared by a society. Both kinds of works of art, he claims, can touch us whether we share its context or are a stranger to it because it taps into something universal in all humans: the work of art eschews the use of words that would otherwise impose on it an interpretation, whereas the emotions, and the associations observers are free to make when looking at the work of art, has the flexibility to reach almost everyone on their own terms and within their own understanding abilities.

To sum up, because we are conditioned by our context, and because our context can never be identical to another person's, our perspective or position in the world will be unique. We will not be affected by the same things nor will we be affected by them the same way: no two people will be moved identically by a work of art. This is what Polanyi conveys in his discussion of meaning: our attachment to our country's flag is connected to our life in that country but which aspects or events in our life we associate with what the flag represents is unique to each person. John Russon also touches on our conditioned nature, but from a different take when he states that: "the way we immediately notice the new moments of our experience is always in terms of the meaningful contexts we have already been developing" (1995, 23). We apprehend the unfamiliar or the new by starting from that which is familiar or makes sense to us, recalling Gadamer's *fusion of horizons*. Russon articulates an important point that is implied in our embedded and conditioned nature: we can only experience the world from our own point of view, originating in our unique context, which means that we can never know exactly what others are feeling. Rather, we can have a more or less clear sense of others' feelings through our imagination

and our own experiences, which requires entering into a dialogue with others.

Dialogical

As a result of being embedded into a context that include others, our nature is also one that is dialogical. Our dialogical character is a way in which our context shapes us, but it is also a way in which we can shape our context. Charles Taylor, also coming from the premise that posits humans as embodied agents (1995, 26, 63), understands our relationship with others as central to shaping who we are. Taylor gives humans some agency in choosing what their context will include and reject, which makes the dialogical character of humans so central to his ontology. Indeed, in line with Polanyi and Collins, he claims we learn how to belong or to be part of our society through imitating its members. Some people who are part of our context provide us with ways of being and connect us to traditions and cultural practices, preferences and behaviours. However, Taylor sees some dialogues as having more significance and leaving a stronger impression than others.

The most influential conditioning element in our context, according to Taylor, is what he terms our "significant others" (1995, 230-1). John Russon concurs but defines this influential circle more specifically as "family" (2006, 307). Our relationship with those significant others (who could be our family members, a mentor, people we admire, our life partner, or a dear friend) will have more significance and will influence us more strongly than feedback from strangers or from members of our cultural or social group whom we barely know. Significant others give us the language to be full human agents and their feedback provide a standard to judge our actions and desires. Our dialogical nature means

that we can accept or reject the feedback we receive from the people around us, although it may be more difficult to dismiss the feedback from those important people in our lives. Taylor holds that our past context is constitutive of our present context, and he believes that we, as individuals, can choose what we want our self to be, which values we want to adopt and which we want to reject. While it is more difficult to make such decisions over values and perspectives instilled by our significant others than by less personal relations, Taylor nonetheless believes we have the capacity to reject our given context and choose according to our personal preferences. Nonetheless, Taylor, in echoing Polanyi's claim that rejecting a consensus (Taylor calls it a framework) can only happen in terms of and within that consensus, means that human agency and self-determination are not the quintessential element for him. What may appear to be his preference for agency, however, is an effect of his assumption that identity-construction is essentially a reflective process, which in fact supports the centrality of dialogue in his work. For Taylor, then, the most important thing that makes dialogue possible is being intelligible to others.

Cultural

Charles Taylor holds that we are free to make choices about our values, our identity and what we consider good, but our choices are limited to the conditions of intelligibility (1995, 70) particular to our context. Therefore, our embedded, conditioned, and contextual nature means that human agency is not as purely autonomous as the liberal conception of identity claims. Indeed, when we make a certain range of choices in order to be understood, this range highlights that our world is already embedded in a context that defines the choices

we can make within it. As Russon states, we are not "self-contained choosers who stand aloof from things": rather, "we find ourselves already committed to various situations such that we find our choices made for us" (2003, 17). As Russon and Taylor express, our social existence and the need to communicate that emerges from it shapes the character of our experience, as well as the range of experiences available to us.

How, then, from such a determining context, can we communicate with the Other? How can that Other, coming from a different context, be intelligible to us and us to it? Russon, as a Hegelian scholar, seeks some common ground and suggests to base our recognition of the Other on commonly shared laws and rules and, from there, approach the Other from the perspective of an initiate (2003, 73). I believe Russon's suggestion has its flaws—namely that it may strengthen a majority culture's assumption of the universality of its rules—but it also highlights our cultural character, which we add to our embedded and dialogical nature. For instance, laws shared by a people are reflective of its values, which are themselves part of the broader language that characterises a culture. In *Meaning*, Polanyi demonstrates that the elements or events we associate with certain words, the connections we make between seemingly disconnected ideas, and the metaphors, symbols, and myths we use, are all things that elude our capacity to give a complete verbal account of such associations. To be part of a society, however, we must learn our culture's non-verbal language, which we do tacitly, through practice and imitation. Thus, contrary to Collins' argument for the minimum embodiment theory, we need to have some insight into language writ large in order to fully grasp the tacit meaning behind words, which is itself an integral part of a language.

We know that language is more than word use and the tacit in language is where

we can find its subtleties. Indeed, for Merleau-Ponty language is indirect and allusive (1964, 43) but this is preferable because "to speak is not to put a word under each thought; if it were, nothing would ever be said." The incompleteness of language allows readers to make sense of the words written by someone else from their own perspective, to follow the writer's thought, and to think thoughts that rework the readers' own. Similarly, "through speech … there is a taking up of the other person's thought, a reflection in others, a power of thinking *according to others*, which enriches our own thoughts" (2012, 184 emphases in the text). Not only is language dependent on tacit meaning, for Merleau-Ponty, so is the body a "natural power of expression" (187) which further increases language's complexity, especially in speech, where tone, gestures, facial expressions give a great deal of information that will be lost when the speech is transcribed.

In addition, human's cultural nature—our language, in a broad sense—can embody our tacit contextual identity. Indeed, Heidegger considers culture as the discloser of worlds—or as what he calls the clearing. To disclose what is tacit for Heidegger is a revealing, but it takes the form of a revealing-ordering—and thus of a further enframing— if one imposes one's assumptions and expectations on what is revealed (1977, 19). Heidegger suggests an encounter with the unfamiliar to bring forth the enframing—or as Russon frames it, "it is in crisis…that the conditions are encountered which can drive us to *explicitly* recognize ourselves" (1995, 511, emphasis in the text). The tacit, therefore, must be brought forth in a manner that allows for personal meaning and imagination to make sense of it; we must apprehend it on our own terms.

Taylor and Russon, although they both acknowledge an approximation of the tacit contextual identity, cannot, however, escape the influence of Hegel on their work and both

seek a common ground to begin dialogue and recognition in plural societies. Taylor believes there can be a movement towards solidarity based on his understanding of fullness. What makes one feel that one's life has a purpose is left to the individual to define from their own meaning but he nonetheless assumes that the plurality of meaning attached to fullness demonstrate a universal connection to something higher and more powerful than us. Consequently, in trying to provide a common trait behind personal notions of fullness, Taylor acknowledges the tacit but underestimates its importance when he tries to articulate it.

Russon also seeks a common ground for dialogue, but he bases it on the common language that is implied in laws and customs (1995, 514). Sharing the same standards, Russon assumes, facilitates recognition of the other as a rational being and as part of a "we." "Becoming a member of a society requires becoming habituated to a series of practices which *do* structure a dynamic of recognition along intelligible lines, but which *do not* appear as such to the practitioner" (516, emphasis in the text). Thus our recognition of the Other depends on their assimilation of our standards and customs, in which case they are not recognised as "other" but as part of the "we." Hence, Russon is aware of the tacit contextual identity and that what a group considers as obvious is the key to interpret the behaviours of the members of that group (520), but his notion of recognition seems to suggest a reductive notion of the tacit in assimilation.

In light of all of the above, is finding a common ground with minority cultures impossible to attain? Would it be fair to claim that, as contextual beings, there is nothing universal in humanity that is strong enough to form a bond with others on which we can base a dialogue? I tend to be more sympathetic to Isaiah Berlin and Chantal Mouffe's claim

that confrontation in plurality is inevitable, necessary, and implies a loss in one party or another (Berlin 2002, 214) (Mouffe 2005, 158). Their emphasis on the crucial importance of plurality is not watered down by searching for a consensus, and they view the tensions involved in diversity as what keeps a society dynamic.

Does that mean that we must resign ourselves to unending tensions with regard to religious requests for accommodations and dialogues of the deaf between groups that are not speaking the same broader language? Does that also mean that we must not ever pass judgment on others' practices and values because we do not share the same background and historical context? I think these questions frame the problem too simply, and take for granted the universality of our position. For instance, I partly agree with Russon that we must approach the other with the assumption that they are rational but, contrary to him, I do not believe common laws are sufficient to make this assumption (this points to the tacit conviction that obeying the laws do not imply the same level of rationality as generating the laws and that Others do not have to think about the rules, but merely to obey them). Rather, I claim if there is to be a ground to begin dialogue with the other, it should be one that grasps that people will make decisions as a result of their context, which will often involve emotions, non-reflective factors and result in the making of biased decisions because of a tacit context that makes them sensitive to some issues more than others. If we are to view the other's culture from the point of view of an initiate, as Russon suggests, without rejection or condescending tolerance (1995, 523), we need to acknowledge and bring forth the tacit in the majority culture, which is the aim of the present work[9].

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[9] If I must situate myself among the multicultural theorists, I would be more partial to liberal egalitarians like Will Kymlicka, because of their attempt to combine individuality with cultural membership, which I believe resonates with my conception of agency. I firmly believe the insights that tacit identity can bring has potential to improve the theory by challenging its assumptions of universality and the normalizing effect

Methodology and structure

The above established the assumptions from which I begin my inquiry into tacit identity, namely, that we are embedded and conditioned, dialogical, and cultural beings and that our view of ourselves and of the world is shaped by this state. Thus, my starting point aligns with Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, which establishes that our fundamental character is one oriented towards dialogue and interpretation. Indeed, his account of the implications of our embedded character is akin to that upon which my own project rests, and provides a promising premise for a discussion of the tacit. As a way of opening the discussion, I offer the following reading of Gadamer's hermeneutics.

For Gadamer, our situated nature and the uniqueness of experience it implies emphasize the importance of interpretiveness in our every perception and interaction. The unique combination of our context, of our physical particularities, and of our own personality, means that we understand and interpret things in a way that will not only be unique to each person, but will also be unique to the situation and to the object in question. It is with this human characteristic in mind that Gadamer refers to "the infinity of the unsaid" (1975, 426): the way a person understands something—a word, a text, or a gesture—is imbued with deep-seated assumptions (such as aspects of one's context that unreflectively influence one's perception and interpretation), with personal connections and meanings, and language alone cannot give an account of the totality of those subtleties. What will make something significant to one may not be the same for another, or it may be significant but for different reasons. The infinity of the unsaid is the sum of all that goes

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it has on majority populations. A brief reading of political theories from a tacit identity perspective is provided in the conclusion chapter.

into our understanding: it is the tacit context to which this project aims to bring attention.

Living with others, part of the unsaid contributing to our understanding includes our confrontation with Otherness, or to that which is "not-me". We have established the contextual and embedded nature, which makes each person's experience unique. Yet, as dialogical beings, how can we understand each other's unique perspective? Gadamer offers the possibility of a "fusion of horizons" (273) through Socratic-like dialogues between seemingly distinct understandings. Such interactions can enable the formation of common ground between interlocutors, which may facilitate reaching agreements without sublimating the particular perspective of any side. In a similar direction to Gadamer, I aim to facilitate an approach to otherness from a perspective based on the knowledge of the prejudices (in a Gadamerian sense of "pre-judgment") and of the deep-seated assumptions inevitably attached to identity.

My characterisation of human nature as cultural and linguistic (in a broad sense) is enriched by Gadamer's "infinity of the unsaid" and his "fusion of horizons." Communication is key to social beings like us: we consequently require a language that is commonly shared, no matter how elusive and incomplete it is, if we are to understand each other. We have seen with Polanyi that language—verbal or non-verbal—only partly means what it designates: the most important part of language, then, is the unsaid, or the tacit. This tacit part of language will include historical references, traditions, customs, and other commonly shared elements specific to our social context. Such elements are tacitly implied in dialogues within our own culture, religion, or socio-economic class, and help determine who belongs to a group and who does not, based on who understands the references and who does not.

For Gadamer, understanding and interpretation form a practically oriented mode of apprehending the world, in an Aristotelian sense of emphasizing our practical being-in-the-world (*phronesis*). This way of being gives a unique perspective to the interpreter and, as a result, cannot be reduced to a simple set of rules. In addition, the interpretation resulting from one's unique perspective will always vary according to the object concerned. For example, a freedom-fighter for a people will be a terrorist for another; a statue will represent a proud history for a culture of the majority and represent a history of oppression for a minority culture; wearing a keffiyeh[10] for fashion purposes in the West, versus wearing it in Palestine as a political statement. Thus, our perspective is unique because of our way of being within our specific context, which will in turn affect the object on which we focus our attention.

Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is not a methodology but a starting point that circumvents the prescription of a clear methodology. I will follow his lead in my own project: after all, I am looking to discuss something that largely eschews descriptive language. Indeed, while tacit contextual identity may be based on a series of shared and explicit influences, their meaning and the range of their influence on our perceptions, interpretations, and decisions are too personal and too numerous to articulate fully and adequately. Any attempt to articulate it would amount to imposing a meaning that would oversimplify the possibility of meanings we may connect to it, and would also remain parochial in its reach. My solution is consequently an indirect approach where I will discuss and point to tacit contextual identities while leaving its personal significance open for anyone to fill in the blank for themselves. I will therefore discuss how I understand identity,

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[10] The iconic black and white scarf worn by Palestinians.

how and why something becomes tacit, what the relationship between the tacit and language is, and I will give an account of what an articulation of the form of the tacit may look like. Within this framework, I will look at what role the tacit contextual identity may have in the political.

I aim to provide a sketch of where the tacit resides, and to give a sense of its influence on identity-construction. To begin, I will give my account of identity as multileveled and multirelational, then describing the relation between each level, that is, between the individual, relational and contextual levels of identity. I will argue that identity is constituted through agency, dialogue, and context, which all have reflective and unreflective—or tacit—aspects. Thus, Chapter 1 will look at each level of identity and will show where and how the tacit can occur in them.

The second chapter will focus on the tacit, more specifically the discussion on language and the constitutive—or more holistic use of language—which is permeated by culture. I will address the problem of articulating the tacit by making a distinction between the inarticulable and the merely inarticulate. This will bring me to discussing language's tacit quality, which may make it potentially well-suited to provide the unfamiliarity necessary for the tacit to be brought forth. My central argument in this chapter is that language writ large is an important tool to approach the tacit because of its cultural and contextual embeddedness.

From the conclusions of the previous chapter, language will be further explored in the third chapter, although from its non-linguistic aspect. I will explore art as a possible articulator of the tacit, given that its very nature largely relies on tacit communications. Heidegger and Polanyi's use of the tacit in art and their discussion on how it can articulate,

all the while concealing the tacit will be the focus of this chapter.

What, then, does an articulation of the tacit contextual identity look like? Chapter four will point to two tacit contextual identities that have, and continue to permeate and influence political experiences: the religious tacit identity in Québec, and the racial identity in the United States. I will then point to works that provide interpretations and articulations of those tacit identities. First, I will look at the Québec religious connection through interviews conducted by the advertiser Jacques Bouchard in 1978 and 2006, and through the work of Author Dany Laferrière who looks at Québec with the eyes of an immigrant who has been living in Québec for forty (40) years. The United States' racial tacit identity will be presented through the articulation of Michelle Alexander's comparison of Mass Incarceration with the Jim Crow era, and through Steven Colbert's satire of post-racial discourses.

The fifth and final chapter will situate the use tacit identity can have in political theory. I will provide examples of how the tacit identity can offer a framework within which political theories can be evaluated and their claim to universal applications can be challenged. This conclusion will also point out that, as a result of political practices being reflective of a majority culture, we cannot turn to the state to provide an articulation of the tacit identity, not can it provide the practices through which such articulation can take place. Rather, I will conclude this chapter with possible avenues that could encourage the emergence of majority cultures' collective awareness of their tacit identity.

Throughout what follows, I will use a rather circular structure, which I consider necessary to give any account of tacit identity. That is to say, I will often return to elements previously addressed in one section in order to give them a new and more complete account

from a different perspective in another section. The tacit dimension of identity is a topic that, by being beyond words, cannot be addressed directly. To bring it forth, then, I must add layers gradually and give an account of what each layer contributes to the greater picture, eventually resulting in a composite that best approximates what I see as the tacit identity. Consequently, the picture will not seem complete until Chapter 4, when I provide concrete examples of what a tacit identity looks like.

Chapter 2—A Multilevel and Multirelational Identity

In the previous chapter we have established the nature of human experience as embedded, dialogical, and cultural. As beings inextricably engaged in the world, our perceptions, interpretations, and actions condition our world and our world, in turn, shapes us. This circular process of mutual conditioning shapes our experience and interpretation of the things and people that exist alongside us, but it also alters how we understand and experience our self. From the first moments of our existence, our human condition is one of immersion and of constant dialogue with others, and this inevitably has an effect on identity construction. The values, preferences, and beliefs that we hold, and even the memberships we associate with our self-definition are a product of this dialogical conditioning. Claiming that ours is an embedded condition that affects our identity construction challenges the broadly accepted liberal conception of identity as largely self-generated, and rather posits an identity that constitutes itself within a context in which the self is embedded and constantly in dialogue with its world. As contextual and embedded beings, we are influenced by our family, friends and by the narratives carried by the larger society. Yet, although our identity is a composite of our relation with our context, it is also a reflection of our own interpretation and synthesis of the received feedback into a coherent whole that make sense to us.

What follows is an account of what a conditioned and conditioning identity looks like, given our embedded and contextual nature. As thrown beings, we are, from the first moments of our life, apprehending the world from a subjective point of view. Our experience and understanding of the world, therefore, cannot come from a purely objective

perspective. Likewise, our embeddedness means that we can never be a thoroughly self-contained agent, perceiving and interpreting the world without having any factor from our world interfering with our perceptions and interpretations. But this is not to say, as liberal critics of communitarianism do, that there is no place for agency if our environment shapes our identity and exerts an influence on our choices. In the following we will see that, as we construct our identity, we are confronted with the perspective and claims of others, which require us to take a position on what those perspectives project. In addition, we may internalize other people's perspectives about our identity, and this will result in a more complex identity-formation where our range of choices are made possible by our world[11]. It follows that, not only are we influenced in our identity-construction by our world and by certain people in it, we can also be a source of influence on the identity of others close to us.

In other words, the conception of identity implied here stands halfway between the liberal focus on agency and the communitarian emphasis on society's influence. Our context frames possibilities and limits them to a range from which we can make choices. These decisions, it is important to note, can be influenced by the dialogue into which we enter with our world, especially with those people important to us. They may also be the result of internalised dialogues or feedback, or the workings of our unconscious but it does not mean that such influences take away our agency over our own identity-construction.

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[11] Bourdieu's habitus also acknowledges that our choices are framed within a context that makes those choices possible (1990, 53). Our internalizing of the context is what gives us the impression that we have all possible choice available to us (Swartz, 2002, 64).
From another perspective, Anders Odenstedt uses Gadamer's notion of tradition when talking of context-dependence to point out that partakers of a tradition have a limited scope of presuppositions, which gives them a range of answers to questions. There will be a plurality of answers among those who share a tradition, but they will still remain within the range that the context makes possible (2003, 91).

Rather, we use our agency to make the best possible choices and to construct our identity in relation to a given situation, to our own perspective, and to the choices available, which are factors that are largely determined by our context. We are agents, but we come into this world with certain particularities that will inevitably remain in the subtext of who we are and of what we choose. This subtext will be the focus of this chapter: we will look at identity construction and at the elements outside of the individual that contribute to its shaping, which will help us understand how the tacit aspect of identity comes to exist, and how it influences us as agents.

The word 'identity' is derived from the Latin *identitas*, which is defined as 'the quality of being identical' and comes from the Latin word *idem*, or 'same'. From this etymological perspective, we can define identity as that which is identical to ourselves, or in other words, what we associate with the defining of our person. Identity, as a product of our embedded condition, is an accumulation of *personal* and *meaningful* connections that shape the way we see and interact with the world, enter into relationships, make choices, and without which we would not be the same. Beyond the labels we give ourselves—our nationality, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, or political association—our identity may also include values, beliefs, traditions, history, myths, symbols, and practices that we consider meaningful and defining of our self. Thus, not only are the constitutive elements of identity complex, they are also unique for every person.

If we assume that our identity is self-generated, we focus on our first sense of ourselves and this assumption defines us as not only distinct, but also separated from the rest of the world and consequently impervious to it and its influence. However, to make such an assumption would be to ignore all the situations from our earliest memories that

confront us with the denial of our imperviousness to outside influences (Russon, 61), like how we have learned to think through language, for instance. Identity develops and takes shape through our connection with the world. This connection manifests itself via different levels of influence, but in such a simultaneous and interrelated way that it is impossible to parse the specific effect of each on identity. This is not to claim that authenticity—as being true to oneself as a self-defined individual (Rawls 2009, 519)—has no place in the identity construction of embedded beings affected by the conditioning effect of the world. Rather than assuming that authenticity depends solely on the self-generated individual, it is important to keep in mind that authenticity in identity concerns self-construction within the dialogical and inextricably embedded context that is the human condition. Thus, being authentic is not about asserting one's self against the world: it is the asserting of oneself in choosing among the alternatives our context makes possible[12].

This chapter, therefore, begins with the claim that our embedded and contextual nature precludes a definition of identity that present an objective account of its specific constitutive components. Rather, by tracing its basic characteristics one may get a better handle on the nature of identity. What one can observe with some degree of certainty is that identity is multileveled and multirelational, thus making its construction a complex conditioning process. As such, we cannot conceive of our identity without the presence of others (Aristotle, Mouffe), without appearing to others (Arendt), that is to say, without entering into relationships with others. This chapter aims at demonstrating the central role significant others and society have in collaboration with the individual perspective in

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[12] From another perspective, Taylor ties authenticity with intelligibility and this cannot happen outside of a horizon of meaning. He claims that "if we want to define ourselves significantly, [we cannot] suppress or deny the horizons against which things take on significance for us" (1991, 37).

identity construction. Before entering into an account of this multilevel and multirelational identity, however, a brief exposition of the roles of identity is necessary to further establish the deep connection between self and world.

Tracing Identity through its Characteristics

Identity provides a boundary—albeit a porous and flexible one—between the world and the self, or between the outer world and our inner world. Of the realm of the outer world, are both our significant others and our broader societal context. We are aware of the separation between ourselves and the world through experiencing our body and its sensory perceptions: we can easily determine what is me and what is external to me. Yet, this physical boundary does not preclude our embedded nature which means that from our very first breath, we understand the world within the context in which we exist, and this context is characterised by the presence of others. While identity is a very personal notion, it cannot separate itself from the world in which it exists, and that includes other selves and our constant interaction with them. Identity, like the Rubin Vase that simultaneously appears as two facing profiles because of the interplay between negative and positive space, needs the world of difference in order to constitute itself. Indeed, establishing what is "me" necessarily implies what is "not-me", thereby distinguishing the self from the rest of the world, while the presence of that world also reveals us both as simultaneously subject and object.

Yet, whereas the Rubin Vase image has clear boundaries between its light and dark shapes, the boundary between me and 'other' is considerably blurred: even if identifying

what is "me" and "not-me" is quite clear, my self-concept is nonetheless inseparable from my connection to the other. My vision of the other is as an object looked at by me, the subject. Yet, I understand that the other is also considering me as an object because, from her perspective, she is a subject looking at something. Consequently, in our interactions with others, we are both simultaneously subject and object: we are at the same time the one looking and the one being looked at. Others are linked with me in a world we both inhabit, where we become simultaneously subject and object, but our connection is limited because I cannot see what she sees when she looks at me, and neither can she know what I see when I look at her (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 225). Through our interactions, our subjectivity and objectivity constantly intermingle with those of others, which make others impossible to ignore and an inevitable part of our identity formation. To put it differently, our identity is inseparable from our being in the world and, consequently, from our being with others: all aspects of identity, its roles, its different levels of influence and its interactions, all presuppose this intertwined and yet distinct connection.

The first characteristic of identity affirms the self in making a distinction between it and the rest of the world while underlying that self and world complement each other. If I stub my toe on the coffee table, for example, the pain I feel is solely my experience, and in a way, this experience gives me a primary sense of self that distinguishes me from other selves and from the rest of the world: the table leg is not part of me, and my friend who is witnessing the incident cannot feel my pain, nor can I see the incident from his perspective. The world can only appear to me from my perspective and I cannot have another immediate vantage point. My pain is an inner sensation but the source of that pain is outward, that is to say, I establish my connections with the world outside of myself via the experiences,

sensations and perceptions my body receives. Indeed, not only does my identity establish the boundaries between the world and me, thereby situating me in space, it also situates me in time since what I perceive and experience can only take place at the present moment. While I may remember the pain I had in my toe when I hit it against the coffee table leg, and while remembering it will make me more careful next time I run across the living room, in both cases, my imagination will be solicited, not my perception. Only in the present can I perceive my world and experience my connection to it. Identity, therefore, helps to situate the self in time: that is, anchoring us to a present that is a product of the past and that is always headed towards the future. Identity provides a vantage point from which to begin to apprehend the world but it is important to keep in mind its porous boundaries, and how our personal vantage point is inseparable from outer influences.

Another characteristic attributable to identity is to establish membership to a defining community, whether it would be regional, national, political, religious, or cultural. Memberships provide us with a basis from which to begin articulating who we are and situating ourselves in relation to others (for instance, one can self-identify with being Canadian, an anarchist, an Anglican, a vegan, and so on, in an infinite number of combinations). Charles Taylor considers our identification to such terms as an association with "the commitments and identifications which provide the frame of horizons within which I can try to determine…what is good, or valuable… or what I endorse or oppose" (1989, 27). Identifying with being vegan, for instance, presumes an adherence to specific values and notions of the good implied with this identity, such as holding all animal life as worth protecting on the same level as human life. Identifying with certain groups not only helps us evaluate and regulate our behaviour to fit in the expectations associated with roles

within that group, it also determines membership and non-membership.

Identity connects our self-concept to a community. It puts the individual in a shared context and, as a result, reinforces one's own convictions through the presence of others who share the same convictions. This connection also highlights another degree of distinction between identity and difference, whereby a shared identity, around which a group of people rally, establishes the boundary between member and non-member, or between "us" and "them." The distinction between self and other is central to identity-construction but does not necessarily entails, as William Connolly asserts, that this distinction needs to be rooted in a judgment of values. Connolly posits that achieving a strong group identity necessitates the simultaneous devaluation of those not subscribing to its shared identity (1991, 64). He therefore implies that identity is not only a fundamental distinction between "me" and "not-me", but this dichotomy is also fundamentally value-laden, assuming that what I am is right and what is not like me is wrong. This duality of the self and the other suggests that an openness to the other is impossible without altering our identity to the point of no longer being intelligible to our own (44). Thus identity-construction, especially when it comes to a shared identity, is in need of an 'other', and we need to contrast this other against our own notion of the good, which, according to Connolly, means positing it as bad, or in the wrong.

This duality between identity and difference is a position Charles Taylor rejects and his discussion of 'fullness' stands as an attempt to bridge the gap between self and other and an alternative to Connolly's version of identity construction. Fullness, for Taylor, is based on a common form but differs in its content; fullness has a clear definition (namely, that which makes one's life complete or meaningful) and the elements that will bring

fullness to a person's life will most likely be central to their identity. Yet, what will fulfil their lives will differ for most people (Taylor 2010, 315). Fullness, therefore, is not a shared identity under which most people can connect, but the principle can certainly be applicable to propositions of a shared identity.

Indeed, community membership only offers a broad notion of identity in that it does not impose a homogeneous description on its members. For example, not all Quebecers agree on what identity traits make a Quebecer, and from a legalistic point of view, such identity merely depends on citizenship and place of residence. Yet, in Québec, members of the majority culture are likely to share similar notions of the good, which they will, however, explain from their individual perspective. By keeping broad descriptions, shared identities make possible a variety of interpretations of the notions of the good they carry, whereby people can formulate a common identity in a way that is meaningful to them. Connolly's dichotomist view of identity, thus, is probably more apt to describe encounters with drastic otherness (as his example of the conquistadors' experiences with the inhabitants of the New World illustrates). Yet, such encounters in our globalized world become increasingly rare, and common grounds are more widespread, which suggests that differences are not entirely unbridgeable. Nevertheless, finding a common ground under a shared identity does not mean that this identity loses all specificity by being broad enough for all to identify with it. Shared identity is still comprised of basic characteristics that all members must agree on, abide by and find important, which in a way reduces the possible varieties of interpretations: for instance, a person who eats meat cannot define herself as a vegan, nor can an anarchist vote in federal elections without being at odds with his convictions and his self-definition.

A shared identity grounds a population in time by connecting it to its past, to its traditions, and to what that identity has come to represent from the time of its inception. What it conceives as its identity is confirmed by connecting it to history and thus making stronger and clearer the distinction between the members and the non-members of this identity. Old stock Quebecer identity, to continue with the same example, is connected to historical events that shape this group identity, whether those events occurred in a recent past, like the two referendums on independence in 1980 and 1995, or refer to historical events like the loss of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham by the French in 1759 and the subsequent abandon of their American colonies.

Identity also gives us a sense of direction, a position in the world, which involves a notion of the good that is connected to our self-concept. Indeed, our identity, as Taylor claims, is where one answers from: that is to say, to answer the question 'who?' is to know where one stands (1989, 29). Hence, identity gives us a stand on moral and spiritual matters: for instance, whether or not one believes in God and the choices that such stance makes available to us, or the choices one makes based on moral principles, like putting forth our respect for all animal life by becoming vegan. Taylor further adds that " an identity is something that one ought to be true to, can fail to uphold, can surrender. More fundamentally, we can see that it only plays the role of orienting us, of providing the frame within which things have meaning for us, by virtue of the qualitative distinctions it incorporates… Our identity is what allows us to define what is important to us and what is not" (Taylor 1989, 30). This sense of direction also helps situate ourselves in time by framing our identity into a story or narrative from which we find significance in our life. An important part of the African-American identity, for instance, connects its members in

time and space through its history, that is, through the narrative that begins with an uprooting out of Africa, and continues as the long march towards equality through two hundred years of slavery, the Reconstruction era, Jim Crow, the Civil Rights Movement, and post-racism. The narrative of this identity informs how its members situate themselves in the world and provides a vantage point from which they experience and interpret their world.

Our dialogical nature is crucial in concocting our narrative and in creating the stories that give us a direction, and even perhaps a meaning to our life, which means we cannot ignore the other's role as an influence on our interpretation of ourselves. African-Americans have been in dialogue with Whites ever since their first contact and, as a result have inadvertently and mutually shaped one another's identity and narratives. This is a key concept of the multilevel character of identity and we will further address it in the next section. In the meantime, it is sufficient to say that, through a narrative, identity provides one with a sense of direction and with meaning. To make sense of the complexity of the constant dialogue we enter into with our close relationships but also with our world, it will be helpful to look at the construction of our identity as multilevel and multirelational.

A Multilevel Identity

Our identity is a compound of the connection and the constant interchange between self and world that comes with our embedded and contextual character. As being-in-the-world, not only is our self inextricably connected to our context, those around us are also beings who are embedded in the world. Consequently, our interactions with them and with our

context can never be objective because they are inextricably embedded in, and thus affected by, the world. Yet, how do these interactions with the world affect identity construction? Are there certain relations more formative than others? There are three levels of identity that we must examine in order to get a sense of what an embedded and contextual identity is like and how it is shaped. These three constitutive levels of identity operate in concert, have porous boundaries and are never identical to another person's, because they comprise the important interactions that contribute to shaping our identity. This section provides a breakdown of these three levels, addressing what they consist of, what they include, and what part of identity links to each level. The next section will give an account of their complex interactions and of the extent of their influence.

To begin, the individual level of identity pertains to the personal and reflective experience of one's world and determines how formative to one's identity such experience can be. Hannah Arendt speaks of the inner dialogue into which we enter to clarify our interpretation of the world, our position towards it and our own evaluation of our choices. She describes this dialogue as taking place between one and oneself, thus describing the individual as "two-in-one" (Arendt, 1978, 64), that is to say, Arendt believes the thinking ego only relates to itself, and not to one's experiencing of the world[13]. In reflecting by oneself, that self is split in two parts where a part of one asks and the other part answers, the aim being to remain true to oneself, that is, to align one's actions and decisions to the elements that define our identity. For instance, if an environmentalist bought a very large

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[13] Arendt's account of the "two-in-one" self provides a useful description of one's inner dialogue where a final decision about one's choices are made. She acknowledges that this aspect of identity is the one where one asserts one's agency and makes a decision about one's interpretation, acceptance, or rejection of the influence of the outside world. Yet, her view of the self demonstrates some Cartesian influence where she does not acknowledge that, as embedded beings, our internal dialogue cannot escape our context and so, even in our own thoughts, the outside world will exert its influence.

gas-guzzling SUV, she would find her choice of purchase in contradiction with herself. Our dialogue with ourselves is part of this level of identity, as it is the first connection we have of the world, that is to say, our perspective of the world is shaped by our self-reflection based on what we consider defining of our identity.

We have established in the previous chapter that each individual perspective is unique because of the distinctiveness of each person's physical context and perception. Arendt draws particular attention to the distinctiveness of every human being. She views the uniqueness of one's birth, not only from a genetic point of view, but also from the particular cultural, socio-economic, religious, and political circumstances surrounding every birth as the basis of uniqueness in every person. Thus, according to Arendt, from this radically unique context in which we begin our life results our exclusively human capacity to initiate something entirely new (1958, 178). Arendt connects both the unique context and the potential for uniqueness with the particular perspective each person has, not only as a result of one's physical particularities, but also because of their unique context, which also alters their point of view and their position on various issues. Every single person, therefore, has a perspective that is unique to him or her, but that perspective is a product of the context in which one finds oneself.

However, claiming that identity is partly shaped by its context requires a reassessment of the role individual agency plays in identity construction. Indeed, our dialogical nature means that we are in constant exchange with others who present us with an image of ourselves that will influence our own self-conception. Identity is not uniquely self-generated, nor is it entirely dependent on the dialogues into which we enter with others. The individual, its relations with meaningful people and its life within social groups all

contribute to shaping one's identity. Each person's character and personality is, of course, context-based and is unique to each, giving one a unique perspective, not only on the world, but also on oneself. Choices about what is significant in one's life, one's strong evaluations or notions of the Good, while inevitably tested by living with others, nonetheless remain a choice that the individual must will him or herself. We have our own perspective, which we put to the test with others' feedback, and that perspective is fashioned by our embedded nature, which may internalise some influence, but the final decision about what is meaningful, or objectionable is nonetheless the result of our will. Making vegetarianism part of one's identity for ethical reasons, making the choice to refuse to share the racist and bigoted values prevalent in one's family, or choosing to identify with values the Church promotes demonstrate the sort of contribution the individual level of identity has in identity construction. The level of the self establishes one's identity when it comes to making decisions that have to do with one's personal connections to something meaningful, or to declare "I am." The self has the final say on what we consciously reject or embrace, even if certain internalised and unreflective influences frame our decisions within a certain range of choices. In other words, our context has reflective and unreflective sources of influences that come from the three levels of identity and that interplay with, and influence one another. As a result, our beliefs, convictions, and decisions are the product of complex interactions between ourselves, the important people in our life, and the society which we inhabit. The final decision among those options, what we decide to define as "me" are our own, but what led us to favour one option over others is once again a combination of various influence, feedback, and preferences that come from our interactions with our world and from a context that is, at the outset, arbitrary.

This level of identity is also largely concerned with the construction of personal meaning. This means that although we may be influenced to various degrees into holding a position or making a choice, that position or choice will be that much more a use of our agency if we connect some personal meaning to it. For instance, we can adopt positions, views, beliefs that may be collectively held or shared among specific groups but we can only do it from a very personal standpoint. Polanyi's example of a nation's attachment to its country's flag illustrates this personal contribution to identity: we may identify with the flag for what it represents (the country we inhabit and love) but the associations we make between history, other symbols, and people that give the flag importance are unique to us (Polanyi 1975, 71-73). We add our personal connections to the things we choose, even when they are a collective choice. The individual level of identity concerns our personality, unique perception, and perspective within a specific context, which defines our interpretation of the world, our judgment, and how we construct meaning. All these elements are unique to each and every person but are only a constitutive part of identity.

The relational level of identity, or the level of the significant others, pertains to our dialogical nature, specifically to the feedback we receive from people who matter to us and who hold a privileged place in our lives. These meaningful people will have an influence on our self-perception when they give us their interpretation of who we are.

Not every person around us has such a formative and influential role in our life, however. Taylor's points to our "significant others"—the people who have a great importance in our lives, whether they are family members, friends, mentors, or life partners—who have this potential to influence our self-conception and to enter into a

dialogue with us about what we consider to be our own identity. Thus, while we are not impervious to feedback received from comparatively insignificant people—harsh comments coming from a stranger may hurt us—we would not be as strongly affected by it as we would if this same intervention came from a family member, or from a dear friend. To this point, Taylor gives significant others two reasons for their importance: they are "the crucible of our inwardly generated identity," that is, our significant relationships will put to the test that which we outwardly project of our identity and, by the same token, they can give or withhold recognition which can have serious effects on us (1991, 49).

Taylor's view of our significant others, however, seems to overlook the importance of social pressure and the power of culture in shaping identity. John Russon departs from Taylor's significant others with his broader notion of 'family'. Like Taylor, his group of meaningful relationships includes family members, dear friends and other people who play an important role in the shaping of a person's identity. He enlarges the circle of influence upon the self that Taylor defines with the significant others by taking into consideration the larger society to which one belongs and the values and expectations it carries. One's family is part of a shared context and as such, it will give one their interpretation of what is expected in terms of that context. Thus, for Russon, the family takes on the role of teaching one what it is like to be a citizen, to be part of a specific community and what one should do to be a normal functioning member of society (2003, 67-69). Via the family, one not only learns the culture specific to one's family or cultural group, one also absorbs the culture of the broader society, which is interpreted by one's family[14]. Unlike Taylor's

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[14] Russon points to the family as a source of socialization. Through examples, they teach the child the "language" of the family, the identity, values, traditions, and practices connected to it. Yet, as socialized members of a broader society themselves, the members of the family have also internalized the mores, the "language", the myths, values, and practices, of the larger society to which they belong. This

significant others, Russon's family emphasizes the complex character of identity, where the self, our significant relationships and our larger societal context constantly interact and contribute in simultaneous, yet distinctive ways to the construction of our identity. However, whether 'family' or 'significant others', the meaningful relationships that are partly formative of one's self-concept are unique for every person: for some people friends might have more influence on their conception of their identity than their parents, especially if they are not as close to them as they are to their friends.

Thus, we give the meaningful people in our lives enough importance for their input to affect our own identity (Russon, 2003, 62). Yet, Russon's conception of the family puts the focus on the first years of one's life, when basic socialisation occurs. In this case, I am more in agreement with Taylor who claims that some significant others are so important to us that we can even internalize their feedback and continue our dialogue with them even in their absence (1995, 230). Through this dialogue with our meaningful relationships we further define the boundaries of our identity: that is, where their influence ends and where our agency begins over defining our own identity. Thus, the level of the significant others puts to the test our interpretation of the world and of ourselves. Our meaningful relationships will evaluate our views by scrutinizing and challenging them through their own views of us and of the world: the exposure to our significant others leads to the altering, confirming or rejecting of aspects of our self-concept. This conversation with our significant others involves an exchange of viewpoints through negotiations and confrontations, leading to an identity that becomes, to various degrees, a collaboration between them and us.

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internalization will be transmitted to the child through socialisation, thus making the child a functioning member of society.

It is important to note, however, that the influence of the significant others, while we have established that it is more important than that of a stranger, will not be forced upon one and inevitably accepted wholesale. Indeed, the influence of our meaningful relationships will differ in effect depending on our suggestibility, on the forcefulness with which significant others communicate their feedback, and certainly on the importance we give to our interlocutor. The effects of this influence will also differ depending on the kind of relationship in which the dialogue takes place, that is to say, if our significant relationship is a nurturing or an abusive one, although an abusive relationship would not facilitate a dialogue, where one can consciously accept or reject the feedback received, so much as a harmful confrontation, where there is no give and take possible and the feedback is more or less forced upon one.

Our significant others, therefore, do not have a solely positive or negative role, and they are not exclusively challenging of our identity when they convey their interpretation of who we are. Indeed, depending on the nature of their message, on our interpretation of their feedback, and our openness to it, we might see in them a mirror of our own view, an enemy bent on undermining our self-concept, or any perspective in between. The role of our relational identity, then, is to be a complementary part of the self, providing the individual with a notion of what one *ought* to choose in order to evaluate what one *wants* to choose. As members of a closed unit—whether part of our family, clan, or intimate social circle—our significant others project values they believe we ought to support or oppose and they evaluate us from their own standards. To this point, Russon states that "it is … our group of familiars … that first defines for us where we fit into intersubjective relations and, consequently, what will count as the values by which "we" must approach the world,

by which we must contact reality" (2003, 65). He views our meaningful relationships as a constitutive part of a larger society that promotes its own sets of values and notions of the good and which our significant others carry into their own views. While he does not assign an actively influential role to the larger community like he does to members of our family, Russon acknowledges that our significant others embody the larger culture, which transpires in their own identity (67). They will give us feedback that expresses what they consider valuable or objectionable, and they will convey, more or less reflectively, some of the values and taboos the larger society[15] carries. Thus, in addition to providing a source of evaluation between what we want and what we ought to want, the role of the significant others also contributes to our context and history and, as a result, shapes our perspectives, values, opinions, and our view of those others that populate our internal dialogue.

While one does not automatically internalize—and can, therefore, potentially reject—the identities and the associated values championed by the relational level of identity, one, however, cannot escape the frame of references and the language in which this choice takes place. According to Taylor, our choices of values and even the rejection of those our significant others propose must occur within a common language that makes those choices intelligible (1989, 37). Identity requires a similar connection to a shared language or framework. Our context is the only one we know but while the choices given us within that context can lead to something entirely new and unique, the language used to articulate it, nonetheless remains within the common language of our socialization. Thus, originality and uniqueness is not as radical as what Arendt assumes, but is in fact framed within the possibilities our context presents to us. Originality is indeed possible but this

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[15] The following section on the multirelational character of identity will expand on the complexity of the interaction among each level of identity

framing context allows our peers to understand us on a basic level, regardless of the opinion they form about how we present ourselves: intelligibility does not imply agreement or acceptance. This sharing of language in a broad sense is necessary for any dialogue to take place between the self, its significant others, and society at large. Realms of intelligibility are thus crucial, not only to initiate a dialogue among different parts of identity, but to provide a framework of assent and dissent.

This framework is also important at the societal level—the third level of identity—which concerns the feedback one receives through society at large. This level can comprise one's nation or country, one's religion or other cultural, or political groups to which one belongs. It can be understood as what establishes a "we" in relation to "them." The societal level also pertains to a collective identity that is defined by characteristics and specific values, the sharing of which one's membership depends. Thus, this level of identity provides a new form of evaluation of an individual's self-concept, one that is not connected to a relatively intimate circle of meaningful relationships, but to society at large and yet that is made meaningful and worth embracing and even maybe defending for deeply personal reasons[16].

Societal feedback on one's identity is less personalized and thus more rigid: while it is still a dialogue of sorts between the individual and its society, there is very little negotiation and compromises made on the part of society. These national, cultural, or religious groups influence identity differently than the level of our significant others does, but their influence is nonetheless important. The feedback on one's identity is not as direct

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[16] The connection between personal meaning and shared identity will be addressed in the next chapter.

at this level as it is in the previous one but its influence is effected in one's desire to belong and in a society's emphasis on cohesiveness. The values promoted at the societal level transpire through members of that society and, as a result, through those among our significant others who also belong to that larger group, which makes it more difficult not to experience its influence. Our significant others do not necessarily actively and reflectively promote the greater society's identity but they embody it as a result of their own socialisation. Thus, this level of identity becomes a framework of intelligibility for the members of that society because its shared values—for instance, the Western liberal values of freedom and equality, reason and democracy—take on the role of a common language. Thus, we tend to adopt identities and their associated views, opinions, and values, at least as reference points, for the sake of ease of communication with our peers. We also evaluate ourselves from criteria given us by the groups that contribute to our identity construction, which determine whether or not we live up to what being a member of a certain group involves. Members of such groups can encourage other members to espouse the rules and values a group promotes, but they may also simply reject a person's membership should he or she not meet certain important expectations. Likewise, a person can reject their membership to a group if the promoted values conflict with others they hold as more important.

This part of identity is more complex than the level of the self or the level of the significant others because we view some traits and values as inseparable from a specific group identity and so, in identifying with this group the traits and values themselves become inseparable from one's identity. A man identifying as a homosexual, for example, while not problematic at the level of the self (in terms of what he wants), may, however,

give himself a negative evaluation of his identity when considered through the discourse of the Church (that is, in terms of what he *ought* to want). If he also identifies as a Catholic, a tension will exist between these two parts of his identity: on the one hand, his beliefs lead him to identify with a religious denomination but the rejection of homosexuality from that same church makes this believer an undesirable—or, at best, a problematic—member. This is where the dialogical aspect of our identity comes in: we are presented with values, practices, and beliefs by a society to which we belong and we get to determine if they correspond with our own. Should there be a tension between our values and those of the larger society, it is then up to us to determine whether belonging to a specific society is more important than being true to our personal values, and if that is not the case, if there is another group that supports values and beliefs closer to our own.

Identity at this level takes shape in society through institutions that regulate or favours certain behaviours, thereby providing us with a description of good and bad, and consequently making clear what values, beliefs, or practices one needs to share with others to identify with that group. Yet the societal level of identity implies a wide variety of groups that can differ in size, and we can belong to several of them simultaneously. Groups can be fairly small, like a book club, and can also be connected to a larger entity: for example, the local chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous may have its own particularities, but it is nonetheless based on a uniform process (the twelve-step program, the tokens) and promotes uniform values (such as the belief in a higher power to supplant one's struggles with alcoholism). Medium-sized groups can comprise tribal, national, or cultural particularities like being Indigenous, Chinese, or a Corsican. Finally, large groups have transnational reach, like Catholicism, Islam, the LGBTQ community, economic or social classes, but

they may also simply involve a wide sharing of values, ideas and notions of the good that reach beyond national or regional borders, such as anarchism, feminism, democracy, liberalism, etc.

This third dimension of identity provides one with a broader context that includes a history connecting many people, values that are broadly shared, and symbols that are broadly understood, which further solidifies one's sense of belonging to that "we". In the words of Alasdair MacIntyre: "What I am… is in key part what I inherit, a specific past that is present to some degree in my present. I find myself part of a history and that is generally to say… whether I recognize it or not, one of the bearers of a tradition." (2007, 221). In light of this broader dimension added to identity, the dialogical nature of human beings now includes exchanges across national, societal, cultural, political or religious groups, as well as among its individual members.

Thus, a number of group identities, varying in size, coexist under the influence and the unifying identity that is the larger society and, to different degrees, share its values and outlook. Yet, inevitably, different groups within one society will hold values conflicting with the larger societal group. For instance, while the closeness with nature that defines the Inuit identity may resonate with other autochthonous populations in the world, it is nonetheless at odds with the use-value perspective of the majority culture in Canada. Those two identities can coexist for a time—and they likely share certain compatible traits—until they clash over the choice between the preservation of a natural habitat and the monetary gain resulting in its exploitation.

Another example of clashing identities is a state's unreflective suggestion, through its actions and policies, that it considers a part of its population to be second-class citizens.

Members of this population—for instance, Indigenous peoples in Canada—receive, through their interactions with state institutions, the message that the state does not consider them as equally important as non-Indigenous populations. The Indian Act, Residential Schools, and the thousands of Indigenous women missing without investigation[17], are a few of the many examples of inequity perpetrated on the Indigenous population in Canada. Unfortunately, their personal and societal identity is subjected to this feedback, which denies them recognition as an equal citizen, and thus contributes to negatively shape their identity construction.

Thus far, I have rendered my conception of identity in two ways: first, I have described its roles in situating us in space and time, in relation to others, and in giving us meaning and a sense of belonging. I have then described the three levels of identity: the individual, the relational and the societal levels, which I claim interact to constitute our complex identity. In light of the interaction and mutual conditioning described above, we can characterize the dialogical aspect of our identity as multirelational.

Multirelational identity

Hannah Arendt considers that thinking is an activity that must take place away from others. In other words, it occurs in conversation between one and oneself. The first level of identity is that of the individual, where reflective decisions about our identity are made. Yet, being

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[17] Graham, Jennifer. "Family members say missing and murdered Indigenous women inquiry a failure; call for 'hard reset'" The Canadian Press. July 26, 2017. https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2017/07/26/family-members-say-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-inquiry-a-failure-call-for-hard-reset.html Accessed Dec. 29 2017.

"by ourselves" is not necessarily exclusive of the outside world. We can question ourselves while keeping others' feedback in mind and the internalized dialogue we have with our meaningful relationships may also come into play in our reflections. Thus, even by ourselves, our thoughts still cannot escape our world and its influence is still felt. That is not to say our interiority is merely a combination and a by-product of the world making its impression on us, but if individuality requires others to establish its boundary and to situate itself in the world, it suggests that identity is not solely generated from a communal life, as Russon asserts (1991, 533). Taking the example of a child's first exploration of her world can illustrate my claim: her exploration and first experiences allow her to find out what she likes, what she dislikes, what she finds funny or what scares her. Through her experience of the world, she will accumulate a series of notions that will be unique to her context and her preferences. The argument behind Taylor and Russon's claim that there really is no such thing as a self-generated identity comes from the contention that, as embedded beings, our very first impressions and experiences have been coloured by external influences. There is, therefore, no experience of the world and of oneself that one can have which would be unadulterated by outside influences. Indeed, one could summarize Taylor and Russon's argument thus: from our very first impressions of the world, we have been in constant dialogue with others, which makes our identity a by-product of the choices that are proposed to us by this world. This section argues that, while one is influenced by significant others and by standards and values promoted by the context in which one lives, the composite notion that is identity is not merely an accumulation of internalized feedback, but rather something that is interpreted and synthesized by the individual into an identity that makes sense to him or her.

Every person has a basic notion of what is good or bad, and of what they consider significant, and necessary. Through this notion, one can filter the world and focus on the elements one finds important and thus pay more attention to their influence. Yet, the world can also have an unexpected influence on identity: for instance, if some of the values of our significant others are incompatible with our own and it so happens that for us this person is a crucial influence on our identity, then, the tensions between what we want and what a source of authority tells us we ought to want will be difficult to solve.

A society can also influence us in ways outside of our control, if the homogeneity of the values associated with a group's identity clashes with our own. Identifying with a group may pressure us to conform and go against our personal identity and its defining convictions. This tension can also remain in the internalized feedback we receive about our identity: the repetition and insistence of the message, but also the importance we give to the originator of that feedback will determine the intensity of such tensions within our self-concept. Our dialogical nature is thus a deeply complex one, where sometimes the individual speaks louder and sometimes our significant others do, or our society does. Indeed, it is nearly impossible to pinpoint which level of identity is responsible for a certain trait, preference or perspective, since our embedded character blurs the line between the realm of influence of each level. Our self-concept, our conception of others and of the world is inseparable from the connection with others' conception of us and of society and from a society's reflection in others' identity and in our own.

Hence, while I disagree with Russon and Taylor's suggestions that the significant others, or family, have more effect on identity formation than the individual does, I do not believe the opposite is the case either. Rather, the three levels of identity that are the

individual, the relational and the societal interconnect in an ad hoc fashion in unique ways from one person to the next, and this is what makes possible the uniqueness of each person's perspective, to which Arendt refers in *The Human Condition*.

One of the ways the multirelational aspect of identity operates is via a sort of appropriation of the feedback we receive. Multirelational identity can be explained with a Gadamerian account of 'interpretation', which is central to his notion of 'fusion of horizons'. For Gadamer, understanding is interpretation: indeed, "interpretation is not an occasional additional act subsequent to understanding, but rather understanding is always an interpretation, and hence interpretation is the explicit form of understanding" (2004, 306). Understanding, therefore, is not a passive state, but rather an active endeavour that requires we become engaged with that which we try to understand. All understanding begins from a set of prejudgments—or prejudices—that give us a handle with which to grasp our world, and provide us with a point of view to interpret others' feedback. Indeed, "to try to eliminate one's own concepts in interpretation is not only impossible, but manifestly absurd. To interpret means precisely to use one's own preconceptions so that the meaning… can really be made to speak for us"[18] (398). Preconceptions are thus necessary to begin any attempt at understanding and learning.

With regard to our dialogical nature, understanding—and even internalising—our

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[18] In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer argues that our prejudices, while they can restrict our openness to difference, are nonetheless essential to begin to open up to otherness. Interpretation, for Gadamer, begins with fore-conceptions, that is, with what we expect to get out of the study of a text, speech, or culture. We first must put an unfamiliar 'text' into our own words, or into a familiar frame in order for us to begin to make sense of it. Once there is an opening and we can begin to make sense of the 'text', we can venture gradually into the unfamiliar, as, with the help of our prejudgments at first, it becomes increasingly intelligible for us. As we progress in the reading of the 'text', our fore-conceptions—or prejudices—are eventually replaced by more suitable conceptions.

significant others' feedback requires framing it in our own language. It, however, does not mean that we can interpret the feedback to mean anything we would like: rather, by framing something unfamiliar from a familiar standpoint, it is easier for us to understand the message when it is formulated in a way that speaks to us. Indeed, "to understand a text always means to apply it to ourselves and to know that, even if it must always be understood in different ways, it is still the same text presenting itself to us in these different ways" (Gadamer 2004, 398). When sharing a context, we communicate with others within a framework of intelligibility, using a common language and references that we all know. However, to truly make something meaningful to us, "we must translate it into our own language" (397). As subjects, we have our own standpoint, our own self-concept, and our own way to understand, and every moment of our life is spent engaging and conversing with other subjects who also have their own standpoints, self-concepts and their own pre-conceptions. We can only understand others from our own perspective, just as their interpretation and evaluation of us is based on their own point of view, thus making understanding a process unique for every person, even though it is premised on a common language and set of references. Essentially, then, interpretation is central to our multirelational identity since others evaluate us, and then give us feedback, which we evaluate in turn. Our interpretation of that feedback, however, depends on the interpretation we make of that person, what of that interpretation I communicate to her and how she interprets this in turn.

The connection and synthesis among the three levels of identity can provide clashing views, not only between the identity that we think we have, and that which is reflected back to us via the feedback of significant others and the society to which we

belong, but also between our desires and the other's expectations of us. The individual's synthesis, or the fusion of horizons, provides a bridging between different interpretations into something that coherently joins one's own perspective and others' feedback.

Developing the example from the above section, in a familial and societal context that considers heterosexuality as the only acceptable and possible sexual practice (for instance, a very traditional Christian community), a person with an alternative sexual orientation may make sense of the conflict between his identity and his society's values by internalizing the latter and labelling himself a sinner and a bad Christian. In contrast, he may view things differently and consider the creed of his Church, which his family shares, to be backwards and needing to get with the changing times. From such alternatives, the individual frames his identity either in Christian guilt or in modern liberalism. Which framework will colour one's individual identity will depend on a person's self-concept, the importance given to one's significant others, the presence and strength of the message one's society carries, and the importance one gives to it. A homosexual whose Christian faith is a crucial part of his identity will likely frame and evaluate his sexual orientation within a religious standard, whether or not his significant others are religious, and whether or not his society promotes deeply religious values. Yet, this person will ultimately choose the identity that holds more importance to him, although this choice will not necessarily be an easy one, nor one made without struggles or inner conflicts.

The Tacit in Identity

In this chapter, we have seen that identity is a deeply collaborative notion that involves a complex web of interactions among the self, our significant others, and our society. First, having an identity is essential to establishing a boundary between me and the world, although this very boundary highlights the character of identity as both individual and shared, and in constant exchange with the world. Identity, then, is the provider of a vantage point from which we can apprehend the world. It also reflects the extent of our membership to a defining community and our adoption of the values, mores, beliefs, traditions, customs, and language it promotes. This characteristic of identity establishes a boundary and a standard to distinguish "us" from "them". Finally, identity gives our life a sense of direction and meaning: it gives us a stand on moral and spiritual matters and a position in time to construct our own narrative. These characteristics of identity provide us with a way to understand our world and to find our place within it. It also brings up the emotional connection that result from seeing such a source of meaning in our identity. For that reason, we can presume that challenges and perceived attacks on our identity, or on what we consider defining of it, will trigger strong emotional reactions.

Identity, as multileveled, is divided into three parts that, while distinct in their roles, are deeply and inextricably intertwined in their effect. First, the level of the self concerns one's particular and unique perspective, where we add our personal connections to the things we choose, even when they are a collective choice. Secondly, the level of the significant others has a great deal of influence on our identity because our meaningful relationships have more influence on us than strangers do. It also shows the extent of our dialogical and embedded nature when we internalize certain dialogues and feedback.

Thirdly, the societal level of identity pertains to collective membership, where one identifies with certain groups and thus embraces the traits associated with those groups from one's personal standpoint.

Finally, the profound interconnection between the three levels has meant that the description of any one level remained unsatisfactory until its connection to the two others was established. The self, its significant others, and its society mutually shape and influence one another in a way that renders those interconnections and dialogues numerous and complex. Indeed, it is impossible to give a complete account of the multirelational character of identity—which level of identity influences the other and how its influence manifests itself—which is why some aspects of identity remain tacit. The nature and cause of the tacit, and what its place is in identity, is addressed in what follows.

Chapter 2—Approaching the Tacit

As phenomenological beings with a multilayered and multirelational identity, we are affected by our context, and, with all the complexity that entails, such complexity will inevitably make it impossible for us to be aware of all the factors involved in our process of identity construction. Nevertheless, the unreflective—or tacit—parts of our identity will still affect our thoughts, actions and how we apprehend the world to the same extent that the explicit parts of our identity will influence our thoughts and actions. This chapter will therefore indicate the parts of our multilevel identity that are tacit and how this comes about. To begin, I will provide a rendering of some of the general attributes of the tacit as a concept. I use the works of Michael Polanyi, Martin Heidegger, Charles Taylor and John Russon to describe tacit knowledge and to connect it with tacit identity, thereupon giving an account of the impact a tacit outlook can have on ourselves and on our understanding of the world. In providing this account, however, I will distinguish between two kinds of tacit identity: first, a tacit identity which can be brought to our awareness and made explicit, and a tacit that is simply ineffable, that remains in the background, largely beyond our articulation. Finally, I will connect the present chapter with the previous one, and establish where the tacit in identity resides, arguing that we can trace its manifestation at the intersection of the individual and the societal levels of identity. This chapter will thus demonstrate how, given that our identity shapes the way we see the world, a tacit identity will also influence our worldview, but without our awareness and with the consequences that ensue. This has particular relevance for majority cultures, whose views are especially shaped by their tacit identity, as a result of the effects the normative assumption of an overly familiar, widely shared, and unchallenged identity—which can take to the

background under the guise of universality—can have.

What does the Tacit Entail?

Michael Polanyi

The nature of our experience of the world—as embedded, multilevel and dialogical—makes the tacit an inevitable aspect of our reality. Indeed, there is very little we can do without having a large part of our knowledge, assumptions and practices belonging to the realm of the tacit. In beginning to address the tacit aspect of identity, therefore, I must clarify what I understand as tacit. To do so, I turn to Michael Polanyi, who has devoted his philosophical career to the notion of the tacit, focussing on its repercussions on what we conceive as knowledge and meaning. Polanyi's work on the tacit has relevant insight we can apply to our conception of identity: emotional attachment to one's identity and the elements that define it makes meaning central to identity, but it also makes it difficult to articulate, given that how and why something becomes meaningful cannot be entirely explicit.

   Polanyi frames tacit knowledge in this simple statement: "one can know more than one can tell" (1966, 8)[19]. In our everyday dealings, some things require our full attention—our focal awareness, in Polanyi's terms—in order to adequately and effectively respond. Involved in such dealings are also elements that do not require our focal awareness but which are central to give meaning and intelligibility to that on which we focus. Being subsidiarily—or tacitly—aware of those elements forms a context within which our focal

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[19] Anders Odenstedt, in describing Gadamer's own indirect reference to the tacit, points to "any reflective act [which] has conditions that are not noticed" (2003, 83).

awareness makes sense and this enables us to respond appropriately. Our subsidiary awareness is part of our tacit knowledge; it becomes part of our background and make our focus on, and understanding of, other and more complex things possible. Polanyi gives a famous illustration of focal and tacit awareness in his example of riding a bicycle (1958, 88). On a bicycle, it is not only impossible to focus consciously on the mechanisms involved in balancing oneself on two wheels—that is, on every shift of one's body, on every movement one makes, or even on the laws of physics that allow one to remain upright and to propel oneself forward—such awareness would be a distraction from the more immediate and important things we need to contend with while riding. Our brain does not need to consciously register every prompt from our environment or every response we give to it in return. Riding a bicycle involves dealing with traffic and obstacles, and planning our route to reach our destination, none of which would be possible if our awareness was focused on the mechanics behind the rudiments of cycling. Hence, in this case, determining whether it is possible to isolate and render accurately all the moves and actions involved in balancing on a bicycle (Collins 2010, 79) is not helpful; what is of note, however, is that we *can* unreflectively balance on a bicycle, thereby making possible our focus on other things, like potential dangers on the road.

Tacit knowledge, therefore, makes possible a more complex level of knowledge and action by taking some notions for granted[20]. Indeed, the elements on which we focus make sense to us only if they are connected to a background or pattern that give sense to

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[20] By contrast, "strictly explicit knowledge *is* strictly meaningless—the epistemological equivalent of a brainless corpse" (Ray 2009, 81—emphasis in the text). in other words, it is not enough to know explicitly how to use tools; what is crucial is the capacity to use them properly while focusing on something else, which is unique to each person. For instance, Polanyi himself was a notoriously bad driver, seemingly unable to use his car subsidiarily (80).

our object of focus and this context is in part constituted by those elements of which we are subsidiarily aware (Polanyi 1958, 55). Our subsidiary—or implicit—awareness of the elements around us form a pattern that enable us to get a sense of our world, which would be impossible if we were to focus on individual elements constituting the whole (59). Polanyi refers to our use of tools, to posit that "we can be aware of certain things in a way that is quite different from focusing our attention on them" (1975, 38), although that subsidiary awareness is crucial to giving a coherent meaning to the subject of our focal awareness. When we use a tool, for instance, we integrate it into our world where the tool makes sense, that is to say, we blend our subsidiary and focal awareness into one, which enables us to use the tool properly (Polanyi 1975, 38). For Polanyi, therefore, the pursuit of knowledge involves "an active shaping of experience" that is the combination of focal and subsidiary awareness—or of the "knowing what" and the "knowing how" (1966, 7)— and which makes meaningful experiences possible. In other words, we experience the tool a certain way because of the background that gives it meaning. We experience our world through the tool, on which we focus, but our experience would be meaningless if we could not be indirectly aware of the combination of all the elements in our context that give the tool meaning as a tool. This is the tacit power at the basis of all knowledge (6).

What occurs in Polanyi's notion of the shaping of experience is the simultaneous knowledge of the tacit (or subsidiary) and of the explicit (or the focus of our attention) that makes our experience of the world what it is. Knowledge cannot be what it is for us without its tacit part—even merely pointing at a thing and saying the word that designates it requires an effort on the part of the person to whom we are talking so that they understand the meaning of what we are trying to say. Finger-pointing (Polanyi 1975, 69) illustrate the

kind of tacit Polanyi considers essential in the transmission of knowledge. A pointing finger on its own is not of much interest; rather its interest lays in that towards which it points. Pointing, the finger becomes part of our subsidiary awareness, allowing us to focus on something else. What is tacit, in the case of the pointing finger, is the knowledge that a finger pointing at something is not the focus of interest, but rather a conduit to what interests us or compels our attention, and it indicates the direction where that interesting thing is. This is learned in practice, as we see people pointing to things, and so it involves an effort by the witness to the pointing to make a connection between pointing and what is pointed (Polanyi 1975, 38).

The pointing finger also gives us an insight into our relation to our body: the way we dwell (Polanyi 1966, 16) in the world means that we experience our body in terms of what is outside it and of what we attend from it. Tools, serve a similar purpose to that of our body by becoming its extensions; they allow us to depart from them in order to attend to other things and, consequently, we no longer focus on the tool, but on how we perceive and attend to the world through them. This attending to the world from our body and our tools is how we come to dwell in it. Polanyi uses dwelling, not as a conscious act that involves exploring something, but as a way to perceive the world through the mediation of the tool, but without focussing on that mediation.

Our capacity to perceive our world as a meaningful whole occurs in indwelling, when we do not reflectively think of the tacit knowledge, but rather we think with or through it; it becomes a part of our interpretation of the world. It follows, therefore, that, in looking through the tacit, we cannot simultaneously look at it. The tacit offers a framework within which certain things make sense and thus partly shapes our vision of the

world. This is the immutable part of the tacit because it is not only a deeply personal experience, but also one that requires one not to focus on it in order to experience the world through it. Hence, we perceive the world a certain way, while not being aware that this perception largely depends on the tacit elements that render the world coherent to us.

For Polanyi, tacit knowledge is largely inarticulate, that is to say, by being part of our subsidiary awareness, it is something more intuitive than explicit and conscious. Although tacit knowledge is essentially unreflective, the tacit is not merely equivalent to the realm of the subconscious; by indwelling, we are indirectly aware of the tacit so that it becomes a whole that contributes to the shaping of our understanding. However, explaining the subsidiary awareness that makes our understanding of the world and enables us to focus on other things proves difficult because, as the tacit opens one to insights, it simultaneously withdraws and becomes inarticulate. As such, then, tacit knowledge can only be transmitted and shared via examples and reproduction, seeing others act and emulating them. Knowledge, then, is rooted in context and comes from a particular point of view. Consequently, given the diversity of possible contexts (education, history, socialisation), there will be a variety of points of view.

Polanyi sees two kinds of knowledge, and, in line with our discussion of tacit identity, neither the tacit nor the explicit knowledge can exist without the other. The shaping of experience in which we engage means that we are not only affected by our context, tacit or explicit, in the way we see the world, but our very perception of the world shapes it into something meaningful to us.

Martin Heidegger

Polanyi's account of our relationship to tools parallels Heidegger's discussion of equipment as ready-to-hand. The implications connected to Heidegger's take will give us useful insights to further explain the tacit. Indeed, Heidegger posits that the being of equipment, as ready-to-hand, allows our everyday dealings to go smoothly. Our seamless use of equipment is the combined result—to frame Heidegger's argument in Polanyi's terminology—of a subsidiary and of a focal awareness, which make possible our focus on the result of our action and not on the action itself. For instance, the piano player will not focus on the movement of her fingers on the keyboard, but on the music resulting from the movement of her fingers. Thus, the equipment withdraws from one's attention to allow one, in using it, to attend focally to something else.

The uneventful use of a thing ready-to-hand confirms us in our expectations of our world and of the role of the equipment by being ready-to-hand (Heidegger 1962, §83). For instance, with a working hammer, our expectation that we can drive a nail into the wall, to then affix a picture to it, is confirmed. However, if the hammer is broken, it is no longer ready-to-hand, our expectation is denied, and we are forced to see the once ready-to-hand hammer as no longer an extension of our hand, but as a useless object in the context which made it once coherent as ready-to-hand. The broken hammer turns us toward a new task; either to fix the hammer or to replace it. To refer back to Polanyi's terminology, our subsidiary awareness of the hammer as we are focused on driving the nail in the wall shifts into a focal awareness of the hammer as a broken tool. As long as it functions properly, we have no reason to consider how to fix it or find a replacement for it, nor do we have a reason to consider the hammer as anything other than an extension of our arm as we use it. The seamless way we experience our encounter with the ready-to-hand, until the ready-to-

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hand challenges our experience, is akin to our general experience of the world as thrown beings.

According to Heidegger, as thrown beings, we enter the world in an already involved state from the very first seconds of our life (1962, §322). We are immersed in this world and, consequently, our experience of it can never take place from a neutral and distanced perspective. Having no ability to escape the world in which we are thrown, we are involved in it, it matters to us, and this innate care affects the way we perceive it. Thus, Heidegger argues that, since we have an interest in our world, we tend to view it from a particular perspective in an attempt to have it make sense to us (§62). Living with other thrown beings, we tend to assume that our "concernful circumspection" (§83) of the world is accurate and truthful, never for a moment thinking that our embeddedness in this world may have shaped our perception and judgment. Heidegger describes this situation of our embeddedness as a sort of mediated experience; our body, such as it is in its thrown nature, can only perceive and render the world as it is able to, and the context in which it finds itself can only make possible certain alternative explanation for the world (§62). Our body's limitations and abilities, the context in which we evolve, are the conduits to our experience of the world. Yet, the thrown and concerned nature or our being hides the mediated character of our existence. As the ready-to-hand withdraws in our use of it—and thus confirms our expectation in becoming an extension of ourselves—our thrown existence will confirm us in any perspective we use to explain the world, even if this view can only provide us with a forever incomplete rendition of reality. We assume that what we perceive and how we understand ourselves and our world cannot be otherwise—is truth—and this is what Heidegger understands as enframing (1977, 27-28).

Unlike Polanyi who points to the importance and indispensability of the subsidiary to experience the world, Heidegger notices that we may rely too readily on the subsidiary and warns of the potential harmful results that this can occasion. As with the ready-to-hand, unless something forces us to see the world differently, we tend to confirm our assumptions and, as with Heidegger's discussion of technology, we tend to shape our world to fit into these assumptions (17). Heidegger's discussion of the totalising effect of technology sees a globalization of this enframing, not only shaping all connections we have with our physical world (animals, things, humans) but especially, and more importantly, with our way of thinking.

To sum up, Heidegger and Polanyi tell us that, for our seamless and proper use of a piece of equipment, it must withdraw into an extension of our body, thus becoming ready-to-hand. Heidegger's readiness-to-hand is an unreflective encounter that occurs when things confirm us in our view of the world and in our expectations. Similarly, our thrown nature means that this seamless coping we experience with the ready-to-hand is also our experience of the world; our way of being in the world finding confirmation in its familiarity and simply becoming the only way through which we view the world. Whereas Polanyi tells us that part of our awareness of the world must withdraw to enable us to focus on more complex things, Heidegger understood this tacit knowledge more broadly, seeing that thrownness is core to human nature and, as such, when a certain perspective is omnipresent to the point of withdrawing from our focal awareness, it can have serious repercussions, for example, when we begin to view not only things, but also people as standing reserve (1977, 17).

Thrownness makes it impossible for us to ever see the world from an objective

perspective, and Heidegger acknowledges that, when a certain way of seeing the world becomes omnipresent and shapes everything we experience through this lens, it can become akin to a prison, keeping us from a different, yet no more truthful, perspective of the world. Heidegger points to modernity and technology as a source of general enframing: but can culture, values, practices and religion prove to be enframing?

Charles Taylor

Similar to Heidegger and Polanyi, Taylor conceives of human nature as embedded in what he calls its given "context of understanding" (2007, 3), that is to say, we may have different views of our world depending on the context through which we experience it. This embeddedness also implies that some of our context will be reflective, and other parts will remain tacit, or in the background. Taylor's extensive work on the Western rise of secularism that results from changes in our conditions of belief brings up an important variable to the discussion of the tacit, namely the cultural character of these contexts of understanding. Taylor's understanding of the tacit—he refers to it as the background— addresses the cultural and changeable aspect of tacit knowledge, connecting it intimately to the changes that can occur in a society. *A Secular Age* is Taylor's attempt to render the gradual changes that occurred in Western societies' mores, thought and other conditions of beliefs—changes, which led to a shift from "a society where belief in God is unchallenged and indeed, unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be one option among others, and frequently not the easiest to embrace" (2007, 3).

Taylor's claim is based on the premise that our societal context of understanding— whether explicit or tacit—shapes the thoughts, beliefs, mores, and values available to us as

well as the choices we make between them. This leads him to propose that even if belief in God, taking the form of organised Religion, is relegated to the background in modern society, it is still a notion that will have an effect on our understanding of ourselves and of the world, if only to provide us with a common language that makes us intelligible to one another. For instance, Taylor reminds us that an atheist discourse requires the possibility of the existence of God in order to make sense (2007, 591): Western societies tend to reflectively reject religion and belief in God as naïve, or backward, while still grappling with its existence as a possibility, in order to reject it through a secular discourse.

Changes in language, Taylor suggests, result from and reflect those changes occurring in one's society, and strongly contribute to the push of some discourses to the background, such as the theist discourse. Such change of language will also lead to the demotion of certain explicit and once defining values, practices, and traditions as no longer reflective of a society. According to Taylor, an identity-defining trait, even when rejected, still has the power to affect people in their everyday dealings. Indeed, he claims that one result of the use of secular language as exclusively legitimate is the restriction of the plurality that ought to be present in western liberal societies (2007, 160). He maintains, however, that people still feel a strong desire for the community or the spirituality the religious can provide. What results is that the need for transcendence, having no longer an acceptable articulation, leaves believers at a loss to articulate their views and needs in the public sphere in an acceptable way.

Taylor's project in *A Secular Age* is to bring religious and faith-based discourse out of the background and back into the mainstream, as one of many possible and legitimate discourses to explain our world. He proposes to do this by articulating the tacit presence of

the transcendent through a new language that has not been discredited by the prevailing discourse. The next chapter will explore this possibility, but it is sufficient to point out at this stage of our inquiry that the avenue of the articulation of the tacit requires it to be articulable, and this is not the case of all that is tacit.

What does the tacit do?

Polanyi, Heidegger, and Taylor provide us with helpful ways to understand the nature of the tacit. As Polanyi argues, its essential role allows us to live richer and more complex lives and to enter into more sophisticated actions: by not having to focus on basic elements of our everyday coping, we can take them for granted and focus on things at a level higher in complexity. Tacit knowledge is thus foundational to all our interactions with the world, whether in the form of a subsidiary awareness of the law of gravity, or a tacit assumption of Western superiority, that defines a people's perception of the world. Maben Poirier describes this internalisation of one's context when he states that

> To advance awareness, knowledge, and understanding of any sort is to draw on a culture that one has appropriated, sometimes in an explicit and sometimes in a tacit manner, in the course of living one's life, a culture that, when learned in an explicit manner, gets "subsidiarized" to the point of becoming one with who one is, and when learned tacitly, simply fuses with one's personality without our being explicitly aware of what is taking place (2011, 217).

For example, we do not need to think about what physical distance is proper to maintain when having a conversation with a friend, or with a stranger from our own culture, but this tacit behaviour will become explicit when we encounter someone whose culture dictates a longer or shorter distance to that which we are used.

The tacit also enriches our understanding of meaning and its communication.

According to Polanyi, for language to communicate something to us, the words, sentences and grammar rules need to withdraw and not be the center of our focus, lest they obstruct the meaning of the entire message (1975, 69)[21]. In this case, the letters and words are subsidiary indicators of meaning and subtext, that is, like the pointing finger, something that reveals that which requires our focal awareness. The tacit, then, for Polanyi, permeates all our interactions, it is context-based, it is not explicitly transmittable, and it is something through which we think, interpret and understand the world. Let us consider Polanyi's characterisation as the foundation from which we will refine the concept of the tacit as it pertains to identity.

Heidegger's insight on the tacit moves it from scientific knowledge and meaning into our perception of reality. He claims that sometimes what we take for granted and recedes to the background as tacit needs to be brought forth in order to access a new perspective on our world. In his essay *The Origin of the Work of Art*, Heidegger tells us that this glimpse of the tacit—the clearing—is brief but striking enough to put into question that which we assume to be the only accurate and plausible interpretation of reality (1977, 178). As embedded and thrown beings, what we perceive as reality is that which shapes our culture, our traditions and our ability to reason. Thus, he warns that in our condition of care for our experience of the world, we tend to picture the world in a way we think makes sense, and the tacit not only confirms the legitimacy of our assumptions, but it also excludes any alternative perspectives. Thus, one becomes limited to the prevalent view of reality.

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[21] This is not to say that we cannot know the rules of grammar in order to understand the message conveyed: rather, "any language rule would seem to require a certain amount of unreflective adherence to such rules" (Odenstedt 2003, 82). In other words, we must know the basics of a language but there is no need for us to be focally aware of those rules, unless they are brought up specifically. Indeed, "that language cannot be reflected upon when [speaking] does not imply that the speaker or listener is unconscious of the grammatical rules involved but rather that these rules are not formulated when operative" (2003, 88).

Hence, the tacit, for Heidegger, is context-based to the extent that our thrownness and the resulting perception of our world can only be a result of the context in which we exist, that is, the physical particularities of our bodies and of our physical, social, cultural and economic environment. From Heidegger, we can take away that the tacit depends on our context, that our context will determine what kind of reality we will accept as true, and that our understanding of reality will largely become tacit if it is never challenged by another perspective.

Taylor's main insight on the tacit echoes Heidegger's contextual implications but strengthens its connection to culture and identity. He departs from Heidegger by emphasizing the societal, religious and cultural aspect of the tacit and its role in shaping the way we perceive the world around us, the judgments we make about it and about what constitute human societies. The tacit is something that is part of the background. Taylor frames it in terms of a "framework of the taken-for-granted", something that might even be "unacknowledged by the agent, because never formulated" (2007, 13). Thus, from Taylor's discussion of the changing conditions of beliefs, we can find important insights into the tacit as it pertains to identity: first, when a whole population shares in a common identity, its particular aspects can become part of the background and no longer be noticed. Secondly, a particular identity can be demoted by a group and find itself in the background as well. Thirdly, however, both those now tacit identities can still shape our worldview without a group being aware of it. Taking an identity trait for granted, according to Taylor, may explain the changes in the conditions of belief that led to the de-legitimation of the religious discourse in Western liberal societies. Taylor's discussion of the difficulty to propose an open discourse of the transcendent in a secular society that associates the

transcendent with a naïve or reactionary position opens the way to ask how, in a cultural or identity-based society can some traits come to be tacit.

The Inarticulate and the Inarticulable in the Tacit

We have established that, in general, the tacit withdraws to the background of our experience in order to enable our brain to focus on more important and complex things in our world. Not only does the tacit allow us to engage in complex actions, it also makes possible a tacit language[22] among people belonging to the same group. The tacit in our social or cultural practices, therefore, is learned as it becomes key in how we communicate with others like us and define ourselves. Over time such practices become internalized by socialization, imitation and observation and largely remain unnoticed until they are challenged, which explains why being immersed in a different culture brings to the fore all that we take for granted in our own: the way we deal with traffic; the acceptable distance between two interlocutors; the social practices involved with eating on the street, or; the assumption of racial, religious or cultural superiority. This kind of knowledge is acquired by observing those who have mastered this knowledge and by imitating them, as well as by trying it out for ourselves (Russon, 2003, 71). A close look at Polanyi's understanding of the tacit, however, leads us to identify two distinct kinds of tacit: a tacit that can potentially be formulated and so is merely inarticulate, and a tacit that is ineffable and, therefore, inarticulable. Exploring these notions further will be useful to get a deeper

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[22] By "language" I mean the practices, values, beliefs and mores that are commonly shared in a population. The tacit aspect of language refers to those practices and values that belong to the background, that is, that are taken for granted and therefore remain unnoticed.

understanding of the role of the tacit in identity.

Polanyi's work posits that certain kinds of knowledge are simply impossible to articulate, while other kinds are not articulated, although they could be. First, scientific knowledge is an example of tacit knowledge that can be potentially articulated. Indeed, Polanyi argues that science cannot exist outside its context, that is to say, without a community of scientists skilled in their practices, who communicate with each other, who emerge from a specific education, socialization and enculturation that such community assumes (Polanyi 1966, 73-74). This kind of knowledge, while inarticulate, is nevertheless transmitted to new members of the community through examples, practice, observation, and emulation, until these practices become tacit for the pupils as well (Polanyi 1958, 209). This kind of knowledge is essentially in the background but is central to the meaning and transmission of scientific knowledge and could potentially be articulated with enough careful observation.

In contrast, we are unable to articulate some aspects of our knowledge largely because of their complexity and of their highly subjective nature. When a tool becomes an extension of our body, for instance, it allows for a type of perception that can only occur through that tool and, as such, this acquired knowledge would be impossible to accurately describe. Indeed, the bumps on the ground the blind man feels through his cane (Polanyi 1975, 71) and the topography of the ground he constructs in his mind cannot be communicated to others in a way that will give an accurate rendition of what the experience is like for those who, not only are not blind, but have never used a cane for this purpose before. In such a case, only a general description of the nature of the tacit, such as that which Polanyi provides in *Meaning,* is possible. In this case, he describes the tool as an

extension of one's body that, as such, withdraws from our focal awareness, and its presence is only felt as a conduit to our perceiving the world (35-36). Such description renders the cane's role to enhance perception intelligibly, but the specific mechanics behind the use and the feedback received from the cane, how the brain will translate stimuli from the vibrations felt on the palm of the hand into a topographical understanding of space for the blind person is impossible to describe, even for the person using the tool. In this case, such knowledge must withdraw to the background in order for the blind person to be able to apprehend the world through the cane.

The above example demonstrates a tacit that is beyond language—that is fundamentally immutable—because there simply are no words to describe the experience accurately to a non-initiate. Our connection with meaning is also inarticulable but not as fundamentally so. The unique and personal experience of meaning, the emotions connected to it, and the attribution of meaning to symbols, metaphors, or works of art are all aspects of an inarticulable tacit. While it is possible to give a summary account of what something means to us, the depth of meaning we see in something and the emotional connection we have towards it cannot be entirely described in its every details. This attribution of meaning is a process similar to the meaning and attachment we have towards certain elements we associate with our identity. For instance, the connections made between a work of art and the individual experience and interpretation of its meaning—especially when it comes to a person's own estimation and explanation of its importance—are too numerous and too complex to describe in their entirety. Moreover, in all likelihood, those connections will be, at least in part, of an unreflective nature. Polanyi's poetry example points out that, where it may be clear, for example, that a poem is about love, our reception and

interpretation of it, the connections we make with our personal life, the emotions the poem evokes in us, and the uniqueness of our past experiences mean that it will be impossible to attempt an accurate and completely articulate rendition of our experience of it (1975, 85). In this case, the complexity of the interactions of our emotions, memories, context and history with a work of art would largely be beyond words. Similarly, with the country flag example we see that, while the flag represents something every citizen can recognize and find meaningful, the feelings and meanings associated with the flag are individually constructed (73) and cannot be communicated beyond commonplace statements. We cannot describe such experiences that have meaning rooted in a largely personal connection in a similar way for everyone, nor can the context that contributed to the formation of an individual meaning be thoroughly described because it is too multilayered and complex. The impossibility to provide a complete description, not only one's own personal meaning attributed to a collectively important symbol, but also all of the possible experience of that symbol that every person may attribute to it, means that a part of the attachment to something meaningful, like a poem or one's country flag, will remain inarticulable past certain general formulae. Such experiences, attribution of meaning and emotional responses are therefore part of the inarticulable tacit.

It could be argued that this tacit is not inarticulable but merely inarticulate because of the impracticability of articulating infinitely numerous and complex attributions of meaning and that if we found a way to articulate how something holds meaning for us— consciously, subconsciously, and tacitly—it could potentially be possible to do. As an answer, I refer to Polanyi's description of what is involved in the reading of a poem:

> The poem takes us out of the diffuse existence of our ordinary life into something clearly beyond this and draws from the great store of our inchoate

emotional experience a circumscribed entity of passionate feelings. First, the artist produces from his own diffuse existence a shape circumscribed in a brief space and a short time—a shape wholly incommensurable with the substance of its origins. Then we respond to this shape by surrendering from our own diffuse memories of moving events a gift of purely resonant feelings. The total experience is of a wholly novel entity, an imaginative integration of incompatibles on all sides (1975, 88).

Polanyi tells us that our experience of a poem is a combination of disordered, partly articulated, and subsidiary elements that our imagination weaves together into something that resonates with us. To attempt to articulate something which can only be significant as a combination of emotions, subsidiary awareness, memories, and past experiences into something entirely new, would fail to render the experience in any meaningful way. Like poetry, our emotional connection to our identity and the meaning we attach to it cannot be rendered in its entirety, not only because what constitutes its meaning is highly personal, complex, and largely comprises subsidiary and diffuse parts, but also because any articulation would fail to communicate the meaning as we experience it.

In contrast, Polanyi's example of the bicycle and the tacit knowledge involved that allows us to keep our balance on it speaks of a tacit that is not inarticulable, but merely inarticulate, if we agree with Harry Collins, who claims that this kind of tacit knowledge is only inarticulate because the brain is not quick enough to provide the account of all that is involved in balancing on a bicycle as it happens. He argues that this knowledge could potentially be articulable, as long as we have the technology to do it, or if we found ourselves in a situation where all our movements could be slower, as in a near zero-gravity environment (Collins 2010, 100), and where our brain could be focally aware of the process behind balancing on a bicycle. In our current context, however, the particularities involved with keeping our balance and propelling ourselves forward on the bicycle withdraw to the

background so that we can focus on our surroundings and react to it in a timely manner: they are, in our context, inarticulable. Riding a bicycle, we are subsidiarily aware of the physics that keeps us upright and balanced, and consequently, we can be focally aware of other things that are important to pay attention to when we ride. The bicycle example shows the presence of an inarticulate tacit knowledge that is taken for granted—and consequently no longer noticed—but that could be potentially articulable. We take for granted the knowledge that constitutes part of our subsidiary awareness. We are so familiar with it that it becomes a second nature, and something that withdraws to the background so that we no longer notice it, and consequently cannot describe it.

Given that we are "already shaped by our interpretive orientation", which is how "our experience ever begins" (Russon 2003, 14), we do not only have subsidiary awareness of physical objects: in living with others and being socialized into a particular way of being, the mores, beliefs, values and practices prevalent in society will also withdraw to the background. By becoming part of the background—that is, by becoming tacit—the elements that constitute our identity will shape how we will view the world without being aware of their influence. This tacit framework enables us to focus on more complex concerns and interactions which will take place within the context of that framework. We therefore need to look for the tacit in identity, in this widely shared set of identity-defining elements which take to the background because their ubiquity—that is to say, the fact that the majority of members in a society share it—gives them the semblance of universality. John Russon, channeling Hegel, argues that the identity-defining tacit in our lives we see as customs, serves to recognize one another as being "an 'us', as a 'we', for it is when I act according to the customs we all automatically adopt that my action is a representative for

all of us" (Russon 1995, 514). As a member of a society, we internalize certain practices that are part of a process of recognition. Similar to Polanyi's subsidiary, "one becomes a reflective self precisely through not being reflectively self-conscious of this process" (1995, 516). To put it differently, Tim Ray, broadening Benedict Anderson's notion of imagined communities (2006) connects the tacit with community when he claims that "*all* communities *are* imagined—tacitly—in the sense that interaction *within* and *among* them is shaped by what is known, but cannot be told" (2009, 87—emphases in the text). The customs and practices that are considered universal, however, must be meaningful to a population and this means that an individual attribution of meaning onto the collective identity and identity-defining elements (symbols, beliefs, values and the like) must take place. Thus for a collective identity to be shared by a people, it must have a personal meaning for every individual member. The reliance on the inarticulate, which largely constitutes meaning, along with the complexity and diversity of all possible individual meanings makes the personal meaning attached to a collective identity inarticulable.

Taylor presents us with another aspect of the tacit that, while potentially articulable, is nonetheless inarticulate because it no longer stands as a characteristic of one's society. His discussion of what he sees as the current illegitimacy of the transcendent discourse in secular societies points to a rejected part of a collective/group identity—the belief in a transcendent authority from which came our notion of the good—that nonetheless retains an influence on a society. Indeed, Taylor's claim in *A Secular Age* is that a once unchallenged religious belief no longer permeates secular society, and its discussion in the public sphere as a viable source of insight is no longer legitimate in our current context (2007, 14). However, given that we have established that identity holds meaning and that

meaning is linked with emotions, the rejection of a once important identity will not be a simple thing. I argue that while the de-legitimizing of an aspect of identity is done explicitly, the tacit connections and meaning associated with that identity remain: the rejected identity still affects a society because it becomes part of the background[23]. Considering that meaning-making involves emotions, rejecting a once meaningful identity over a short time will leave some emotional connections behind, even if, reflectively, the de-legitimation is voluntary.

This is how a group identity—that has become tacit by being explicitly rejected as no longer defining of a society—can still shape a people's view of the world. A common rejected identity, as it is pushed to the background, becomes inarticulate: whereas the many personal connections to that shared identity have mostly been ineffable because of their diversity and complexity, the presence and influence of the rejected identity will become tacit and therefore inarticulate once a society rejects it. In other words, and taking Taylor's example of the secular turn, in secular societies, the shift away from legitimate religious discourses is assumed to have been complete and the connections that remain to a religious identity are not only ignored, but the replacing secular discourse that is now considered universal, has made their articulation impossible. Part of a shared identity remains tacitly present, therefore, even though it has been explicitly rejected as a constitutive element of

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[23] Gadamer is of the position that once what he terms a presupposition is noticed, its influence on the people sharing it decreases. Thus, as Odenstedt claims, the rejection of such a presupposition would be the effect rather than the cause of its loss of influence. Indeed, "[p]resuppositions that are brought to awareness no longer function as presuppositions, that is, this process involves a concealment of the way in which they function when not detachedly related to" (2003, 87). Whereas I agree that a presupposition—or the tacit element of a group identity—loses its influence once it is noticed and can be questioned, I rather think that once a group believes that the rejected identity is no longer an influence, and is no longer challenged, its former influence can remain unreflective and continue to shape a group's identity and outlook.

that identity.

Thus far, we have established that tacit identity can be either merely inarticulate—having a potential for possible articulation—or it can also be inarticulable. Whether it can be formulated or not, tacit identity comprises variables that affect us while it remains in the background. Indeed, a shared identity is most influential when its presence is neither noticed nor articulated: through it we understand the world and we can establish meaning into things by making connections without being explicitly aware that the way we picture the world is partly shaped by a tacit identity. Thus far, then, we have established that tacit identity is necessary, omnipresent and inevitable in all our interactions with the world and with others. Yet, a tacit identity, being such a seamless part of the background, is rarely understood as being contextual. When a large group of people share a similar identity, it tends to take it for granted as an objective and truthful rendition of the world. The difficulty involved in articulating something tacit is that normative or universal assumptions about it will tend to be taken for the truth and become almost impossible to escape or challenge. A tacit identity, then, can be shared in such a widespread way that no one sees it anymore; it can also be an identity that was broadly and very explicitly rejected for no longer being descriptive of society. Whether omnipresent or illegitimated, a tacit identity will affect our outlook on the world and the emotional attachment we have to specific values and traditions.

Our context has tacit elements that are both fleeting and central to our way of apprehending the world: the grammar rules that frame our language, the laws of physics that come into play when balancing on a bicycle, the colonial pretensions behind the historical issue of race in the United States all shape a people's outlook on the world. The

tacit in knowledge, then, is not separate from the tacit in identity: our knowledge determines how we understand the world and is connected to what we take for granted, which includes our cultural, historical, and religious biases. In addition, our meaning-making—or the way we associate memories and emotional connections with certain things, thereby giving them importance—is another aspect of tacit knowledge, but one that is more personal, multilayered and complex. These tacit elements of our identity recede to the background to enable a focal awareness on more pressing things. To further define the tacit in identity, however, we need to look at whether there is a tacit that is inarticulate or inarticulable in each levels of interaction involved in identity construction and what it looks like. This is the aim of the following section.

Where is the Tacit in the Context of the Levels of Identity?

Because identity is so essential to give us a sense of self, to situate us in relation to others, and to orient us in space and time, we will inevitably have a strong emotional attachment to the identity we embrace, both as an individual and as part of a society. Yet, the complexity of identity we described in the previous chapter means that some formative aspects of identity will inevitably be tacit. Indeed, a great deal remains either inarticulate or inarticulable among the internal dialogue we have with our significant others, the institutionalised values and outlooks which we endorse, our own experiences, and the connections we make between things we find significant.

It is in part complexity and depth which render the tacit in identity inarticulable. Indeed, identity is a multilayered and porous thing where the self is in constant exchange

with significant others, and with the traditions, customs, and institutions embraced and promoted in the groups to which one belongs. It would therefore be impossible to describe, for instance, where the individual level of identity begins and where the societal level of identity ends in their interconnection. Thus, given the caveat that not only is each level of identity porous and interconnected, it is necessary, for the purpose of identifying more clearly the concept of tacit identity, to look at what in each level of identity we can potentially articulate and what is simply inarticulable.

Individual

The individual level of identity takes care of individual attribution of meaning and reflects our individual preferences, unique context and our personality. This level is complex enough that it would be impossible for every constitutive part of it to be reflectively explicit. Individual attribution of meaning connected to personal context—current and historical—will inevitably involve some aspects that are inarticulable and others that are merely inarticulate.

A great deal of the elements behind the decisions we make about our identity, our values, our actions and even the meaning we attribute to things around us may remain beyond our direct experience or our conscious awareness. Polanyi describes subsidiary awareness as "ranging from the subliminal to the fully conscious" (1975, 39): he largely points to the complexity and depth of our subsidiary awareness of the world, but I claim Polanyi's concept can also include the complexity of our own motivations and perceptions. Some parts of our awareness of the world around us can be articulate, yet others cannot because they occur "at levels inaccessible to us through direct experience" (39). Thus, the elements that play into one's choices, and even behind one's meaning-making are

numerous, complex and multilayered; some are unconscious, and thus inarticulable, and some are merely tacit and inarticulate because they are unreflective, in the background, and we fail to pay attention to them, or we take them for granted.

In other words, what is inarticulate in the individual level of identity concerns the unreflective. Yet, whereas the unreflective in the individual level of identity is inarticulate, only that which is beyond consciousness fully inarticulable. The unreflective is potentially easily accessible and only requires us to shift our focus on it. For instance, let us imagine that a significant element of my identity is that of a caregiver. I find rewarding and feel compelled to help others, and as such, I could not conceive of having a career where I cannot help people, which is why I work as a paramedic. The inarticulate in my caregiver identity would be the additional—and numerous—associations between altruism and the positive emotions, which led me to make such a career choice. As an example, one such associations may be that my beloved grandmother, who was highly respected in my family, was deeply altruistic and someone I greatly admired, and I aspired to be like her. Associations such as this are not fundamentally inarticulable, but if we were to list and describe all of the possible events and associations that led me to this choice of career, for instance, their sheer number would make any articulation inevitably impractical in its extensiveness. Rendering the motivation behind my identity would thus be practically inarticulable. What would be fundamentally inarticulable at this level of identity would have to do with my subconscious: the experiences that did not make a conscious and memorable imprint on my identity but that did affect it without my being aware of it. To delve into what such experiences could be and how they might have affected my caregiver identity would be the domain of psychoanalysis, which exceeds the purview of this chapter.

Moreover, while getting into the subconscious connection to my identity might, in theory, be articulable through psychoanalysis, it can certainly be argued that such an account can never be entirely complete and would therefore eschew thorough articulation.

Relational or Significant Others

It is more difficult to point to the inarticulable in the relational level of identity, simply because this level largely challenges and shapes individual identity, and therefore brings forth aspects of our identity we might otherwise overlook or take for granted. In other words, in challenging the tacit in a relational identity, some aspects of our identity that were once unreflective come to the fore. This level of identity also provides us with statements of the order of "you are" or "you ought to be", which are quite explicit because they force us to evaluate whether or not we agree with such statements. Indeed, the level of Significant Others is mostly explicit in that the feedback we receive from a significant person in our lives is rarely tacit, and even less so if we receive different feedback from someone else of significance.

Comments we receive about who we are, are very important: for instance, the feedback we receive from our family may convey that we are not important, that we are stupid, or, conversely, that we are a wonderful person, or too precious to handle difficulties, etc. These "you are" statements will confirm or deny our own view of ourselves and we will have to make a decision to either embrace or reject that interpretation of us. The tacit part of identity remains unnoticed, in the background but will be brought to the fore when challenged or contrasted with another interpretation of our identity. Feedback at this level, coming from someone important to our sense of self, can become tacit when the self internalizes it, even if one consciously rejects it. Thus, internalised, "you are" statements

become "I am" statements and become part of the individual level of identity, either tacitly, explicitly, or both.

In the relational level, none of the feedback we receive—in the form of "you are" statements—is left unnoticed or taken for granted because the nature and the diversity of human interactions will inevitably project a variety of feedback to confirm, or contrast against our individual identity. Consequently, because the level of identity of the significant other is a varied source of feedback—coming from our family, a mentor, or our best friend—it is unlikely to become tacit. If, for example, all members of our immediate family belittle us, we might assume that this is a normal behaviour for others to adopt towards us until the feedback we receive from a best friend, a mentor, or a life partner contrasts with, and thereby challenges, the validity of our family's view of us. Thus, for a part of the relational level to be tacit, it would have to be the kind of feedback that would be echoed and confirmed in all aspects of our context and it is unlikely we would receive such a uniform view of ourselves.

The motivations, behind the significant others' feedback, what leads them to see and interpret us a certain way is largely unknown to us but this is still not part of the tacit at this level of identity because it concerns the individual level of identity of that significant other: their feedback is what this level of identity comprises, and as such, it is explicit. The level of the significant other, in giving us interpretations of who we are, is a level of identity to the extent that we belong to units that link us with our significant others (family members, friends, or AA sponsor, for instance) with whom we share certain traits ('god-fearing folks', fashionistas, recovering alcoholics) and which situate our identity from this perspective. The level of the significant others provides us with their view of who we are:

they provide us with "you are…" statements which are up to us to embrace or reject, and which can also become internalised if put to us often and for long enough. Yet, once internalised, the feedback is no longer part of this level of identity. Internalising significant others' feedback can make that feedback tacit, but then it becomes part of an individual's unreflective part of their individual identity. The message given was still explicit, but once internalised—once we embed it as part of the way we view ourselves—that feedback is no longer about the relational level of identity.

As a result, it would be difficult to find a specific value, practice or trait that could be taken for granted, at this level of identity, to the point of becoming tacit, especially since it is bound to contrast with other people's views, within our significant others, and also in relation with society at large. Indeed, interacting with people outside our circle of significant others would be enough to notice the difference between the feedback received from our meaningful relationships and that of other people, and make them explicit.

It could be argued that if a family or small group of people constituted an insular community that lived in the margins of the larger society, the identity-defining traits that members of that small group would hold would be tacit, and thus no longer noticed at the level of the significant others. However, even living on the margins of society, that small group would be aware that other people outside of their group hold different values, outlooks, have different practices, and so on. For instance, let us assume that members of an Amish community will all share similar values, will hold similar beliefs and have similar practices. The presence of—and the inevitable interactions with—the larger community of gentiles would be enough for the Amish to be explicitly aware of their own principles and of the fact that they are not universally shared. This knowledge does not imply that an

insular society cannot think they are right in their beliefs and that the rest of the world is wrong, but their exposure to difference, and their minority status in the greater society, among a culture of the majority, is enough for them to not take their beliefs, values and identity for granted to the point that they become tacit.

As another example, Fundamentalist and polygamous Mormon communities, such as the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (FLDS), isolate their members—especially their female members—so they have little to no contact with the outside world and thus have no exposure to anything that could challenge the apparent normativity of their beliefs. In such case, however, the community to which one belongs would constitute the societal level of identity, since groups like the FLDS are often all that a member has known and clearly extends beyond the level of significant others. Thus, if the group is isolated enough, the fundamentalist Mormon sect will affect a member's identity from a societal perspective. Yet in this instance, it is only a part of such groups— the most vulnerable members, to be precise—who may be isolated enough from the larger society to never have been exposed to alternative values, practices and group identity.

To sum up, the significant other level of identity is largely explicit, and consequently, most of it is articulable. The inarticulate affecting this level originates at the individual level of identity, that is to say, the feedback given by our significant other is a result of their personal context. Moreover, the possibility for us to internalise the feedback received and thus becoming tacit no longer concerns the level of significant others but rather is connected to the individual level of identity.

Societal level

The inarticulable tacit is largely present in this level of identity. In society, identity

takes shape through institutions that regulate or favours certain behaviours and thereby provide us with clear notions of the good, which makes clear what values and opinions one needs to share with others to identify with a certain group. Societies, however, comprise a wide range of groups—a number of people identifying with similar characteristics and the values associated with them—that can differ in size. Such groups are defined by "we are" claims that require the adoption of certain values or beliefs to have membership. The larger the group of people who share similar identity-defining traits, the more tacit such traits tend to be: those traits are rarely contrasted with other identities which would require them to provide an explanation for their adopting such traits. However, minority groups like the local branch of Alcoholics Anonymous, for instance, are aware the values they promote are not necessarily shared by the wider community. Corsicans are also aware of their particular identity in contrast to that of the greater state to which they belong. Corsican identity, when contrasted to the French identity, is largely explicit and they take pride in distinguishing themselves as a people with its distinct history and culture, although, as part of the French state, they subscribe to foundational French identity traits as well.

The unity of a large community, or society, depends on whether its members share some core elements of the collective identity, which can include beliefs, mores, practices, and myths. Although members will acknowledge and protect the importance of their collective identification as an 'us', the meaning associated with such collectively defining elements will wildly differ for each member of that society and in different contexts and situations. Indeed, the societal level of identity utters a "we are" statement that establishes a condition to membership. However, members will subscribe to the "us" from their own context, with their own personal reasons, articulating their personal meaning-making from

a collective notion. Once again invoking Polanyi's flag example, individuals will attribute personal meaning to symbols or traits that are broadly understood as defining of their collective identity as a whole. Individual meaning-making, therefore, is essential for each member of a society to have a personal connection to a collective identity-defining trait.

As we have established, individual meanings are in large part inarticulable because of the complexity and number of elements that go into individual meaning-making. At the societal level of identity, therefore, the inarticulable nature of collective identity resides essentially in the fact that collective identity must be significant at the individual level, in order to constitute a collective identity. As a result, it would be impossible to articulate the totality of reasons and individual attribution of meaning behind a collective identity trait: not only would the complexity of each individual meaning-making process preclude articulation, but the number and variety of reasons behind the meaning of a collective trait would either make such articulation impossible or reductive to the point of meaninglessness. Keeping with Polanyi's example, reducing the reason behind the collective attachment to the flag to patriotism may be useful for certain purposes, and largely accurate, but when it comes to articulating how this symbol can have meaning—how one experiences patriotism and the other emotions and connections one associates with the flag—such description will inevitably be so personal and diverse that it can only be generally formulated.

The three levels of identity are porous and intertwined: we may, as a member of a group, have a strong emotional bond with a collectively held identity trait, but this attachment will spring from a very personal and unique perspective. In providing us with a position or a perspective with which to apprehend the world, our identity traits are behind

the choices we make, the values we embrace, the practices that define us, not only as individuals, but also as part of a collectivity. Such connections between identity and practices, values, and traditions are multilayered and largely tacit and so impossible to fully articulate, if only because of the combination and interrelation of various aspects of the societal identity level, combined with the other levels of identity and their context, which makes human identity infinitely diverse.

We find the tacit associated with the societal level of identity in the personal motivation behind connecting with certain societal traits but the complexity of the connection between the individual and the societal level of identity makes it impossible to articulate. The tacit aspect of identity is also found in those foundational societal traits that spring from a shared identity and that are taken for granted in a society or that have been rejected wholesale. This part of tacit identity is merely inarticulate. Values, beliefs, and practices constitutive of a shared identity can be largely inarticulate—and therefore somewhat articulable—but the individual meaning-making process attached to them are largely inarticulable, both at the societal level and at the individual level.

Where the Tacit Identity Resides

The tacit identity that is most relevant to the political, and, as a result, to the purpose of this project, is the one which bridges individual and societal identities. Personal identification with certain historical events, commonly shared values, practices, and even with stereotypes at the collective level is essential to frame a shared identity as an 'us.' We need to have established a personal meaning to societal elements constituting our shared identity

in order for them to make sense when combined with the other elements that shape and influence our identity. Personal meaning behind the appropriation of a shared identity will inevitably be different for each person but the act of embracing a shared identity is what strengthens group unity: a "we are" embraced from an "I am" perspective.

As an illustration, the argument for the importance of protecting French language in the province of Quebec is an important stake in provincial and federal elections, especially when addressing issues of education and immigration. Many policies and laws are centered on ensuring that French remains the language predominantly spoken in the province. French language is, in Quebec, an element formative of its collective identity: it is constitutive of what defines its members—their "us". Yet, while it is a collectively shared value and a project of society, the desire to protect French language in Quebec is motivated by different reasons and to various degrees. While one reason to protect it may have to do with a post-colonial discourse and the desire to fight the English threat next door, another may have to do with wanting to preserve a culture that is unique in North America, or the wish to respect and preserve a historical heritage, the importance of a society to have a defining and unifying project, or might even have to do with an emotional and highly personal attachment to the musicality of the language and so on.

Multiculturalism as a defining trait of Canada provides another illustration of embracing a collective identity out of personal meaning. Multiculturalism, as a core national value, is something of which many Canadians are proud and with which they identify. We uphold and promote the myth of the plurality of cultures that provide us with a rich experience of the world in our own backyard. Whereas Canada identifies itself as a multicultural country, individual Canadians who share this identification have their own

motivations to embrace multiculturalism, whether it would be as a necessary solution to solve our low birth rate, as an illustration of the country's stance on equality, or to check the country's white privilege and thereby improving the state's relation with its minorities, etc.

It is important to note that while we can say "we are" statements, along with the other members of our society, it does not mean that we unanimously subscribe to all values for which what we consider as "us" stands, as the plurality of opinions present in democratic societies demonstrates. As part of an "us" we embrace some foundational, or identity-defining elements of our society, but not all elements of a shared identity are identity-defining: we may embrace some and reject others. Hence, it is not necessarily the embracing of all identity-defining traits that makes one a part of the "we" but it is rather the adoption of a society's common 'language' to articulate our adoption or rejection of certain traits. Our taking position on certain identity-defining traits of our society must take place in a language that must be intelligible to the rest of the group. Case in point: a white supremacist group active in a liberal democracy will communicate its message by manoeuvering within society's laws regarding, free speech, even if its message goes counter to the values championed by that liberal society.

What does the Presence of the Tacit Imply for Identity?

The presence of the tacit in identity shapes the way we see the world, in the same way as does the interaction of the three levels of identity. Through the tacit, we can focus on more important things by taking other things for granted or by having a peripheral awareness of

them. However, the danger of having such subsidiary awareness of identity, especially of societal identity, is that it can restrict us in our way of seeing the world. Indeed, when most members of a society share the same customs, values, or beliefs, they are often accompanied by an assumption of universality, that is to say, such identity-defining elements "do not look to us like values we have adopted, but like the immediately obvious character of reality" (Russon 1995, 515). This phenomenon is akin to Heidegger's enframing in that we mutually confirm each other in our view of ourselves and of the world and, consequently, we limit the possibilities of what we can conceive as legitimate. Indeed, Russon suggests that living in a community that never challenges our assumptions makes us more complacent in assuming the truth of our perception of reality, and less curious about exploring possible alternative interpretations. Living with parts of our identity that become so ubiquitous that we cease to notice them as particular to our context, we come to expect that all other rational beings will think as we do and share the values we hold, and we are surprised when they do not.

The pervasiveness of certain shared values and customs are such that we do not notice them or take them for granted unless they are challenged, most often by encounters with otherness. Within our borders, this encounter translates as one between a majority and a minority culture. As a result, the majority culture's normative assumption toward its own perspective means that any challenge to it via a minority 'other' will be dismissed on the grounds that any differing perception of what it assumes is the truth can only be erroneous. Indeed, seeing a different set of values and customs in other societies often are, to a majority culture, a sign that such people are backward or in need of enlightenment. The ways such taken for granted identities transpire in a group's values, myths, and institutions

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are largely what is tacit and inarticulate. Yet, in combination with the normative assumption tacked onto a society's ubiquitous identity-defining traits, the emotions and the meanings connected with such traits intensify the reluctance to challenge them. Keeping in mind the role of identity as a way to orient us in the world, of defining what is "sameness" and "otherness", and of giving us a sense of belonging, such a grounding source will inevitably trigger a strong emotional attachment on the part of the members of that society. And as our discussion of Polanyi and meaning demonstrated, individual meaning-making is central to the adoption of a collective identity. Even when challenged, a broadly shared identity-defining trait will hold personal meaning. If a value, practice or belief is explicit, the arguments to defend it will often refer to the broad meaning that it holds for members who share its importance. If that value or identity trait is tacit because it is omnipresent in a society, the argument to defend it when challenged will likely come from an assumption of universality. But there is another kind of tacit identity that occurs when an identity-defining trait that once was pervasive in society no longer represents that society and is henceforth explicitly delegitimated.

If an identity, as a result of a societal change, is no longer understood as being constitutive of a group's identity—such as the rejection of the Catholic Church's influence in Quebec, or the decision in India to get rid of the caste system in state institutions—the group—via its institutions and its leaders—will reflect the changes occurring in that society and explicitly reject an identity that no longer defines it. It is, however, inevitable that some reactions or views coming from a society will be rooted in the remaining tacit influence of a rejected identity. The emotional connection to the rejected identity and the values, traditions and practices it carried may clash with the new identity, but that contrast will

remain largely unreflective. Through societal changes, some identity-defining traits, as they become problematic, become explicit and eventually challenged. Replacing an identity trait is a process that is explicit and reflects the changes taking place in a society. However, the replacement of a rejected identity is not a simple matter of identifying with a trait and rejecting another. As we've established in the previous chapter, all levels of identity become involved in constructing a person's identity and their influence cannot be exhaustively described because a great deal of those interactions and meaning-making reflect a tacit and unreflective process. The meaning attached to a rejected identity made this aspect of identity important in one's self-concept, and thus cannot disappear overnight, nor can new meaningful connections to the new identity spring up as quickly. In other words, replacing an identity-defining trait in a given society is possible, but that society must be mindful of the influence coming from the tacit remains of the rejected identity, which will still contribute to situate the group and the self in the world.

The societal level of identity, therefore, has a tacit aspect, on the one hand, because of the traits held, promoted, and valued by the culture of the majority, which become ubiquitous to the point of being overlooked. On the other hand, the tacit in the societal level of identity can also come from the values, practices, and traditions that were once connected to a collective identity trait, which is no longer considered reflective of a society. The rejected identity and its shaping of our world view will remain as a tacit influence on other aspects of our identity and on our choices. The influence coming from the tacit identity, however, remains overlooked and its effects misunderstood. Both tacit, collectively held identities—the omnipresent and the rejected identities—are merely inarticulate because they are either too pervasive to be noticed, or they are rooted in a

people's assumptions of their universality. By being merely inarticulate, however, suggests that it is potentially possible to clearly point to such identities.

Yet, aspects of group identity that were once ubiquitous but that the group now openly rejects are difficult to notice because they have influenced identity, values and practices covertly. It is therefore difficult to identify how a now rejected but once pervasive, trait affects the "us": not only the trait's influence on identity was difficult to see when it was taken for granted, but once rejected, if it is brought to the fore, it is assumed there are no possible effects on identity since its rejection should mean that it no longer shapes our view of the world.

The cognitive dissonance between the leftover tacit influence of a rejected identity and the denial of such influence from the perspective of the replacing identity often remains unnoticed in a largely homogeneous society. Dissonance is not noticed when everyone acts and thinks similarly: we delude ourselves in thinking that our values, even if connected to a rejected identity, do not need a re-evaluation. In the case of Quebec society—which we will discuss in more detail in Chapter 4—the religious past was tossed over a very short period, but its influence remained. Now, being confronted with cultural, and especially religious differences, the Quebec population is faced with its own cognitive dissonance regarding its relationship with religion. Yet, since the old religious heritage is hidden behind a normative assumption in the form of secularism, the possibility of fully acknowledging such dissonance without help is unlikely.

Accounting for the tacit in our identity outlines a part of our identity that is deeply connected to its context, that constitutes a bridge between the individual and the societal contributions to our identity-making process, and that is difficult to point out. Majority

cultures are most likely to have some tacit aspects to their identity because of their homogeneous and universalist standpoint, which leads their members to take some identity-defining traits for granted, whether they are uniformly embraced, or the rejection of some identity trait is taken as given and consequently believed to be unproblematic.

This chapter defined the tacit as the familiar: it is through such familiarity in our collective identity that we view the world. In tacit identity the familiar takes the form of a homogeneous culture that largely shares similar identity-defining traits among its members. In contrast, we have seen that the unknown and the unexpected tend to bring the tacit to the fore. With the case of tacit identity, the unfamiliar—in other words, the Other—could be what may lead to making explicit a tacit identity. However, in a culture of the majority where the familiar is associated with normality because it has rarely been challenged, the familiar is assumed to be universal. Minority cultures rarely succeed in bringing forth and, by the same occasion, putting to question the tacit identity of majority cultures. Indeed, referring to cultures of the majority such as the Western liberal—and largely Christian-influenced—cultures of Europe and North America, the presumption of the universality of their values—whether or not it is attributable to their colonial past and their Western-centricity—means that challenges brought by minority cultures will be received from a condescending standpoint by confirming themselves in the familiar. The strength of the normative assumption in majority cultures tends to mitigate the challenging forth of the tacit identity that a contrast with the Other could occasion.

The collective tacit identity is something into which peoples are socialised and rarely question, unless they no longer think it represents them, or unless they are confronted to a contrasting Other. Often, because a culture never had to think about things being

otherwise, they fall back on the assumption that their culture is not parochial but universal. This assumption and refusal to engage with difference is not only detrimental to any approach to otherness, but it is also detrimental to any possible dialogue across cultures. In cultures of the majority, tacit identity has political implications that can be associated with cultural, religious, or ethnic tensions and that are too often labeled a clash of civilizations.

In the present chapter, we have seen that the personal meaning behind an identity is inarticulable because, among other reasons, its description eludes a traditional use of language. To put it to question, then, this tacit connection to a collective identity would have to be brought to the foreground in a way that challenges the assumption of universality in those who collectively share that tacit identity, all this while avoiding the restriction of the possible range of personal meaning. What reveals itself as a necessity, therefore, is the bringing forth of the tacit and personal meanings connected to the identity of the majority, that is to say, the explanation an individual would give for holding a certain trait as collectively and personally identity-defining. To bring forth the tacit, in this case, would require a way to put the familiar identity of the majority culture under an unfamiliar lens, thereby forcing members of a majority culture to question what has until then been taken for granted. At the same time, however, such disclosing would require an open-ended way to articulate personal meaning that would connect it to a collective identity. Art, as what Taylor terms "subtler languages," could provide a way to articulate the tacit and personal meaning without imposing an interpretation on the articulation.

Chapter 3—Language and Art: Communicating the Tacit

The previous chapter concluded by pointing to the tacit identity that most affects the political and determined that it stands at the intersection between individual and societal identity. This identity is composed of a part that is merely inarticulate and one that is inarticulable: the collectively held tacit identity can be explicitly formulated, but the intimate and individual connections to these shared tacit identities are not explicitly articulable, given that they are varied, complex and largely unreflective. Moreover, we have established that the private meanings behind a shared identity (whether that identity is tacit or explicit) compose the cement behind the collective attachment to an identity. This connection between personal and shared identity explains why an identity will not only be collectively important to define a society, it will also orient a person in the world. We have also seen that for this reason, a society, through its members, its leaders, and its institutions, may explicitly decide that an aspect of its identity no longer defines it, but individual meanings behind that identity may tacitly remain. Finally, we have argued that a culture of the majority can hold tacit identities because, as majority, its population holds an unchallenged assumption that it represents a normative and universal position.

An important political implication in holding an unreflective identity is that it may lead to actions or decisions—from individual people, or from a society's leaders or institutions—that may clash with an explicit identity. Given that tacit identities are not noticed—either because of an assumption of universality, or because of its collective rejection—the contradictions that arise within a society as a result of contradicting identities may be explained away in a cognitively dissonant manner. For instance, as we will see in more details in Chapter 4, denying the lasting influence of a racial past and claiming postracism, the United States contradict the values of freedom and liberty, with

which they identify, with the systemic racism prevalent in society. Americans will hide a racialized discourse by replacing "black" for "poor," for instance, preferring to appear to discriminate on the basis of class than on the basis of race (Alegria, 2014). With contradictions of this kind come tensions that the majority culture, by lacking awareness of the underlying motivations behind certain of its decisions, is not equipped to address. Unfortunately, for a culture of the majority, interacting with minority cultures only confirms the majority's assumption that it reflects a universal standpoint. Consequently, the unease from such contradicting identities within one group shuts down any possibility to initiate dialogue and to solve tensions with the perceived Other.

Our emotional connections to a shared identity tends to become more difficult to change when that identity becomes tacit: we take for granted the normality of our worldview or the unequivocal nature of our choices as a group. Assumptions of universalism hinder any kind of reconciliation between a group's identities that are in tension. It would therefore be necessary to put the focus on the cognitive dissonance that contradictions between tacit and explicit identities cause. Yet, how can the individual meaning behind a group identity that is collectively taken for granted be brought forth to provoke its questioning? How can people become aware of their attachment to an identity and how can they establish the meaning connected to it in their own words, without being imposed an interpretation that is not theirs? Articulating the tacit identity by pointing at, and challenging its parochial aspect, or the fact that it has not been entirely rejected may enable a re-evaluation of our personal attachment to it.

So, how do we call attention to the personal meanings behind collective identities? Meaning behind an identity does not come up as an issue as long as the identity itself is not

problematic. We have already established that the tacit aspect of identity that interests us is so either because it is no longer noticed or has been somehow rejected. Yet, for individual meaning to become an issue, the tacit identity needs to be made to stand out, that is to say, what we take for granted must be rendered unfamiliar. I hold that if the tacit collective identity is challenged, the reasons and meanings connected to the identity may be more easily challenged.

Still, while one can point at the tacit collective identity, thereby making it explicit, the meaning behind it is not as easily articulable. Thus, there needs to be another approach that can reveal meaning without imposing a specific interpretation to it. As the inarticulable tacit is so because it is largely non-verbal, unreflective, and open-ended in its possible articulations, we could advance that a non-verbal language could allow the open-endedness necessary for such an articulation. For instance, Heidegger considered creative action to be the channel through which what has been brought forth can emerge (1977, 185). Art as creation, therefore, may contribute to the revealing of the tacit by interpreting our world in unique ways. An open-ended language such as art, in its ability to make the familiar unfamiliar in a way that transcends words, could be an important tool to highlight the meaning-making processes connected to those rejected or taken-for-granted tacit identities. Indeed, we could describe art as a "common language for the common content of our self-understanding" (Gadamer 1986, 4) which could be understood on the basis of our own experience and the conclusions to which it led us. I claim that such open-ended or indirect languages have important insights to give us about meaning and can open the way to begin an articulation of its tacit aspects. A language that requires interpretations could facilitate the articulation of the personal meanings associated with a collective tacit identity. Open-

ended languages require us to get involved in their interpretation, and they also tend to unfamiliarize the familiar.

Open-ended Language

Charles Taylor frames the nature of language in a modern debate that pits two broad theories; a "designative-instrumental" and a "constitutive-expressive" understanding of the nature and role of language (2016, 4). Briefly put, the designative theory conceives of language as an instrument to shape and control our world. It concerns the words themselves and the things they designate, from the perspective of the subject who names those things. In contrast, the constitutive theory of language concerns the space between words, what the words imply and the world they constitute, which makes language open to interpretation (12).

Michael Polanyi also refers to the classical understanding of language—to designate or name things—as its most elementary use. It has been broadly assumed that the repeated use of a word in the presence of a thing is enough for us to identify the thing with the word (1975, 69). In addition, by using words like 'elephant', 'cloud', 'blue' or 'Jimmy', we evoke an image that corresponds to what we meant to communicate. While words like 'cloud' can describe different embodiments of the word—a cloud can be big or small, dark and grey or white and fluffy—they all correspond to the idea 'cloud'. Adding more words to name different types of clouds—'stratocumulus', 'cirrus' or 'altostratus'— increases the precision of our utterances and decreases the likelihood of misunderstandings. For instance, describing the color of a car as 'navy blue' or 'powder blue' gives a much

more precise picture than merely describing it as 'blue'. This type of language is largely found in what Michael Polanyi describes as 'statements of fact' (1958, 77). With utterances like statements of fact, designative language is appropriate. For instance, 'the sky is blue', 'two plus two equals four' or 'the earth orbits the sun' are expressions that are clearly made and understood with this sort of language.

Polanyi, however, remarks that, even with a designative use of language, we must not overlook that words have meaning and as such, are more than a mere association between words and objects (1975, 69). He gives the example of Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square, which is interesting as a monument, but the utterance "Nelson's Column" itself is not interesting except in that it indicates the column. The words in fact withdraw from our focus, just like the pointing finger we discussed in the previous chapter, to direct our attention to something else, that is, the column. In this case, then, the association between word and object is not sufficient to explain our relation to language (69).

Taylor, in addressing the distinction between designative and constitutive theories of language, adds to Polanyi's critique that there is a context implied in our associations between words and objects, given that the things we name all have a background. The background is that which gives things significance in our world (Taylor 2016, 16). To keep with the same example, Nelson's Column is named after Admiral Horatio Nelson, who died in a significant battle against Napoleon and its allies who were eventually defeated, thus ending Napoleon's ambitions to invade England. The column is erected in Trafalgar Square, which is the name of the battle in which Admiral Nelson died, and symbolises a man's courage and noble death in a victorious battle against the French. All that is embodied in the monument, and the words "Nelson's Column" are meaningful because of

all the contextual meaning that is implied in the name. The background that Taylor refers to would be England's history, its traditions, values, myths, and customs, which are tacitly implied and understood when we look at the column. Taylor goes further, however, arguing that "individual words can only be words within the context of an articulated language" (2016, 18), that is to say, language is holistic and "our grasp of any single word is always situated within our grasp of the language as a whole, and the multiple rules and connections that define it" (21). We therefore work from a context that makes our words coherent, and the connections we make between words and things inevitably spring from and reflect a certain perspective and interpretation which makes our use of language value-laden. The context of our use of language is based on some view of the world and, by using that language and seeing it as adequate, we confirm this outlook.

In his own discussion of language and discourse in *A Secular Age*, Taylor pointed out how our use of language tends to be vulnerable to the values and preferences of a society. Language reflects the state of a society through its use and Taylor's claim is that some words and concepts can become taboo or fall out of favour given a particular context. He argues that a public religious discourse in a secular society could not be considered legitimate and would rather be perceived as reactionary or backward (Taylor 2007, 14). Taylor points to the value-laden character of language as something that can restrict the range of possible experiences with certain discourses. Indeed, when certain discourses fall out of favour, the thoughts that can legitimately be defended in society become more limited. The problem is what words denote in certain contexts. If a society rejects religious discourse, as Taylor argues it does, then certain explanations of meaning and values will not be acceptable in the public sphere but may still be acceptable privately: public discourse

reflects what a society accepts and rejects as a collective.

We see with Taylor and Polanyi that even the most basic of utterances emerge from a context that makes it intelligible to others and that gives it meaning. A word never stands as a mere designation; it stands for a world of assumptions, connections and meanings that are tacitly present in the word. Thus there is a great deal in our use of language that is never articulated but that is nonetheless communicated. A great deal of our communications are tacit, not only because of the context that gives words their meaning, but also because language itself needs to comply with the law of Poverty and Grammar. As Polanyi points out, "a language must be poor enough to allow the same words to be used a sufficient number of times" (1958, 78) and those words must be identifiable so that they can be repeated consistently:

> A fixed vocabulary of sufficient poverty must therefore be used within some fixed modes of combination, which always have the same meaning. Only grammatically ordered word clusters can say with a limited vocabulary the immense variety of things that are apposite to the range of known experience (79).

Language relies on certain combinations of words in order to articulate meaning, although the meaning itself is always more than what the words articulate. Thus, anything that language cannot cover directly, as with statements of fact, relies on the tacit and requires interpretation.

To 'statements of fact', Polanyi adds two more types of speech made possible by language but that rely on a greater demand for interpretation and imagination: 'expressions of feeling' and 'appeals to other persons' (1958, 77). A designative use of language would be inadequate to make such heartfelt utterances. For instance, using the words 'sad' or 'Joyful' may give a sense of the emotion one is talking about, but this description remains

vague because one's depth of emotions is rarely contained in one word. Unlike using more specific or technical language to describe types of clouds, using a specific word to describe every possible emotion would be unmanageable. Emotions are difficult to articulate precisely because not enough words exist to describe every nuances. As a result, language can only approximate what we mean to say, especially with regards to utterances that deal with expressing feelings or appeals to other persons, and thus relies heavily on the tacit. So it is in the nature of language that there are elements of our communications that remain inarticulate. As Polanyi notes:

> [s]peaking and writing is an ever renewed struggle to be both apposite and intelligible and every word that is finally uttered is a confession of our incapacity to do better; but each time we have finished saying something and let it stand, we tacitly imply also that this says what we mean and should mean it therefore also to the listener or reader" (1962, 207).

Even in our everyday use of language, we might feel that our thoughts are limited by our words and that when we speak we provide the best approximation possible of what we are trying to say. This is why our words and meaning might be misinterpreted by our listeners. But it is also how we can attribute meaning to another person's utterances because a language that uses the tacit leaves room for a personal connection with another person's utterance. Words take on the role of subsidiaries for the meaning implied, which means that not only does a person who speak provide us with their best approximation of what they mean, it also means that the audience will also be able to construct an approximation of the intended meaning from the words spoken.

Our use of language reflects our context and its connected value-judgments: it translates emotions and intent, and consequently, most of our communications comprise a large part that remains tacit. Language and the tacit cohabit, according to Polanyi, when

the latter becomes subsidiary: that is to say, when words withdraw from our attention to let their meaning come forth. Thus, when we speak, it is not language itself that is the object of our attention, it is rather the meaning that words come to have when grouped in specific combinations. In speech, the focus is not on the words themselves but rather on the ideas communicated; we focus on the overall concepts that the combination of words and sentences reveal to us (Polanyi 1975, 70). The words themselves are not of much interest to us beyond appropriately articulating a thought; they serve their function by bearing on something else, which makes them of interest to us in that role. We only have to repeat a word numerous times, focussing on its sound, for that word to cease to make sense and to merely become a series of incoherent sounds without meaning (1975, 40).

A designative use of language restricts the diversity of ideas that words can convey, which is why a more creative language relying on interpretation and imagination is necessary to express the depth and richness of our thoughts. Symbols, similes and metaphors come in to broaden what can be communicated by providing a focus beyond the meaning of the words used. With symbols, for instance, not only do the words withdraw from our focus, but the symbol itself becomes a subsidiary to draw attention to the image it invokes. Polanyi's flag example tells us that:

> the nation's existence, our diffuse and boundless memories of it and of our life in it, become embodied in the flag—become part of it. […] Flags and tombstones *denote* a country or a great man but they do not bear upon them as words bear upon their objects; they rather *stand* for such interesting objects, which is to say they *symbolize* them (1975, 72).

We are therefore required to make connections between symbols and what they stand for, but we also make a connection with what they represent *to us*. Polanyi tells us symbolizations are self-giving in that they are established by both "an integration of

subsidiary clues directed *from* the self to a focal object", and by "surrendering the diffuse memories and experiences of the self into this object, thus giving them a visible embodiment" (1975, 75). The process of reading a symbol, therefore, introduces a further involvement from the viewer, namely interpretation in our attribution of meaning.

As with symbols, similes and metaphors stand for something else that require our involvement to give it meaning. In a metaphor, a few words can evoke images and emotions and a combination of metaphors can reveal a great source of meaning. Once again, this use of language requires a good deal of involvement. Indeed, more effort is involved in reading a symbol or interpreting a metaphor than with merely linking a word to its meaning. As the discussion of poetry in the previous chapter demonstrated, poems must be "heard by the imagination" (Polanyi 1975, 80).

Essentially, the more illustrative and open-ended a language is to describe an experience, the more effective it will be to touch a cord with people. Indeed, "in order to describe experience more fully, language must be less precise. But greater imprecision brings more effectively into play the powers of inarticulate judgment required to resolve the ensuing determinacy of speech" (Polanyi 1962, 86). In this case, language builds a context that opens a space of meaning which individuals fill up with their own experiences. Emotion and the tacit can be hinted at in the silent space between words. Our interpretation of an utterance, in turn, needs the inarticulate—or silence—in language for us to experience it through our own meaning-making process.

The possibility of free play between interpretation and understanding of an utterance requires enough leeway to dwell in the inarticulate. It is in the space around the articulate, in what cannot be described adequately, that is to say, it is in the tacit, that the

meaning of works of art like poetry resides. For instance, to specify all the possible connections between two elements of a metaphor would empty it of its meaning, hence, there needs to be room for the tacit without trying to articulate it (Polanyi 1975, 82). The more complex our thoughts and ideas, the more diffuse the language to express it must be: it is in the silence of language that most things are communicated. The tacit, then, as something that is difficult and sometimes impossible to articulate, has more room to reveal itself with a use of language that allows for meaning-making and personal interpretations. A language that is essentially using the tacit and requires interpretation and engagement from the audience is the broad variety of artistic languages.

Thus, a language that is less precise and that, consequently, requires a larger effort of our imagination, can be compared to an artistic language. In a similar fashion, Gadamer defines language as something that involves and requires some effort of the imagination in the audience, especially languages of artistic expression such as poetry, with its use of metaphors, similes and symbols. Experiencing such language, making all those connections, and including our own past experiences in its meaning constitute part of what Gadamer calls "play".

"Play" uses the experience of a theatre performance to indicate what needs to take place in the onlooker in order to be moved by the theatrical experience. Gadamer uses the idea of a "play-along with", which makes the onlooker more than a passive viewer: one is, in a sense, participating in a communicative activity (1986, 23). Indeed, in order to experience language in the form of poetry or plays, we are required to use our imagination to grasp the metaphors, the symbols and meanings brought forth in the work. However, we get involved in the work of art in a way that immerses us in it, without mistaking it for

reality. This way, we are able to be moved by a murder on stage: we can learn from it and make connections with similar themes in reality, but we are never carried away by the play to the point that we believe an actual murder took place on stage. Thus, by "playing-along", we participate in the work of art's existence by accepting the premises that makes the work meaningful, we let ourselves be moved, works of art can alter our view of the world, but we retain our capacity to distinguish between fiction and reality (Polanyi 1975, 83). In playing along, we acknowledge the rules involved in the making and the experiencing of the work of art, and we embrace the "free play between the faculties of imagination and conceptual understanding" that take place in our experiencing of the work (Gadamer 1986, 29).

Yet, whatever meaningful experience we live through the work of art, Gadamer tells us that, not only is it unique to us, it is also an experience that cannot exist for us or speak to us in any other way (1986, 36). A work of art is not limited to the representations it depicts. That is to say, art calls us to dwell upon the work of art and listen to what it has to tell us. Being receptive to art is to simultaneously experience the particular and the universal. For instance, all those who look upon Caravaggio's *Sacrifice of Isaac* will see the artist's dramatic depiction of the story from the Old Testament's Book of Genesis. Yet, whether one will be moved by the painting, what one will find moving and in what way, will be unique to each viewer and may be partly inarticulate. Still, aside from being moved in a uniquely personal way, "in any encounter with art, it is not the particular, but rather the totality of the experienceable world, man's ontological place in it and above all his finitude before that which transcends him, that is brought to experience" (Gadamer 1986, 32). Art by its nature will always challenge ways to view the world, thus constantly adding

to the ways our world can appear to us. Our experience of art presents us with unique

portrayals of the world, and confronts us with how we belong to it: the meaning art has for

us is thus based on our establishment of personal connections, thereby making the universal

personally significant. "But it does not mean that the indeterminate anticipation of sense

that makes a work significant for us can ever be fulfilled so completely that we could

appropriate it for knowledge and understanding in all its meaning" (Gadamer 1986, 33).

Art brings us avenues to understand and apprehend the world that may have been

inaccessible to us until then, but it does not mean that this added experience totals the

possible ways to see the world.

To sum up, the use of a language that does not allow for personal interpretation is

not adequate to articulate what is tacit. However, a language that can have some latitude of

interpretation would be better suited to bring forth the tacit, and more specifically, the tacit

elements of a group identity. Indeed, just as describing all the connections behind a

metaphor would rob it of its meaning, an attempt to describe the tacit motivations behind

an aspect of our identity would result in something just as meaningless. Any articulation

of the tacit through language would therefore require a language that could let the tacit be

as diverse in its attribution of meaning, which means it would have to be a language that

itself embraces the tacit such as poetry, plays, perhaps even fiction, and other performances

that involve language. The key characteristic of language, then, would be its open-

endedness, that is to say its own use of the tacit, which allows for various interpretations.

Art, while it can be a tool to mediate the world for us, cannot provide a finite and

complete articulation of the world because it is open for interpretation and largely works

in the inarticulate and tacit. Hence, in instances where we need to be precise with certain

claims where language clarity and unequivocal utterances are necessary, such as in the public sphere, the artistic language would not be adequate.

Play, Symbol, and Festival

Open-ended languages provide a space for our own interpretation where we can attribute meaning to things in a very personal way. We have established that this is especially true of works of art and of the very personal way they tend to speak to us. But art also has the ability to reveal an open place in which everything is other than usual. This is Heidegger's view of the work of art. Unlike Gadamer who focuses on a personal experience of art, Heidegger is more interested in the ability of art to change an entire group of people's outlook on reality.

Our experience and our interpretation of art may reveal the world to us in a very different and altogether new way. Here lies the power of art for Heidegger: to clear a space where we can encounter our world in a way that was never shown to us before (2008, 195). Experiencing art, therefore, forces us out of our preconceptions, which we would otherwise tend to reproduce because of our assumption of objectivity (Armstrong 1983, 343).

We have demonstrated in the chapter (on the tacit) that we tend to be blind to other ways of seeing the world when we are confident that our view is truthful and universal. Yet, Heidegger answers us that there is no such true or universal way of perceiving the world, because "truth does not exist in itself beforehand, somewhere among the stars, only subsequently to descend elsewhere among beings" (2008, 186). He explains how we mistake truth for our perspective, but ours is the perspective of one that is embedded in the

world. Our embeddedness reveals the world to us in a certain way, and, consequently, we assume our outlook is reality, and it cannot be otherwise. This assumption is at the origin of the concealing of the world, according to Heidegger: as we establish our perspective as reality, it distracts us from the interplay between the articulate and the inarticulate—or what Heidegger terms as clearing and concealing taking place in the world. Art, then, being that interplay and opposition, enables us to glimpse that clearing (2008, 197).

If we allow Heidegger's proposition that our view of the world is merely part of a totality of being, making our worldview only one of a myriad of 'truths', then we can say that it is those alternative views that art discloses for us. Showing us a different perspective, art can put in question our assumption of the universality and the veracity of our interpretation of the world. Through such challenging, we would see that which we've taken for granted in a new light, and become open to a new disclosing of the world. By making the familiar unfamiliar—by taking what is tacit, taken for granted, or in the background and making it articulate or explicit—we could conceive that art, as an open-ended language, could bring forth the tacit. Art, therefore, may be helpful, not only to challenge our assumptions, but also to provide tools to become aware of, and to articulate the personal meaning we've each attributed to certain identity-defining traits of our society.

Art's disclosing power

Referring back to Heidegger's enframing—or the mistake of being caught in one perspective and assuming it is truth, thereby denying the possibility of there being alternative ways to see the world—we can compare to it the assumption of Western superiority, which has justified an infantilizing approach to non-Western countries, from

colonialism and orientalism to interventionism, proxy wars, and "democratization." As embedded beings, "our preliminary sense of the whole gives us a particular set of expectations that then direct our attention and that the subsequent explication of details checks, modifies, and fills in. To project a hypothesis is to anticipate a possible future" (Armstrong 1983, 344). Being enframed in a certain set of assumptions, we assume that our perspective of the world is truth, and we experience confirmation bias by explaining our world in terms of what we assume is reality. Yet, this picture of the whole is also how we can experience surprise: by mistakenly expecting something that does not occur, or by experiencing something that was not expected (Armstrong 1983, 342) (Heidegger 1962, §353-4). Thus, Heidegger, using Hodlerlin's lines, tells us that in the danger lies the saving power (1977, 28), that is to say, if we can adopt a view of the world that we see as reality, we can just as well adopt another view if we see it as truth. It can be in our power to make that which we take for granted strange again. Indeed, with a different sense of our world, we could have different sets of expectations and art, in its ability to render the familiar strange, could provide this different outlook.

Gadamer associates art with play in art's ability to take us along to experience its message. He also associates with art the character of the festive, which is an aspect of art that could be helpful to make our world unfamiliar. Indeed, festival marks a special time, a break from the everyday and the familiar routine. It exists aside from the regular passing of time, as though it opened us up to a sacred time, a moment where profane time stood at a standstill. During a festival we encounter familiar places brightly decorated and filled with people and music. The streets are closed to traffic, stages are installed in public squares for various performances, people are occupying the space in ways they would

never do normally: dancing, cheering, sitting on stairways, along a curb, or in the grass to rest their feet. A festival enables us to experience a familiar space in a new way, discovering it anew (Gadamer 1986, 40-41). We cannot truly see something when it ceases to stand out to us and recedes into the background as something too familiar to notice. In framing the ordinary in an extraordinary way, art, like festivals, can help us notice the enframing on which we rely because "[t]ruth is never gathered from things at hand, never from the ordinary" (Heidegger 1977, 196).

Truth, for Heidegger, is the worldling of the world[24], which reminds us that our truth is merely one among an infinite collection of possible "truths." He tells us that there is a worlding, a happening of truth, for instance, in Van Gogh's painting of the peasant shoes (Heidegger 1977, 161). However, "[t]his does not mean that something at hand is correctly portrayed, but rather that in the revelation of the equipmental being of the shoes beings as a whole—world and earth in their counterplay—attain to unconcealment" (Heidegger 1977, 181). Heidegger's discussion of Van Gogh's peasant shoes explains that the artist's choice to represent an ordinary piece of equipment with paint, on a canvas, against a plain background, forces us to look at that piece of equipment not as a ready-to-hand—which we barely notice unless it can no longer fulfill its function—but as the embodiment of a whole world and way of life that is unnoticed when we look at the equipment that are the peasant shoes. "The more simply and essentially the shoes are

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[24] "The world is the self-opening openness of the broad paths of the simple and essential decisions in the destiny of a historical people. The earth is the spontaneous forthcoming of that which is continually self-secluding and to that extent sheltering and concealing" (Heidegger 1977, 174). In other words, earth concerns human interpretations of reality, which are disclosed through culture, traditions and the physical manifestations of those interpretations. World, on the other hand constitutes the infinity of ways reality can be understood and interpreted, which will inevitably withdraw from our grasp at any attempt to articulate it. Thus, the movement of disclosing and concealing is the worldling of the world.

engrossed in their essence, the more directly and engagingly do all beings attain a greater degree of being along with them. That is how self-concealing Being is cleared" (Heidegger 2008, 181). In having a deeper experience of the shoes through art, Heidegger claims that we will, in turn, have a richer view of the world. The endless movement that simultaneously conceals and discloses enables us to see the world that inhabits the peasant shoes, while it conceals for a moment their equipmental quality, which they still hold, but which withdraws to let the disclosing of the shoes' world happen. The back and forth occurring in the work of art's revealing and concealing of the world points to something tacit in an artefact, a culture, or a people; something that we can grasp in experiencing it, but that we are incapable to fully articulate (for instance, Heidegger's description of the peasant shoes is incomplete and uses an open language which does not provide a final description but remains vague enough for the reader to 'fill-in the blanks'). We see that art opens up our experience of the world with a new truth, but, as this truth is not something that can be fully articulated in the first place, it still remains concealed, and yet it is revealed in our experience of it.

Through art, then, ordinary shoes can become precious and special: it is art's power to represent the familiar anew, disclosing it in a way that was concealed to us until then. Letting art speak to us, we will experience something that will be unique to each of us. Whereas being open to a work of art necessitates being receptive to the truth happening in the work, we must also be accepting of our own experience of the work, which enables us to see meaning in it and lets it speak to us. Indeed, "in order to find something beautiful, we must let what encounters us purely as it is in itself, come before us in its own stature and worth […] we must release what encounters us as such to its way to be; we must allow

and grant it what belongs to it and what it brings to us" (Heidegger 1979, 109). Thus, art is not simply a thing that holds a message disconnected from us and the rest of the world: rather, art, being the opposing movement of revealing and concealing, is the embodiment of its inherent connection to the world and to us, as part of this world.

The creation of a work of art involves something that is unique and marks the beginning of something new. As a beginning, art "always contains the undisclosed abundance of the awesome, which means that it also contains strife with the familiar and ordinary" (Heidegger 1977, 201). In other words, art, in addition to challenging us with the new—or the awesome—also puts into question what we take for granted. Seeing art as a source of the new and challenging, we can compare our experience of art, and the role of the artist in generating such newness, to our experience of Hannah Arendt's notion of natality.

Arendt claims that action embodies natality, the inherent potential of humankind to generate something entirely new (1958, 9). For instance, the speech delivered by the political actor has the potential to be radically new and world-changing. Such latent creativity and radical newness has its origin in the unique event that is every human's birth because no two persons in the world are born into identical circumstances and context. The singularity of our coming into existence consequently makes each of us potentially capable of creating something without precedent and with the potential to change our human condition forever. Arendt holds that natality, however, is best expressed via political actions, although in the last chapter of *The Human Condition* she lists, along the discovery of the Americas and the Reformation, the invention of the telescope as world-changing events that have forever altered the way we understand our world and ourselves (258). For

Arendt, therefore, actions in the public sphere, especially political actions, are capable of tapping into the language we all share and, from the unique agency of the actor, can create something new and world-changing.

Art similarly draws on a common language and renders it unfamiliar by showing us a new perspective. Yet, can we compare the impact on our understanding of the world and ourselves that an event like the discovery of the Americas or Marcel Duchamp's 1917 *Fountain*[25] can have? We can claim that the realisation that our world was much larger than we ever conceived possible had much more repercussions than the final nail in the coffin of the representative role of art on the world. However, being faced with an unfamiliar way to represent a familiar reality both events challenged our conception of the world in a way that forever altered our reality. In both instances, we saw the world in a way that we could not un-see.

Art's Interpretive Power

The purpose of art as Heidegger or Gadamer see it, is not to merely reproduce the world as we perceive it—what Plato would call *mimesis*, art being a poor imitation of the truth (Plato 1968, 597e)—but rather to communicate an interpretation of the world from the artist's own subjectivity. By giving us a rendering of the world from a subjective view, the artist presents us with a perspective on our reality that enhances or obscures certain aspects, thereby proposing a richer depiction and a more complex meaning to the world (Crowther

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[25] By positioning a urinal horizontally, signing it "R. Mutt" and naming it *Fountain*, Marcel Duchamp breaks the mold of the elitist understanding of art and radically democratizes it, while at the same time elevating the artist himself as an intellectual. Duchamp takes the profane urinal and sacralises it as art, forcing us to question what makes something a work of art, but also forcing us to reflect on our relationship to art and to the artist. Duchamp also ends art's representative role and gives it a subversive role. *Fountain* shows us that there are no more rules in art: anything can be art when the artist determines that it is.

1983, 145). Still, even as a rendering of the artist's vision, we, as viewers or onlookers are not restricted to experience the artwork exactly as the artist envisioned it. Indeed, it is impossible to experience the artwork exactly as the artist did. Our natality, as Arendt formulates it, gives us a unique perspective on our world, which means that, as viewers, our experience of art can only be personal, just as the artist's work, coming from his or her own unique perspective, will be a unique interpretation. As a result, the very character of art opens a way to its interpretation and personalization where we can attribute a meaning to an artwork that will be deeply personal. It is, therefore, not imperative to know or integrate the intent of the artist into our own experience in order to be moved by a work of art (Polanyi 1975, 85). However, the meaning of a work of art is never exclusively up to the viewer, given that our experience and our meaning-making process takes place within a certain framework set up by the artist's vision (Gadamer 1986, 27). Giving meaning to art therefore necessitates the viewer's interaction with the artwork: without someone to experience the work of art, and without the involvement required every time we experience it, especially with regards to the use of our imagination, art would be meaningless (Polanyi 1975, 150).

We have established above that art's power is that it simultaneously reveals and conceals truth in the form of the opposition of world and earth. Yet, the "happening and becoming of truth" that is brought forth and withdraws through art will inevitably be perceived differently from one person to the next (Crowther 1983, 141). Of course, the diversity of our experience of art is based on evoking certain universal notions like love, fear, joy, or sadness which, as such, refer beyond themselves (143). However, in order for the viewer to recognize such concepts, the artist must articulate them through using tacit

language, allegories, symbols and metaphors, which succeed in provoking the desired emotion by the openness of a language that can evoke different things for us. It is in the nature of art that parallel interpretations and experiences can unite the artist and onlookers in their being moved by similar emotions but from different interpretations. Art does not impose on us only one possible interpretation of a work: it enables us to make a work meaningful on our own terms, so that it has a lasting effect on us (Gadamer 1986, 26). Art requires involvement and some degree of participation in experiencing it. Indeed, whether we are faced with a kind of art with which we are familiar, or with an unfamiliar or new art, "all art of whatever kind…always demands constructive activity on our part" (Gadamer 1986, 37). Just as we use our imagination to make the connection between a word and what that word denotes, we must be actively involved in the experience of art and in the process of giving it meaning. As with language, art requires an involvement that makes a work of art what it is. Gadamer frames this involvement as a conversation where "all artistic creation challenges each of us to listen to the language in which the work of art speaks and to make it our own" (39). Indeed, he claims that "something can only be called art when it requires that we construe the work by learning to understand the language of form and content so that communication really occurs" (52)[26].

Art first appeals to our senses and emotions, but we can use our intellect to distance ourselves from its experience by formulating an explanation for our reactions to it.

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[26] Gadamer thus echoes Polanyi from a different perspective. As the previous chapter described, Polanyi sees the meaning attributed to art as largely beyond words and more a matter of emotions, memories, and experiences, which our imagination turns into a whole that speaks intimately to us. Gadamer, in comparison, turns to a more academic description of our experience of art, but he still sees a reconstitution taking place where the viewer makes the artwork meaningful to one, and as his "fusion of horizons" would suggest, from our own language and standpoint, but that we eventually connect with the language of the art we experience.

Dwelling in our first encounter with the work of art, however, takes us beyond intellectual explanations, if only for the process we enter into in giving it meaning from our own tacit or explicit perspective. As art springs from universal notions and, by its very nature, opens itself to individual interpretations, it does not merely reflect back to us things we already know: it can confront us with thoughts and perspectives of which we had never conceived before. Indeed, by having the ability to touch on unconscious parts of our identity: "[g]reat art shakes us because we are always unprepared and defenseless when exposed to the overpowering impact of a compelling work" (Gadamer 1986, 37). However, Gadamer asserts that dwelling in our experience and in our reaction to the work of art, it will, over time, reveal more and more things to us. And the insight we will receive from such contemplation will be subtler, more nuanced and meaningful as we become increasingly involved in the work of art (45).

We can make a work of art our own and see it as a continuation of ourselves by connecting the message we perceive in a work of art with our own experiences, as when we use a line from a poem to express how we feel because, in our own experience, we "recognize…the truth of the poet's lines" (Polanyi 1975, 126). In extending the articulation of our experience through a meaningful work of art, we take our meaning-making process further: not only does the line of a poem strike a cord with our feelings, but by using the verse to articulate our feelings in a particular situation, we have shaped our perception of that situation from the perspective of that poem. We can see, therefore, that art can change our way of viewing the world. Because art can channel our individual experiences into a more clearly revealing interpretation, we can be astonished at that interpretation. "This is what happens when we are carried away by a poem or are spellbound by a play… and are

forced to revise our estimate of the human race" (151-2). We put meaning into art from our own experiences, but the work of art can take that meaning further: by getting involved in reading the work of art, we allow it to change us and to change our outlook. This is a deeply personal event that occurs by experiencing a work that is meant to be viewed by many. The artwork is the "public embodiment of individual experience" and as such, it "is a source of possible influences on other works; it creates new possibilities of meanings, and is integrated into the perceptual style of those who encounter it" (Crowther 1983, 143; see also Polanyi 1975, 102).

Summing up, art can make the familiar unfamiliar and it can alter people's perception forever. The artist makes the universal explicit in giving it an interpretation and form that are unique and that will uniquely speak to the viewer. Our encounter with a work of art transcends our subjectivity in that, being out of our notion of the ordinary and something which others can experience as well, the work of art can have the character of an event, thereby becoming akin to Gadamer's notion of festival in that it involves the presence of a community and an encounter with a greater context (Scheibler, 2001, 151). Art originates out of an individual artist whose expression, being part of the human race, taps into a universally shared range of emotions and thoughts. The viewer is thus able to relate to the artwork because of the basic human character they share with everyone else.

Yet, given that the artist's work is a personal take on universal themes, the artwork provides a new take on the world that viewers may not have thought about beforehand. What appeals to the universal in the work is not unfamiliar to the viewer, which means that the form the work of art takes, and the particular parts of the content can be better communicated and understood—and internalized by the viewer's own interpretation—

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when there is a basis from which we can relate. This is what Gadamer means when he speaks of a fusion of horizons (1986, 78), and of reading an artwork (79), that is to say, we need to learn the language of the work of art to be able to understand what it is trying to convey, but we cannot learn it if it is completely hermetic to non-initiates.

Gadamer and Heidegger both see the work of art as a potential opening to a new outlook that can challenge our own assumptions and that can bring forth that which we take for granted. Art therefore could be the clearing, the saving power against the enframing. Yet, for Heidegger, the clearing—the opening that gives us a glimpse of Being, or of the world in all its complexity—both reveals and conceals. It reveals what we consider our true world as merely an appearance, and an incomplete one at that, by showing us our world in a new way, and it simultaneously conceals all the other possible ways to apprehend Being, thereby re-enframing our world into a new reality (Heidegger 1977, 179).

Broadening Subtler Languages

We have established that art is a universal version of particular experiences that can bring forth what usually remains in the background in a way that is open to personal interpretation and meaning. The open-ended character of art is what makes it helpful in bringing forth the tacit because it can force us to see a part of our world we once took for granted in an unfamiliar way and focus on it. However, is this way to express the inarticulate a power exclusive to art alone, and is this characteristic present in all types of art?

Heidegger tells us that "[i]t is precisely in great art…that the artist remains

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inconsequential as compared with the work, almost like a passageway that destroys itself in the creative process for the work to emerge" (1977, 166). As long as the artwork taps into and withdraws to the universal and does not remain rooted in an artist's self-conscious display of their own subjectivity, art can potentially let the opposition of disclosing and concealing occur (Scheibler 2001, 152). Great art takes the forefront and the artist himself—as creator of the work—withdraws, letting art take on the character of an event where the opposition of world and earth take place (158). The above quote may seem to suggest that Heidegger has a very restricted idea of the kind of art that could embody the becoming and happening of truth. According to Ingrid Scheibler, Heidegger strongly prefers monumental art or classical art to provide the clearing he wants, as opposed to modern art and modern aesthetics (2001, 154) even though he makes two exceptions in *The Origin of the Work of Art*, when he uses the examples of Cézanne and Van Gogh's paintings to reveal the opposition between world and earth. This, I believe, is not a contradiction on the part of Heidegger but an indication that he has a much broader definition of art that can include modern aesthetics.

For Heidegger, it is in challenging what we take for granted as the truth about the world that we can glimpse the clearing—that is to say, that we briefly get a sense of the infinite ways reality can appear to us before it escapes our grasp as we attempt to articulate it. The clearing can occur by portraying a piece of equipment as the embodiment of the experience of a world; in experiencing a temple as the vestige of a way of life that no longer exists, or; in depicting a landscape from several angles, as if the very process of seeing was painted on the canvas. For Heidegger, the essence of art is poetry, and "[t]he essence of poetry, in turn is the founding of truth" (1977, 199). Indeed, he claims that "the letting

happen of the advent of the truth of beings, is as such, *in essence*, *poetry*. …It is due to art's poetic essence that, in the midst of beings, art breaks open an open place, in whose openness everything is other than usual" (Heidegger 1977, 197). This passage suggests that, for Heidegger, as long as something can reveal the opposition of earth and world, that is to say, as long as it can challenge the familiar and open up a clearing to glimpse the world differently, it is art. Perhaps he assumed that this potential would largely be the domain of monumental—or great—art, but he does not provide a clear rejection of any kind of art.

I believe it is therefore reasonable to assert, from the above passage, that poesy, as a language that indirectly articulates the tacit part of our being—or the strife between earth and world—can potentially stand for a sculpture, a painting, a poem, or a concerto, as long as it challenges our current comprehension of the world. What is key for Heidegger is that works of art have a deeply important role to play in challenging the enframing. He conceives of art as something that can open up a clearing to allow us to glimpse beings (the world) differently. "Beings can be as beings only if they stand within and stand out within what is cleared in this clearing. Only this clearing grants and guarantees to us humans a passage to those beings that we ourselves are not, and access to the being that we ourselves are" (Heidegger 1977, 178). We can interpret the clearing as our experience of the unfamiliar, especially when what is unfamiliar was once familiar or taken for granted. In other words, when we realise that the way we have been perceiving the world was not the only possible way to perceive it but is merely one among an infinite number of ways, this realisation puts into question our assumptions and what we have been taking for granted is made strange by no longer being the reality we thought we knew. From this interpretation,

then, we can propose that making the familiar unfamiliar might not be the exclusive domain of art, although is it art that more readily fits this description.

In order to access the tacit with language, we need it to be open-ended and to leave room for individual meaning-making and personal interpretation. Art, by nature, has a close connection with the tacit, given that it appeals to our senses and emotions first. However, it would be limiting for our purpose to consider only a traditional understanding of art as having the potential to make our world unfamiliar. To that notion of art, we should add any form of communication that opens itself to interpretation: that can leave space to be filled by personal meaning; that provides a unique experience in the recipient, and; where the largest part of its message resides in the inarticulate and the inarticulable. The sum of all those forms of communications would more appropriately be named 'subtler languages', a term which Charles Taylor uses in *A Secular Age* (2007, 357) to point to such open-ended forms of communications as all forms of art, but also to unique events lived as a common experience. Taylor used his version of subtler languages because he wished to look at possible ways to articulate elements of our identity that were left to the background by avoiding a direct and designative articulation. In doing so, he broadens the range of experiences that could open a clearing and challenge our outlook on the world.

Not all Subtler Languages Are Equal

It is important to point out, however, that not all subtler languages are adequate for our aim to bring forth the tacit personal meaning behind collectively held identity traits. Advertisers, for instance, are masters at using the non-verbal and our tacit identity-defining traits to tap into our emotions and exploit our attachment to such traits. The advertising

industry has used the tacit for decades in order to make its messages more appealing. Of course, the aim of the advertiser is not to bring forth the tacit attachments to our common identity for our consideration, but rather to trigger the tacit attachments behind our common identity to elicit an emotion—desire, excitement, pride, and so on—in order to get us to associate it with the brand, to identify with that brand's image and eventually to purchase (or at least to desire) that brand's products.

Similarly, a subtler language like propaganda could not be useful to bring forth the tacit because it aims to tap into or exploit certain aspects of our tacit attachments to an identity in order to trigger a specific response. Propagandists use appeals to tacit identity to efficiently connect with their intended audience, hence they prefer the tacit to remain so. Appealing to a population's tacit sensibility, propagandists aim to manipulate and influence in a very specific way—they are, like advertisers, looking for a particular response to their messages.

Consequently, neither advertisement nor propaganda are adequate to articulate or bring forth tacit identity and the tacit meaning behind it. Indeed, in *A Secular Age*, Taylor expresses his reservations about certain types of subtler languages that could be used for a cheap manipulation of emotions without involving reflection or insight and merely by relying on tradition and well-known tropes to inspire certain emotions (2007, 355) and he found art especially subject to such manipulations, giving the example of the move toward "absolute" music that comes with the instrumental music of the Baroque and classical periods, and reaching its culmination with romanticism (355), which triggered the emotion without providing the story. Taylor's solution was to move away from gratuitous emotions imposed by art, and to focus mostly on the emotions lived via common experiences, such

as Carnival, a stadium concert, or other major events. He argued it left people freer to interpret their emotions and experiences without being imposed suggestive input from anyone.

However, in spite of his reservations about the shallow manipulation of emotions possible with art, Taylor should not dismiss the role of art to bring forth the tacit for three reasons: 1) Art by its nature is a suggestive standpoint that emerges from the artist. What the aim of his or her creation may be—whether to evoke the divine/universal, or to induce shock for the sake of shocking—it nonetheless speaks from a specific context that the work of art utilizes but also challenges.

> Everyday vision 'forgets its premises' but this is precisely what the painter captures. He makes the mountain 'visible' in such a way that we cannot help but notice the invisible perceptual relationships that define it. Indeed, in so far as the artist has constituted his sensuous image from just 'these' 'invisibilia', and just 'these' combinations of brushstrokes and colours, we are placed in a new relationship to him as well as to his subject matter (Crowther, 1983, 146).

Even with suggestive input, if the emotion experienced is connected to a collectively held identity-defining trait, then, it may help bringing it into relief. 2) Moreover, subtler languages like art are open to interpretation and thus cannot be incredibly specific in the message they carry, lest they should be misinterpreted, fail to have a universal reach, or merely evoke broad emotions (nostalgia, elation, longing) the meaning of which may differ from one person to another. Even as broad or general, those emotions may also help to bring one's personal meaning into focus. Art never comes with a user's manual that tells the onlooker what to see or what to make of the artwork: it is deeply personal and "both expresses us and speaks to us" (Gadamer 1986, 51). In contrast, advertisement and propaganda both aim at inspiring certain behaviours but that behaviour is quite explicit. It

can tell us that political party "X" works against the good of the country or that buying this product will make me happy. Art as subtler languages seeks to challenge the familiar, thus opening our view of the world, something which advertisement and propaganda do not seek to inspire. In triggering an emotion, art leaves it to mean whatever is relevant to us, and does not seek to lead us to think or act a certain way. 3) Finally, not all art can serve as a subtler language that could potentially bring forth the tacit: only art that is open-ended, that requires our involvement (interpretation or "reading"), and that makes the familiar unfamiliar —therefore, no art that merely reflects who we are back to us—can count as subtler languages that can bring forth the tacit.

By tapping into emotions that all of us humans can experience, we can feel a connection to our peers, to the work and to the artist, but we are also able to make the universal meaningful to us from a personal standpoint. Not having an object to the emotion evoked in a subtler language gives us more latitude to make meaning of our own. For instance, a piece of music that evokes nostalgia and longing may remind one of a dear person they've lost; another person may think of the home they left and that they miss dearly, another may simply think of their childhood and long for the insouciance of those years. The emotion is common and, truly, nothing special, but the meaning we give to it is unique and heartfelt. We do not need to be given an object for the emotions that a subtler language may evoke: we can give it our own, thereby making it even more significant.

Limits and Possibilities of Subtler Languages

In this chapter we have described art or subtler languages as open-ended, a characteristic which enables the viewer or audience to establish their own interpretation of what they see because it speaks to them in their own particular language. We see, therefore, that subtler languages require our involvement for them to be meaningful: in being involved with it, we interpret it and can connect with its meaning. A subtler language can also shock, innovate, present us with something radically new and can make the familiar something strange, thereby pointing to a way to see our world under a new light. What makes all of the above possible is that it takes place beyond a merely descriptive language.

Subtler languages refer to the tacit and the subtext. Whether we refer to literature, visual arts, performance, or common experiences, subtler languages are useful to bring forth the tacit to the extent that they have an open-ended meaning; they open up a large possibility of interpretations without loosing meaning; they require involvement to experience them, and; they provide us with the shock of the new. We therefore need to note that the discussion in this chapter, whereas it centered mainly on art's ability to make the familiar unfamiliar, served to provide the above template for what is necessary in order to bring forth the tacit.

These particularities of subtler languages give us an avenue to explore and to begin a partial articulation of the inarticulable in our tacit identity. However, subtler languages may not be as helpful to articulate the merely inarticulate. Subtler languages are helpful because they can leave enough room for subtext in the articulation of an identity and the meanings connected to it so that individuals can interpret an articulation of the tacit in a way that appeals to them and their own meaning-making process.

We have established that the tacit identity that interests us, because of its influence on the political, is at the crossroads between the social and the individual levels of identity. A group identity becomes tacit, either for its omnipresence in a culture of the majority, or for its rejection and replacement, and is therefore inarticulate but easily articulable: it needs to be brought to the fore in order to challenge the assumptions of its universality or of its disappearance. The importance of a tacit identity, however, is rooted in the collective meaning that meshes with the individual meaning. Thus, whereas the societal identity can be articulable, the way it comes to have importance for an individual, aside from the commonplace explanations at the societal level, is through an individual's own memories, experiences, and context, in other words, something that cannot be entirely articulated because of its depth and complexity. In this case, an articulation of an open-ended element of identity via an open-ended medium will prove helpful. On the other hand, because what is articulable must be pointed at with clarity and precision, an open-ended language will not be adequate to articulate the merely inarticulate.

What subtler languages bring forth essentially depend on the interpretation we give to them. Thus, if their interpretation is still framed in the tacit elements of a collective identity—because, that tacit identity has not been challenged—then the familiar remains familiar and is not put into question. What would need to happen would be to clearly name the content—that is to say the tacit group identity—but leave open the interpretation of its meaning and the explanation of its significance for us, thereby forcing us to see the tacit group identity under a new light.

The aim of this chapter was to explore the potential of art to articulate the tacit, not to provide a clear recipe on how that could be done. As a result of our inquiry, we now

have a few avenues to look into when it comes to articulate the tacit, whether it is merely inarticulate or inarticulable. Subtler languages are largely helpful in providing the space for the introduction of personal subtext that is key to individual meaning-making. Yet, we can also take guidance from art's characteristics—its open-endedness, its ability to shock and make the ordinary unfamiliar, and its need for the spectator's involvement—in articulating the tacit identity. The following chapter will present examples of such possible articulations of the tacit, using any or all of these characteristics with more traditional means of communication.

Chapter 4—The Tacit Exemplified

Thus far, we have determined that our contextual nature shapes our identity and that we will judge and make choices in relation to our specific context. We consider certain values and goods significant enough to be part of our identity because we attach personal connections to them. When those values we hold dear are also shared at the level of society and are part of a group identity, we still hold them dear from a personal point of view, which makes a group identity personally significant. We have also demonstrated that our outlook on the world is a combination of three interwoven levels constituting of explicit and tacit elements. The part of identity that has the most import in the political is the tacit aspect of the collectively held identity. Whereas this part may be fairly easy to pinpoint as a group identity, the meaning behind one's attachment to it is connected to a personal point of view, which is largely tacit, and will inevitably differ among individuals. Before we can look at how to articulate or bring forth that tacit collective identity, however, we must describe in what context such articulation is needed, and we can do that by showing what a problematic tacit identity looks like.

Let us look at two examples where a society's collective tacit identity conflicts with collective identities that are explicit and at the tensions that result. We have argued in the previous chapter that such identity conflicts will occur when a community or a people explicitly reject an identity that nonetheless remains an influence as a tacit identity and continues to shape a people's perceptions and decisions. The following examples will point to the sustained influence that identities, which were once part of the background, retain when they are explicitly, yet incompletely, rejected. Tacit collective identities retain strong connections to individual meaning and their role in orienting people in the world remains influential, often because it is ubiquitous, and its presence is not noticed even when it is

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explicitly rejected.

Our first example describes the emotional identification with Catholicism tacitly present in the province of Québec. Conflicting with this tacit identity is the explicit identification with modernity and secularism which make more complex the province's uneasy relationships with minority cultures. The second case concerns the taboo, yet persistent, underlying racism in the United States of America which is connected to its past as a country built on slavery and still tacitly shapes the American identity and affects decisions made at all levels of society. This identity comes in direct conflict with the connection Americans have with freedom and equality, which is at the basis of their constitution. Before we begin, however, a few points must be addressed.

First, the case of Québec is part of a larger trend in the last decades for host, or majority cultures, especially in the West, to find themselves in tension with their minority cultures, especially over issues of religious practices and freedoms[27]. However, the articulation of Québec's conflict between its tacit and explicit identities does not claim to be a general explanation for the phenomenon of religious tensions everywhere. Rather, the conflict between explicit and tacit identity in Québec is unique to its context, and thus the same claim could not make sense for countries like Germany or France because their religious, cultural, and historical context is different. As a result, in different contexts, different tacit and explicit elements will influence a people's identity. The following description of tacit identity in Québec, therefore, does not pretend to provide a one-size-fits-all analysis of religious accommodations in Western countries.

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[27] For instance, France's "affaire du voile" and the 2004 law banning religious symbols in the public space, the Dane newspaper publishing Mohammad cartoons and the ensuing controversy in 2005, the Swiss Minaret referendum in 2009, the protests around Park51 (or the "9-11 mosque") in New York, the Charlie Hebdo shooting in 2013, etc.

Similarly, the following articulation of the conflicting tacit and explicit identities in the United States is in no way a phenomenon exclusive to the United States, nor is it a statement that the context and the resulting tacit identity behind race issues are the same wherever such issues exist. Instances of systemic racism are also very specific to the complexity of the context in which they occur. The country's slow progress toward racial equality, periodically interrupted by backward movements, is a great illustration of the confrontation between its tacit and explicit identities. For the purpose of this exercise, therefore, we will limit ourselves to the articulation of race relations in the United States.

Secondly, the decision to focus on one tacit element of identity for each example is an attempt to keep the discussion as simple as possible, given the complexity of the topic. Each tacit identity chosen is significant in shaping the societal debates and tensions particular to each context. This decision is therefore not a claim that Québec and the United States are solely influenced by one tacit identity: as we saw in Chapter 2 there might be more than one tacit element shaping an identity. Thus, Québec, which began as a settler colony, is also likely to have a racist tacit identity, and the United States may have a tacit relationship with religion or with another tacit element to its identity that will also shape its political decisions.

The following, then, is a brief rendering of the context which led to the making of a specific tacit identity in Québec and the United States. Part of this rendering includes a short historical context, which does not pretend to be complete, but explains how a specific identity can become taken for granted as universal, and thus become tacit. What follows, therefore, is a selective *mise en contexte*, from the perspective of Catholicism and White superiority articulating how each has become the norm in their respective society to the

point of no longer being noticed, and why it becomes difficult to sever ties with these tacit identities even when a society believes it has.

Religion in Québec

Quebecers' uneasy relationship with religion suggests the presence of a tacit aspect of Québec identity which must be better understood. This tension is especially obvious when the majority culture is confronted to the religious identity of minorities, or when it is challenged about its own attachment to religious symbols. Beginning in the second half of the last century, Quebecers have proudly embraced modernity and secularism, claiming to have rejected their historical Catholic identity, all the while tacitly retaining their identification with and their attachment to Catholicism as a source of meaning. The secular and the Catholic identities contradict one another most obviously in the continuing controversy over the crucifix above the speaker's chair in the National Assembly, and in the weak arguments behind attempts to regulate religious garb in the public space, as seen with Bill 62[28], which was passed in October 2017.

A few days after the adoption of Bill 62, the left-leaning party *Québec Solidaire* once again proposed a motion to remove the crucifix in the Blue Room in an attempt to highlight the contradiction in passing a law to regulate religious symbols in the public space while a religious symbol adorns a wall of the legislature. The motion was never tabled and

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[28] Gouvernement du Québec. Assemblée Nationale. *Bill n°62: An Act to foster adherence to State religious neutrality and, in particular, to provide a framework for requests for accommodations on religious grounds in certain bodies.* October 18, 2017. Accessed October 27, 2017. http://www.assnat.qc.ca/en/travaux-parlementaires/projets-loi/projet-loi-62-41-1.html.

was rejected by the Liberal party without discussion[29]. In line with Québec's secular identity, removing the crucifix would make sense and would make a clear distinction between the state and any religious institution. It is, however, apparently not that simple, because the crucifix is still in the National Assembly at the end of 2017. Considering a people's tacit attachment to religious identity in the debate could explain the shock and upset that the possible removal of a sacred object would trigger. The explanation for the contradiction between religious attachment and secularism was reformulated back in 2008, when, pre-empting the release of the Bouchard-Taylor Report a motion was passed articulating the importance for the crucifix to remain in the Blue Room to acknowledge Québec's cultural heritage[30]. The cultural argument stated that the crucifix is not a religious symbol but a cultural one, and a representation of Québec's historical past, which must be respected and preserved (Beaman 2015, 72).

The cultural argument itself is rather dubious, however, and looks more like an attempt to explain away the contradiction between the tacit attachment to the crucifix and the desire to promote the secular character of the state and its institutions. Indeed, the crucifix, put there by Premier Maurice Duplessis to symbolise the close ties between the state and the Catholic Church, symbolises an era that is referred to as the *Grande Noirceur*, when the population was kept docile and ignorant under the yoke of the Church. Would

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[29] Richer, Jocelyne. "Les Libéraux ne retireront pas le crucifix de l'Assemblée nationale." *Le Devoir* (Montreal), October 24, 2017. Accessed October 27, 2017.
http://www.ledevoir.com/politique/Québec/511180/les-liberaux-ne-retireront-pas-le-crucifix-de-l-assemblee-nationale.

[30] "THAT the National Assembly reiterate its desire to promote the language, history, culture and values of the Québec nation, foster the integration of each person into our nation in a spirit of openness and reciprocity, and express its attachment to our religious and historic heritage represented particularly by the crucifix in our Blue Room and our coat of arms adorning our institutions."
Gouvernement du Québec. *Procès-verbal de l'assemblée*. 38th legislature, 1st session, May 22, 2008.

this period, which was passionately despised during the Quiet Revolution and on the rejection of which modern Québec identity took root, be so important to commemorate it in the National Assembly? Rather than paying homage to a time of submission, wouldn't the heritage of the Quiet Revolution and the emergence of the Québécois identity be a more positive and proud heritage to remember, especially given the pride with which Quebecers claim their secularism? Keeping Duplessis' crucifix in the Blue Room, if the purpose is to recognize Québec's past heritage, diminishes the importance that rejecting the Church played in the making of its modern identity and culture.

The cultural argument rather reveals the tacit attachment to religion for a large and vocal part of the population—both from an individual and collective perspective—and keeping the crucifix where it is points to its importance as a symbol of meaning over the proud identity that its rejection built. The argument that, as a historical and not a religious symbol, the crucifix should stay is an attempt to reconcile Quebecers' tacit emotional attachment to religious symbols with the explicit and rational secular argument. Yet claiming that the symbol embodies core values that represents the state's commitment to "tolerance, equality and liberty" (Beaman 2015, 69) is another demonstration of the tacit identity's continuing influence in a society's perception. Indeed, "the move to culture opens space for an argument that religious values are universal values" (68). Moreover, to claim that the crucifix represents the core liberal values that a society embraces is to infer that Catholicism has the monopoly on those values, and it preserves the power relations between the majority culture and its minorities (79). Symbols are "emotional provocateurs" and in this case, some may see it as a non-issue, while others may see the crucifix as an official indication of preference for a specific religious practice (Beaman 2015, 104).

The surreal and ill-prepared attempts of Justice Minister Stéphanie Vallée to explain that Bill 62—a bill to enforce state religious neutrality—is not Islamophobic also points to a double standard in Québec's attempts to describe the place of religion in the public sphere: at one point, Minister Vallée claimed that not only burkas but also sunglasses or ski masks must be removed in public transportation, only to change direction the next day and claim that no one needs to uncover their face in city transports[31]. Bill 62 is one of many attempts from the Québec government to establish parameters within which to frame requests for religious accommodations once and for all. It is important to note, however, that the Québec government has never been overwhelmed with demands for religious accommodations, even at the height of the reasonable accommodations controversy (Bouchard and Taylor 2008, 18). There is also a very low number of women who wear the niqāb or the burqa in Québec[32], which hardly makes a case for the need of such a bill. Perhaps it is a political party's attempt to pander to populist tendencies in Québec. Still, then, if not Islamophobia, what lies behind this unnecessary need to base relations with Muslim women on power dynamics? It could be argued that "the desire to secularise public space often masks an implicit expectation to regulate the space where religion can be expressed within the norms and references of the religion of the majority, even in a society where secularisation is already established" (Milot 2009, 70 my translation). It would then not only be a matter of emotional attachment to a religion but also a desire to keep religion

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[31] Chouinard, Tommy. "Loi 62: la ministre Stéphanie Vallée se contredit." La Presse (Montreal), 24 Octobre 2017. Accessed October 27 2017. http://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/politique/politique-Québecoise/201710/24/01-5141079-loi-62-la-ministre-stephanie-vallee-se-contredit.php

[32] 1.5% of Québec population identify with being Muslim, according to the latest census (2001). We can presume that half of that population is female, or about 0.75%, and that a small portion of that percentage wears the niqāb.
Statistics Canada. "Population by religion, by province and territory" 2001. Accessed November 1, 2017. http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/demo30b-eng.htm

as a political tool, which makes the argument for secularism and state religious neutrality in Québec cognitively dissonant.

The polemic over reasonable accommodations shows the contradiction between tacit and explicit identities. When demands for religious accommodations first found their way on the front page of the newspapers, it was argued that accommodations went against Québec's secular identity. Beyond the official argument, however, we can see that Québec's tacit religious identity was triggered for having to compete with other religions in the public space—something it never had to do before because the space it took was taken for granted as a majority culture, and assumed it to be universal. The reasonable accommodations controversy shows that Catholic Quebecers of European descent—or old stock Quebecers—struggle, not only with an attachment to Catholicism, but also with the values and meaning that were once explicitly connected to the Church. They struggle with this attachment because it once was an explicit part of their identity, but they replaced it with modernity and secularism, just like a teenager who rebels against their parents by doing the exact opposite of what they were taught. Like the rebellious teenager, however, the values and beliefs inculcated remain and are the framework within which the teenager finds herself. Quebecers merely recycled Catholic values under a liberal label.

As early as the arrival of the first French settlers who came to the New World, the province has had a largely homogeneous population that shared a similar framework in which the place of Catholicism as source of meaning was central. From the cross planted at what is now Gaspé by Jacques Cartier, to the Franciscans and Jesuits who were central to French colonization efforts, to using Catholicism to assert a people's identity under British rule, Catholicism, as provider of meaning, with its beliefs, its explanation of the

world, its values and morals, has been an important part of Quebecers' context. Because Catholicism, with its values, tenets and rules, was shared by a majority who built institutions within that framework, the culture of the majority reflected its particularities back to itself and with that came the assumption of its universality. Catholicism has thus been part and parcel of Québec culture and, as such, was taken for granted for generations, inevitably rendering some parts of it tacit.

The first half of the 20th Century saw an increase of the authority of the Church as more aspects of everyday lives became regulated by the Clergy and the institutions it took over. At first, Church-led institutions were taking on a positive and protective role: for instance, in the 1930s, because the Great Depression saw an increased demand for charity beyond what the state could provide, the Church took on the role of dispenser of services, all the while promoting their ideology (Linteau et al. 1986, 88). The Church's prestige in its new role was thus increased by the faith of the population and the authority people gave it. When Maurice Duplessis came to power as Premier of Québec in 1936, he strengthened the state's ties with the Church, benefiting from its support and its cheap labour, while broadening the Church's reach in the lives of the population. The installation of the crucifix in the Blue Chamber of the National Assembly on the first year of Duplessis' premiership stood as a clear indication that the Catholic Church and the State had a privileged relationship under that government (Bouchard and Taylor 2008, 152).

During this period known as the *Grande Noirceur* which was "marked by the strengthening of conservative ideology and clerical power" (Dickinson et al. 2008, 271), the Church provided education, healthcare and hospices, and thus exerted a great deal of influence on the population and shamed behaviour that was not deemed Catholic: its

ideology not only defined gender roles and established the values to follow as a society, it also put these values in practice via its institutions. For instance, women were defined and praised as the queen of the household and their role was limited to making babies and taking care of the house. In fact, women were not considered men's equals under the law until 1964 in Québec (Dickinson et al., 286), and did not get to vote in provincial elections until 1940, while they could vote in federal elections since 1919 (282). To confirm their role as housewives and mothers, the education offered to women was very limited and did not go beyond the minimum necessary to fulfill it (Linteau et al., 93). The Church also shamed women about using birth control, even when having another baby could be dangerous for the mother, the clergy clearly putting population growth above the health of their female parishioners (Dickinson et al., 243).

In addition, because the ideology and values promoted by the Church did not favour commerce but rather preferred to promote religious life, the education system in Québec was poor and the teachers—who were men and women of the cloth—had themselves little formal education (Linteau et al., 93). What resulted from this lack of education was a largely ignorant population that was receptive to the influence of the Church as not only the provider of knowledge, but also of the way to the salvation of their soul (Dickinson et al., 260).

Restrictions on people's everyday lives became increasingly oppressive and eventually sowed the seeds of the rejection of the Church that would be called the Quiet Revolution. As a *quiet* revolution, the resentment towards the Church manifested itself largely as a considerable decrease in Church attendance and the dwindling of the religious community. As Québec society moved into the 1950s, less people devoted their lives to the

orders, leading to less people providing cheap labour for schools and hospitals (Linteau et al., 589). The state then had to hire more lay nurses and teachers to fill gaps in the institutions where the Church could no longer provide personnel (314). Without enough members entering the orders, it was eventually agreed that the Church should return to its primary role of spiritual guide (591), leaving the managing of social institutions to the government. Along with a changing role for the Church, the nationalist movement took off and further delegitimized the Church's influence and societal role, perceived as rigid and unable to adapt to modern sensibilities (591). In the 1960s, with the slogan "Maîtres chez nous" (masters in our own home), Quebecers rejected any paternalistic authority that prevented them from taking their fate into their own hands and administer their own affairs. The province completed the nationalisation of hydro-electricity in the province, established its version of a welfare state and a strong civil service, providing more opportunities for Quebecers to succeed (Dickinson, 312-313) (Linteau et al., 591). With the Quiet Revolution, Quebecers sought to establish their place not only within Canada, but on the world stage. Resentment for the placidity encouraged—and to some degree imposed on the population—by the clergy expressed itself through a discourse that further delegitimised the Church.

With the Quiet revolution, the explicit aspects of the religious identity the population no longer considered acceptable were tossed but the tacit Catholic values and their source of meaning remained untouched. Catholicism became essentially tacit while Québec society was busy reinventing itself as an independent people. But the identity that was rejected never was rejected entirely. The practices, the reach of the clergy in people's lives and in state's institutions were discarded, but the faith in God was never in question,

nor was it ever truly replaced; it merely took a less prominent, more private form, all under the guise of complete religious renouncement and secularism. Old stock Quebecers prided themselves in being secular and modern, but they retained a largely tacit identity still attached to Catholic faith as a source of meaning. Québec's abrupt turn away from the Church took place in a context that was, for the most part, culturally, religiously, linguistically, historically, and value-wise homogeneous and so, without different perspectives to point to the incomplete break Québec society made with the Catholic faith, the contradictions resulting from the tacit religious identity remained unnoticed.

The increasing presence of visible minorities presented a challenge outlining these contradictions and led to knee-jerk reactions and resentment towards those minority groups such as the over-reaction to a handful of demands for religious accommodations on the part of the news media; the Hérouxville 'code of life' for immigrants, the Bouchard-Taylor Commission; the *Charte des valeurs Québécoises* in 2013[33] and Bill 62 in 2017. In all these cases, the official argument is based on the explicit secular identity of Québec society and on the importance to preserve it, but the upset over non-Christian religious presence and expression demonstrates the influence of the tacit attachment to a religious identity and the lengths to which old stock Quebecers go to avoid addressing it.

Majority cultures like old stock Quebecers are convinced of the universality of their values and do not get the same realisation when exposed to otherness as minorities do when encountering the majority culture: cultural and religious minorities, when first immigrating to Québec, will already share certain views and values with their country or society of

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[33] Gouvernement du Québec. Assemblée Nationale. *Charte affirmant les valeurs de laïcité et de neutralité religieuse de l'État ainsi que d'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes et encadrant les demandes d'accommodement.* November 20, 2013. Accessed October 27, 2017. https://www.institutions-democratiques.gouv.qc.ca/laicite-identite/charte-valeurs.htm

adoption. They will clearly see, however, that even if they are convinced of their righteousness, some of their own values, traditions, and practices are not shared by Québec society, which clearly shows them they are not universal. In contrast, cultures of the majority—because they do not have to compete with another majority culture—tend to tacitly link the values they embrace with universality because everything in their world reflects those values back to them and because they view minorities as exceptions.

Nevertheless, when religious and cultural diversity reaches a point where it cannot be ignored, it is viewed as a threat to the existence of the dominant religious narrative (Beaman 2015, 89), even if it is tacit. The contradictions between tacit and explicit identity is once again illustrated by a "rhetoric of choice," where the culture of the majority assumes a religious symbol is neutral and certainly not coercive by its mere presence, even if other religious symbols do not have the same privileged representation (90). Indeed, religious minorities are not forced to be Catholics, even if there is a crucifix in the National Assembly. The rhetoric of choice expresses both a tacit religious identity and a Western identity that takes for universal and neutral its own values and symbols. In Québec, Catholicism is omnipresent, in its architecture, its symbols, its *croix de chemin* but it remains invisible, part of the background, or ambient (Kaell 2017, 136), for old stock Quebecers. "Even if societies become secularised, they still bear the cultural imprint of the founding religion" (Beaman, 92) and challenging this imprint with the presence of other religions may seem like a threat to something that seems to have always been there, suggesting that in Québec, "the secular is not only religious, but specifically Christian" (Beaman, 93).

Engaging with minorities whose religiosity is visible and challenges their

contradictory identity would require Quebecers to reconcile their two conflicting identities. But the normative assumptions that come with a homogeneous society keep the majority culture from seeing the Other as having a possible and legitimate alternative worldview and merely see them as backwards or childish (Taylor 2007, 28). In this case stating "we live in a secular society" quashes sincere discussions over the place of religions and of minorities in the province, protecting the privileged place of Christian religions and blocking any possibility to openly address it (Beaman, 92). Far from being universal, what Québec's culture of the majority considers normative is in fact a contextually motivated conclusion. An important point is to remind majority cultures that, even within the majority, certain values are contentious (95) because interpreted differently. This is not to claim that we must fall into relativism and not defend our values, but this defense should not happen with the assumption that they are the only rational ones and therefore can only be right, thereby claiming that those who disagree (even partly) are wrong and must change.

Of course, we cannot claim that the explicit secular and the tacit religious identities are the only two identities that come into play in the conflicts related to the presence of a religious other: for instance, Québec's identity as a threatened minority (a French minority within an English Canada) also comes into play and likely exacerbates the anxiety over immigration and the fear over disappearing as a result of not being insular enough. Québec pays attention to its identity in contrast to the rest of Canada because it considers itself as a minority, but within the province, it takes for granted its own particular context as any majority culture would, even if being a minority is an important part of its identity. The minority identity Quebecers hold means that the challenges posed by the minority cultures

within the province are largely dealt with as internal threats, as the world in which Québec is a fragile entity (because it is not a sovereign state) is slowly being invaded. Quebecers have a colonial historical context as part of its identity, but it also strongly identifies as a colonized people which manifests itself in the above reaction to otherness. As a majority culture in the province, they consider themselves as a part of Western civilisation, which values are universal and superior to those of non-western countries, but as a minority that has been colonized and exploited, they consider the other as an obstacle to its autonomy and a threat to the preservation of its identity. The former denigrates First Nations and other visible minorities as non-Western, the latter in part leads an instinctive reaction to otherness that is not entirely disconnected from its resentment towards its Catholic past and the exploitation Quebecers have lived under its yoke. Québec has many such identities, some tacit and some explicit, but none more clearly in conflict and pointing to a need for re-evaluation as the secular and religious identities do.

Race in the United States

The difficult race relations characteristic of the United States spring from a tacit part of American identity that must be articulated and challenged. We see clear evidence of these racial tensions in economic, educational, professional, and societal disparities along racial lines. Race is regularly discussed in American media to the point that it could seem to be a very explicit part of American identity. Indeed, white supremacy, as demonstrated by the events in Virginia in spring 2017, is largely condemned, its rejection reflecting the majority of the population's profound belief in the American Creed based on progress, liberty,

equality, and humanitarianism (Myrdal 1944, 80). However, officially denouncing White supremacists gives White folks a false conviction that racism is now a marginal problem that largely concerns extremists and is only a problem when racism is explicit and virulent. Systemic racism is connected to a historical view of race and the assumption of White superiority that remains in American society to this day. Whereas most White Americans sincerely condemn racism, the association of Whiteness with superiority is an identity that was taken for granted and has remained tacit for centuries. It unfortunately still shapes race relations and continues to make discussions about race uncomfortable and largely taboo in the United States.

The tacit assumption of White superiority as a normative concept, conflicts with the American creed at the basis of the unity of the American culture. This identification with the principles of freedom and liberty is mutually shared by Americans to the extent that people barely think about it (Myrdal, xlviii), except when confronted by clear contradictions, in which case those contradictions are received with suspicion and tend to be explained away (Myrdal, xlix).

From the time of the founding of the United States, the American creed has been at the core of the national conscience, but also since its beginnings, those ideals have stood in conflict with the Black population and their own status (Myrdal, 23). The election of Barak Obama to the presidency led some to claim that the country had finally moved past its racial history into a post-racial society. With a Black man in the White House, not only was the past racial identity overtly rejected, it had been superseded by an identity that "does not see race." Yet, in spite of Obama's presidency, instances of police officers shooting black men are still regularly making headlines, the African-American population is still

listed among the poorest in the country, it struggles to find adequate and affordable housing, and is inordinately over-represented in the prison system (Alexander 2010, 12). Post-racism also asserts that the presence of Black individuals at the top echelons of American society proves racism is no longer an issue[34]. However, what is highlighted as instances where Black persons have succeeded without help hides the presence of affirmative action (Alexander, 432), which has encouraged employers to diversify their workplace by consciously working against their bias.

What post-racism overlooks, however, is that social institutions have been established and headed by White people who, not only are largely unaware of their White privilege, but as a result enact racial discriminations through the institutions which they lead. The post-racial discourse impedes a discussion on race in all aspects of the public sphere (Rossing 2012, 45) and hides the fact that Black people who have succeeded have done so by living according to White norms of success (Teasley 2010, 412). It also claims that the limits put on racialized people, not only are non-existent, but are in fact a demonstration of their individual failure (Rossing 47) (Teasley 416). James Baldwin was very aware of this reality when back in the early 60s he dismissed Robert Kennedy's self-congratulatory statement which praised the progressiveness of American society that might elect its first Black president in 40 years, if it kept its progressive course. "If you're good, in 40 years we may let you be president" scoffs Baldwin (1998, 340). What Kennedy's speech implied to non-Whites was that there is a set of rules, but those rules are White rules and unless you learn to play by the White rules, you cannot even hope to be equal to White

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[34] At its extreme, post-racial discourse muddles the meaning of race; disconnects important historical events from current racial realities; ignores economic disparities; protects Whiteness as a privileged position by disregarding the institutions that perpetuate racial disparities, and; enables a belief that Whites suffer "reverse racism" (Rossing 47-48) (Teasley 422).

people. Baldwin would not have changed his position had he been alive to see Obama's election. By dismissing the mere presence of race, to say nothing of the tacit racism still prevalent in American society, White standards remain the norm and are seen as universal standards. "Whiteness is everywhere in American culture, but it is very hard to see… As the unmarked category against which difference is constructed, Whiteness never has to speak its name, never has to acknowledge its role as an organizing principle in social and cultural relations" (Lipsitz 1995, 369).

The post-racial discourse currently in vogue alters racist claims by referring to class and lifestyle broadly associated with Blackness, but because race is not mentioned, it is argued that the claim is not racist. In fact, the mere mention of race inequality and White privilege is now perceived as reverse-racism (Alexander, 423). Post-racism cannot explain current blatant inequalities without reverting to circular logic that associates blackness with criminality: Black folks are arrested en masse; it just so happens that more Black people choose a life of crime than Whites and the arrests prove it (Alexander, 247-8). From the perspective of a group identity, it is more likely that the United States has two clashing identities that complicates racial relations within the country: one identity is an explicit belief in universal equality and freedom, and the other is a tacit identity based on a historical belief in White superiority.

This clash between the two identities has been a contentious issue in the United States ever since the Declaration of Independence signed in 1776—at a time when slavery was already a widespread and legal practice—where it is stated as a self-evident truth, "that all men are created equal." White superiority, it is important to note, had been an element of White identity long before the 18th Century. Cedric J. Robinson considers racial

categories and the worth associated to them a widespread factor in ancient Europe that regulated contact with otherness (1983, 2). From this notion of natural inequality based on race, the inferiority of the Black race was but a small step. Blackness and the associated inferiority truly took root with the beginning of the slave trade (Maynard 2017, 8) (Robinson, 75). European colonists took for granted natural inequalities and, consequently, had few ideological constraints against forced labour (Kolchin 1993, 7). Moreover, stereotypes about Africans such as the association of Blackness with impurity and Whiteness with purity strengthened the assumption of White superiority, and the difference of cultures led colonizers to assume that Africans were savages and heathens to be pitied or shunned (Kolchin, 14-15).

Given that the first American settlers had no qualms about servitude and natural inequalities, the mindset to see certain people as inferior was easy, especially since there were economical reasons to use slaves (5). At first, the inequality and exploitation was based on class, where poor Whites would enter into indebted servitude, essentially being slaves until they had paid off their debts (9). Eventually, chattel slavery was found more economically advantageous. White privilege and superiority was promoted, thereby breaking any sense of solidarity that might have existed between Black slaves and the poor Whites whose life was not much better than that of a slave: maybe poor Whites were not high in the social hierarchy, but they were certainly higher than the Black slaves (Morgan 1975, 328).

Africans were brutally taken out of their home and country, and were put in a subservient position in a place where they did not know the language, the culture, or the land. To the White master, their confusion and defiance merely confirmed their inferiority:

if they were brutish and stupid, then maiming them to get them to work made sense (Morgan 314). In time, as the practice of slavery began to be questioned and despised by the Northern States, the argument to maintain slavery took the form of the White Man's Burden, or the slave owner's paternalism (Kolchin 112). They argued that Blacks were enslaved for their own good because they were not fit for freedom. It was therefore the superior White man's duty to tell them what to do and thereby save them from their own helpless state. Slaves were seen as child-like and keeping them as such by attempting to eliminate any trace of independence in the slave strengthened the conviction that they were unable to take their lives into their own hands (Kolchin 1993, 119). This argument further reconciled the tension between those two explicit identities (90-91).

The context in which a White person can legitimately own a Black person, constructed through the assumption of White superiority, confirmed this assumption that Black people's natural state was slavery (18). The race argument enabled slave owners to reconcile their owning slaves while identifying proudly with universal equality: slaves were deemed as 3/5 of a human being in the American Constitution, which meant they did not fit under the rights bestowed to White folks (Myrdal 87). White masters could use that argument without cynicism because they saw Black people as biologically "raced" and saw themselves as unraced and "normal" (Teasley et al. 2010, 415). In addition, over the two centuries where everyday life, social mores and patterns of behaviour further cemented the master-slave relationship and the assumption of its normality (Kolchin 29), White superiority was internalised and slavery, as Black people's natural state, was taken for granted (3).

White superiority became a tacit assumption throughout the United States, but the

expression of that superiority differed in the North and the South. In the North, the White superiority assumption was perhaps more tacit than in the south because, in the Northern states, where slavery was illegal, the White population still did not consider Black people to be their equal and did not want to live with them. Indeed, it was illegal for freedmen to enter the Northern states (Tocqueville 2000, 331). The prejudice of race in the North, at least according to Alexis de Tocqueville's account, was stronger in the North than in the South because, whereas in the South slaves knew their place, there was no distinct barriers in the North that separated Whites from what they considered "a debased race," and that resulted in the White fear of racial intermingling (Tocqueville 329). In the North, therefore, there was less interaction between Black and White folk, and in the South, Black and White interaction occurred regularly but from a master-slave perspective. Black people, therefore, were familiar to Whites as slaves or they were not known at all and were not wanted. Thus, when freed people had to leave the state of their enslavement, lest they were taken and enslaved again, they had nowhere to go.

The post civil war rejection of slavery and the begrudging acceptance that—at least in theory—Black people were equal to White people meant that the White superiority assumption was officially rejected, although the emotions and beliefs attached to that identity remained, and gradually constituted a tacit identity. Alexis de Tocqueville has remarked that a widespread opinion is very difficult to change and will only do so over a long period (611): White superiority, however, was not merely an opinion but a deeply set conviction, a version of reality and part of a people's identity. Moreover, the American state had been built on the back of Black slaves, by White men who created institutions and infrastructures that benefitted them. Thus, the rejection of a people's conviction

embedded in its institutions could prove a difficult thing to do. To this conviction was added the sense of entitlement of white people to determine what Blackness is. This definition grouped it into one mold, taking as given that "a Black person, no matter who they are…speak for all African-Americans" (Myrdal, 28).

With the Reconstruction, measures were taken to provide opportunities for freedmen to be part of American society but old habits die hard and there was no immediate widespread acceptance of Black people. As the majority culture in the United States, White people felt their perception of others were accurate and truthful, and not the product of convention and prejudices (Myrdal, 113-115). Black codes (Kolchin, 209-210), countering the Reconstruction, were put in place because of White prejudice towards Black people, whom they defined as dangerous, lazy, lacking impulse control, sex-driven, lying, stealing and in need of guidance from the White man, not only because of their brutish ignorance, but also in order to keep them from seeking revenge for their servitude, which White people assumed they resented dearly (Goff et al. 2008, 293).

Over the years, advances in efforts to officially enact racial equality were countered by maintained efforts to keep racial separation. Black codes and Jim Crow are manifestations of the clashes between tacit and explicit identity: with the explicit admission that Black people may be equal to White people, the influence of the tacit identity is not very far, arguing that both races were much too different to live together, giving an excuse to keep Black people separate from Whites, which is to say, on the margins of society. The end of Jim Crow and the rise of the Civil Rights movement was yet another instance of the clash between what Whites overtly claim and most likely believe—namely that every person is equal—and the tacit identity that keeps suspicion and the assumption of the

inferiority of Black people. Even if racial equality is broadly understood as a common good to strive for, the persisting presence of damaging prejudices towards Black people and its manifestation in clear systemic inequalities points to the stubborn presence of the tacit assumption of White superiority and its continued clash with the American creed.

The case could be made that Black people also have a tacit identity linked to slavery and that their behaviour could be said to reflect that identity. Given their position as a minority, however, it is doubtful that the racialized aspect of their identity—an aspect imposed on them by White people—is tacit. Of course, Black people's identity has been partly shaped by slavery, and their ancestors' struggle to increase their social autonomy and independence once freed (Kolchin 200) was unfortunately influenced by a history of bondage (228). However, African-Americans have long been defined by a culture of the majority, which makes them very much aware of the contrast between their own view of identity, culture, condition, and that which is imposed on them. As a minority—and one that for over two hundred years has been considered inferior—Black people are constantly reminded that they are not White and the association of Blackness with evil and Whiteness with goodness may have been internalised and have tacitly shaped their self-conception. It is not to say, however, that Black identity is essentially the result of White people's feedback—although there is certainly a lot of pressure coming from Whites' tacit identity—the African heritage, for instance, also played in the making of the African-American unique culture (Kolchin 41).

Black people, as minorities, are much more aware of their identity and of the majority culture's than White people are aware of their own and of Black people's identities. James Baldwin puts it bluntly:

> You cannot lynch me and keep me in Ghettos without becoming something monstrous yourself. And furthermore, you give me a terrifying advantage: you never had to look at me; I had to look at you. I know more about you than you know about me. Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced (2017, 152).

Baldwin articulates the claim that is core to this chapter, that is, a culture of the majority, by not being challenged in its assumption of universality, assumes that its identity, its values and its choices as a society are universal, but minorities, by being exposed to the majority, are not only aware of the parochial nature of identity and values, but are also conscious of the tacit identity of the culture of the majority, as a result of being confronted to it in contrast with their own identity. Baldwin also saw the necessity of being aware of the true root of a problem in order to change it. In a post-racial society, we further hide the tacit identification of Whiteness with natural superiority under assumptions of universality and of colour-blindness. Then how do we articulate the White superior tacit identity in a way that can reach the culture of the majority in an unavoidable way?

"It is within spaces not marked as…particularly threatening that folks might actually become open to questioning their ideological presuppositions…" (Haggins 2007, 243).

Articulation of Tacit Identity

As James Baldwin states, we cannot change something until it is faced. We cannot be aware of our tacit identity and thereby correct the inherence present in our society until it is made to stand out to us. Unfortunately, we have seen that, for a majority culture, facing the Other is not enough to bring forth a majority's tacit identity, largely because the Other's point of view is itself "othered," and interpreted from that normative standpoint, which further

confirms a majority's assumption of universality. For instance, requests for reasonable accommodations in Québec will be received as a threat to the preservation of its "old stock" identity and seen as a step backwards to a time when the Church had too much reach on Québec's population, which, in turn contradicts its explicit secular identity.

In the United States, protests from the African-American population over injustices are heard as an unfair challenge to the status quo, which ignores the fact that the status quo confirms White privilege and superiority. The appropriation of the "Black lives Matter" slogan into "all lives matter" is a perfect example of the Black experience falling on deaf ears and being misinterpreted by White people who see in it a challenge to equality and a demonstration of reverse-racism.

Thus, how can the tacit identity that contradicts the explicit identity be brought forth without triggering knee-jerk reactions that occurs when a majority culture is confronted to an Other? I believe the answer lies in using the majority culture's broad understanding of language in a subversive way. In using familiar and non-threatening language, references, or messengers, the majority culture might more easily notice the contradiction in their identity and put it to question because there are no obstacles on which to focus to de-legitimate the claim.

I will not go so far as to say that such message can only be heard and accepted as legitimate if the subversive messenger is part of the majority culture, nor that it can only be truly communicated by an outsider who, by not having a stake in the debate could be seen as non-threatening: what the following examples will demonstrate is that subverting the language of the majority culture can take many shapes and even be something unintended but with surprising results. For what follows, I looked for openness to

interpretation, the need for involvement, and the shock of the unfamiliar, listed at the end

of the previous chapter, as guidelines to choose examples of subtler languages. Moreover,

I have found that, given the format of this dissertation, focusing on written sources that

nonetheless meet the above guidelines would be more propitious to give a sense of the

possible ways to articulate something already not easily articulable without my own

interpretation getting in the way, as I feared it would, were I to use visual art or musical

examples. The following examples, then, can articulate the tacit, but also demonstrate what

I meant when I referred to having a broader understanding of subtler languages in the

previous chapter.

Québec

Self-interpretation

Les 36 cordes sensibles des Québécois is a work by advertising executive Jacques

Bouchard, who co-founded the first francophone advertising agency in Canada, the

Montreal-based BCP, in 1959. In this book and in its 2006 revised version, we are given

an array of sensitive spots that trigger Quebecers' emotional response, a list useful for

advertisers who already seek to reach the consumer's psyche in order to sell more consumer

goods[35]. In the wake of the Quiet Revolution, Bouchard saw a need in advertising for

campaigns tailored to the Québec population, which, he argued, was a very unique

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[35] In this example, however, I distinguish the raw material provided by Bouchard's book from the use advertisers can make of it. Indeed, as I argued in the previous chapter, advertisers tap into sensitive spots in order to get the consumer to feel something that will lead him/her to purchase the product advertised. In the case of Bouchard's work, he points to sensitive spots to which Quebecers respond strongly without venturing into why that is, nor into how that can be exploited: he merely articulates where Quebecers are likely to be triggered and he leaves to the reader the possibility to find meaning in it or to find a use for it.

consumer. Indeed, as far back as the 1950s Québec advertisers going to Toronto, where National advertising campaigns are created, would bring with them a list of differences between Anglophone and francophone consumers (Bouchard 1978, 21) but too often national ad campaigns were simply dubbed in French for the Québec market. Bouchard felt that the differences between Anglophone and Francophone consumers mattered more than advertising executives in Toronto realized. Indeed, sales of products clearly showed that the Québec consumer behaviour differed from "the fifty-six million of French who are their cousins, and from the two-hundred and twenty-five millions of Anglophones around them"[36] (20). Certain particularities of Québec consumers meant that certain products would sell better or worse in the province than in the rest of Canada and, for an advertiser like Bouchard, learning about and taking advantage of those peculiarities meant the creation of more effective advertisement.

In his first book, Bouchard points to one such particularity: Quebecers' food preferences. For instance, in the 1970s, the province had a reputation for having more of a sweet tooth (18) and buying less frozen foods—except for frozen French fries—than the rest of Canada (22). The uniqueness of Quebecers' consuming habits also concerned their response to marketing strategies, which differed from that of Anglo-Saxons: for instance, Quebecers prefer to be convinced of the superiority of a product than to be pressured with calls to "buy now!" (68). Taking this into consideration would make for more efficient advertising campaigns, Bouchard thought. Indeed, citing John V. Petrov, Bouchard quips: "trying to entice consumers without really knowing what motivates them would be equal to aiming at a target in complete darkness" (18). The advertiser, therefore, must know the

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[36] This citation and all subsequent citations from Jacques Bouchard's books are translated from the original French by this author.

people he targets with his ads—what makes them tick, what their motivations are, what they fear—in order to reach them in the most effective way possible. This is what Bouchard aimed to do with his book: to tap into the average Québécois' psyche and construct a tool to improve advertising in Québec from his findings.

Bouchard began his project to study and articulate the average Québec consumer by looking at interviews, newspaper headlines and magazines (Bouchard 1978, 17) looking for recurring trends. He also conducted interviews with a small group of people (eight people from eight different areas in the province) between 1975 and 1976. He did not seek to provide an overall sociology of Québec (17), but to generate a tool that would help produce better commercials, so he did not seek a rigorous and neutral methodology but heavily relied on his intuition and interpretation of the information gathered. Moreover, as he set out to make a tool for advertisers and creatives, who only need to tap into one or two chords at a time, the overall portrait Bouchard paints of Québec society is an aggregate of individual traits that he then grouped into a coherent unit. He viewed his book as a tool that can generalize norms and values and look for what is tacit or implied in what people say, write, believe, and care about. Bouchard listens to and reads the explicit, but sees and points to the tacit lurking behind it. Thus, "as soon as several behaviours, mostly exclusive to Quebecers, seemed to be motivated by the same thing this thing, which can have several branches, became a sensitive chord" (48). Moreover, each of these chords had to be sensitive for at least fifty percent of the population to make Bouchard's list (47). The advertising executive then began presenting his research in university conferences, and among advertisers in order to get feedback and to fine-tune his findings.

His work led him to a total of 36 chords, which he grouped under six categories, or roots. The roots can be defined as the contextual influence of Québec identity. He lists them as: Earthly, Minority, North American, Catholic, Latin, and French. To each of these roots are attached six chords, which further define the character of Québec society in terms of its context. Bouchard points out that no root is exclusive to Quebecers—for instance, the North-American root is clearly a root that would be shared with other Canadians, with Americans, and Mexicans—but the combination of roots, and the Chords connected to them will greatly differ across different contexts (Bouchard 1978, 267). Also, while Quebecers differ in the chords that speak most to them—most Quebecers will not be sensitive to all 36 chords—they will however share the same roots because they come from a similar geographical, cultural, and historical context (14). The particularities found in the roots and their chords, Bouchard argued, will transpire in Quebecers' consumer choices (20). In addition to being a tool for advertisers, however, Bouchard conceived that his book can also serve as a guide for Quebecers to decode emotional messages proposed to them, whether ideologically or commercially (49).

Regardless of the subjectivity of the work and the lack of structure to his research, Bouchard's book presents us with a fascinating rendering of Québec society that is neither flattering nor belittling, but that challenges Quebecers to look at themselves and re-evaluate their assumptions, habits, motivations and identity traits. Through his reading and interpretation of interviews and textual analysis, Bouchard brought to the fore traits that may be embarrassing or surprising, but that paint a fascinating picture of the Québec population, with its contradictions and its assumptions about its identity. By reading between the lines Bouchard brings forth a series of traits that remain tacit within Québec

society, which makes them more effectively triggered, especially because advertisement deals more with emotions than with reason.

The portrait of Québec society that transpires from Bouchard's 1978 book is a dynamic people in the midst of a transformation. It tries to find its own identity while dealing with the turmoil of having a deep attachment to traditions and to the meaning they provide, and at the same time, being open and thirsty for new things. Quebecers' hesitation between the safety of traditions and the riskiness of new experiences is expressed, for example, in two seemingly contradicting chords, namely Common Sense (51) and Lack of Practical Sense (228). Indeed, Bouchard defines Quebecers' common sense as what Balzac describes as "the sturdy intelligence of simple folks" (Bouchard 1978, 51) and, connecting it to advertisement, claims that this chord will make the Québec consumer respond better to arguments for the superiority or inferiority of a product than to a preachy ad that scares the consumer into action (51). To the Lack of Practical Sense, he associates Quebecers' tergiversation—which keeps things from moving quickly—and their preference for the familiar, for instance buying a brand they know, even if it is more expensive (229). The average Quebecer, under the light of those two chords, is portrayed as one who will require some convincing over time in order to do something unusual, like trying a new brand of detergent, or like voting "yes" to a referendum for Québec's independence.

Another telling contrast among Bouchard's chords is the one between what he sees is Québec's Inferiority Complex and its Nationalisms. He claims the inferiority complex means Quebecers need to feel valued, which results in a tendency to buy expensive things to achieve a desirable status. Publicity campaigns that would tap into this chord would need to flatter the consumer, as did a very popular beer ad at the time, which praised the

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consumer as being savvy (74). Coexisting with this complex of inferiority, however, is Nationalism, a deeply important chord to Québec identity. In terms of marketing strategy, this chord shows Quebecers' preference for local products and a desire for self-determination—"maîtres chez nous" the electoral slogan of Jean Lesage, elected Premier of Québec in 1962, taps into this sensitivity. However, Bouchard noticed that more than one nationalism seemed to coexist in 1978: as comic Yvon Deschamps described it, Quebecers want "an independent Québec within a strong Canada" or, in other words, they want to be autonomous, like everyone else (which itself can be seen as connected to another chord; sheepishness). In an arrogant way, which arguably overcompensates for the inferiority complex chord, Quebecers tend to laugh at the weak nationalism of other Canadians in comparison to theirs (Bouchard 1978, 12).

In the early 2000s Bouchard revisited his 36 chords and repeated the experiment to observe what societal and identity changes took place in the province within the last twenty years. He, once again, looked at newspaper and magazine headlines to find patterns and repeated the interviews with another group of eight people. This time around, however, he chose to interview an equal number of men and women distributed along four age groups (elderly, baby-boomers, generation X, and generation Y) (Bouchard 2006, 18). He also presented his findings at academic and advertising conferences to finalise his work. The 2006 book is still the product of observation and intuition, and in no way pretends to be scientific, but rather relies on Bouchard's interpretive skills.

Taking another look at Quebecers' 'sensitive spots' over 20 years later, Bouchard found that mentalities evolve much more slowly than trends. However, rather than a people trying to take control of its own destiny, *Les nouvelles 36 cordes sensibles des Québecois*

portrays a people concerned with personal comfort, consumerism and success, not necessarily as a people, but as individuals. Bouchard acknowledged the disappearance of certain chords like the 'inferiority complex', 'mysticism', and 'stinginess,' which may suggest that Québec in the 2000s is a more confident and modern province. Quebecers however still have contrasting chords that coexist quite well, like 'Sheepishness' and 'Individualism': Quebecers are sheepish in their need to follow fashion, to use similar ways of speaking and expressions, and in not liking to appear too different from everyone else (Bouchard 2006, 145). Yet Quebecers' individualism does not push the sheepishness into caring for others. They don't wish to stand out from the mass and thus seem to see the mass as a source of judgment. Quebecers, according to Bouchard, do not have the reputation to be generous and will tend to put up fences, clearly demarcating what is theirs (203): the mass being more of a threat than a source of strength.

An interesting change between the 1978 and the 2006 version of Bouchard's research is the Catholic Root and the chords associated with it. The root itself is still present in the latest version of the book, but while in 1978 its chords gave the sense that the way Quebecers connected to the religious was mostly inward-looking and austere, in 2006 the religious link indicates a turn to pleasures and spirituality. Bouchard sees religion in Québec as still widespread and important. Indeed, he states that "we remain traditionally and culturally Catholic, holding onto the tip of that root. For instance, 3 out of 4 babies are baptized in Québec. We baptize so we are not blamed later, so we do not pass as a pagan" (Bouchard 2006, 38). He adds that an "appetite for the sacred remains present… For example, the tithe[37], which goes back to the French regime, is still practiced in several

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[37] A contribution of one tenth of one's income for the support of the Church.

parishes: the priests' little White envelopes gather no less than 7 to 10 million dollars per year" (39). Yet Bouchard sees that, whereas the majority of Quebecers identify as Catholic (38), the place of the religious institution has clearly changed. Indeed, between the publication of the two studies, the number of youth entering the priesthood has plummeted from 402 to 3 per year; women becoming nuns went from 426 to 68 (37) and; Catholic weddings have dropped in the province by 40% between 1991 and 2006 and we can expect those numbers to be lower still, ten years after publication. Bouchard describes religion in Québec as taboo, and it is fashionable to express one's scepticism (142) even if religion remains present and important in Quebecers' identity.

With the Catholic root, and its six chords, Bouchard provides a sketch, not only of the attachment to religion present in Québec, but also of how this attachment, mixed with a focus on secularism, takes shape in Québec society. Mysticism, xenophobia, anti-mercantilism, sheepishness, fatalism, and conservatism were the six chords Bouchard attached to Québec's Catholic roots back in 1978. From those characteristics, Quebecers seemed to be a people still grappling with old traditions as they were looking to open up to the world. The Quiet Revolution was still fresh and Bouchard portrays a people questioning its traditions as it enters modernity. In 2006, the Catholic chords are: Joie de Vivre, Scepticism, Hedonism, Sheepishness, Fatalism, and Conservatism. This time Quebecers are done looking outward and focus on their own interests, comfort and life[38].

Bouchard attempted to portray Québec society as he saw it in as honest a way as possible, without proposing an idealized version. He wishes Quebecers to look at

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[38] Jacques Bouchard passed away while writing the last instalment of his book: it might have been interesting to see whether he would have changed this list during the reasonable accommodations crisis of 2007-2008.

themselves with their weaknesses and strengths, without thinking they are perfect, but without thinking they are the village idiots either (Bouchard 1978, 5). Bouchard's work and interpretation explicitly points to Québec's historical connection to religion, but he does not propose to articulate the emotional attachment behind it. His work is limited to pointing at those many chords that characterise the average Quebecer, and it is up to the reader to do the rest, namely, to determine which chords speak to one, in what way, and why.

Bouchard's project aimed at articulating identity traits, which advertisers can use to make ads more effective. As such, advertisements can reach into the population's psyche by speaking its language, and by the same token, become part of its culture through images and expressions that have a unique appeal for Quebecers. The objective of the two books was, therefore, not to emphasize contradictions and what made people uncomfortable (although looking carefully at the chords, we can certainly find ground for contradictions), but to point to elements that may lead people to recognize themselves in an ad. Thus, while Bouchard points to the things that tug at Quebecers' heartstrings, he neither explains what is behind such sensitivity nor where it comes from.

Bouchard's descriptions of the chords are themselves a sketch. He renders in broad strokes what each chord looks like, which advertisement or significant event has tapped into each chord, that is, he outlines the identity traits he sees as particularly defining of Québec society. Given that advertisement must be broad in its appeal in order to reach as many people as possible, this means the emotions that ads tap into must also be formulated in a way that lets people fill in the blank with their own story. This is also what Bouchard does with his descriptions of the chords. For example, he describes how sheepishness can

lead people to shy away from standing out and will mean that a fashion trend will really take off in Québec, or will mean that imitating others and being like others will have a lot to do with a fear of judgment. How an advertiser uses this trait, or how a regular reader will interpret this trait is open to individual perspectives.

Les 36 cordes provide a possible avenue to tap into tacit and explicit identity and the material to further explore how these chords may interact with one another in Québec society. Yet, Bouchard does not take himself too seriously and his books use a touch of humour to good-naturedly poke fun at certain idiosyncrasies of Quebecers. Moreover, as Quebecers love to talk about themselves (Bouchard 2006, 18), Bouchard's list has proven a fun exercise where readers are willing participants, agreeing or disagreeing with him. In pointing out Quebecers' quirks in a way that does neither idealize nor lampoons, the reader is not feeling under attack and may be more receptive to the array of chords Bouchard identifies, even the ones that are less flattering. The portrait Bouchard paints of Québec society is left open to the interpretation of the average Quebecer reading the book, as it will be for the advertiser who comes up with a marketing strategy based on a couple chords. Indeed, *Les 36 cordes* and *Les nouvelles 36 cordes sensibles des Québecois* present raw material about Québec society for the reader to explore and utilize. Bouchard lets the reader decide whether some chords fit with their identity and why. Bouchard's exercise aims at better advertising, but also give an opportunity for the average Quebecers to have a better sense of themselves and of Québec identity, and a ground for someone who wishes to delve further into an aspect of Québec identity to use the chords to do so.

The *Other*'s Point of View

Dany Laferrière's body of work offer a different perspective to articulate Québec's tacit identity, which he does indirectly while focusing on the immigrant experience and identity in his country of adoption. Laferrière is a Haitian-born writer who immigrated to Québec in the 1970s. Since his first book *How to Make Love to a Negro Without Getting Tired* in 1985, he has become a household name in the cultural output of the province, authoring over 20 novels, fictional memoirs, and children's books. Laferrière has achieved worldwide recognition, receiving several awards and being welcomed in the French Academy in 2013. He is a source of great pride, not only for the Québec intellectual and cultural elite, but for the province at large.

Let us look at Laferrière's latest work, as an articulation of the Québec tacit identity, in *Tout ce qu'on ne te dira pas, Mongo*[39], a chronicle he published in 2015. The book relates the author's encounter with Mongo, a young immigrant who recently arrived in Montreal. Laferrière himself left his native Haiti to settle in Montreal forty years earlier and the encounter brings back memories of his past experiences when he was himself that impetuous youth looking to conquer his new land of adoption. The book combines conversations with Mongo, personal notes and chronicles written for a radio program. A section of the book takes the form of a little guide for Mongo about Quebecers' particularities and how to "infiltrate a new culture" (Laferrière 2015, 185), in which he points to idiosyncrasies of Québec culture that can appear opaque but for the insight of one who has already been through the faux pas, the uncomfortable silences, and the setbacks involved in learning to live in a strange culture.

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[39] "Everything they won't tell you, Mongo."

Although Laferrière has lived in and has been part of Québec society and of its cultural landscape for years, he still considers himself somewhat of a remote observer and rather likes this ambiguous position where he can see people's quirks and contradictions from a certain distance. Quebecers, however, have long adopted him and consider him one of them, affectionately calling him Dany. Although he never renounced his Haitian origins and culture he has found a way to combine it with Québec identity, and it is probably his clear affection for the Québec culture that endears him to Quebecers. Still, this standpoint is neither an indication that he has not found a home in Québec nor that he still considers himself a stranger. In fact, Laferrière dislikes being labeled an "immigrant writer" or "Haitian Writer" and rather considers himself to be "of the Americas," which posits that he belongs as much to Haiti as he does to Québec (Thomas 2010 267) (Coates 1999, 911) (Thibeault, 2011, 25).

The remoteness he enjoys enables Laferrière to observe that which is similar among different peoples, but also to notice that which a people no longer notices or questions and takes for granted. With this unique perspective he gets a more complete picture of the Québec identity than do old stock Quebecers and seems to be "more deeply anchored in the country than the native can be"[40] (Morency et al. 2001, 16). As such, he describes the contradictions he sees, thereby framing the tacit in an unfamiliar way which presents what Quebecers take for granted and critiques their assumptions from a different outlook.

With *Tout ce qu'on ne te dira pas, Mongo*, we enter the perspective of the old immigrant who is no longer stranger to the Québec language and is so at home with it that he can poke good-humoured fun at Québec's contradictions and enter into a layered

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[40] This citation and the following citations from Laferrière's *Tout ce qu'on ne te dira pas, Mongo*, are this author's translation from the original French.

questioning about what it is to be an outsider who is no longer entirely on the outside. Laferrière points to certain habits and idiosyncrasies particular to Québec that are taken for granted, like smiling to be polite, which may be misinterpreted as flirting (2015, 76), the habit of giving a tour of one's apartment to new guests, or sharing highly personal details to quasi-strangers (72).

Laferrière's own experience living under Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier makes him notice another important distinction: Quebecers' habit of never living in the moment because they have never known war (281)—a trait that could also include people from most Western Countries since WWII. Such insight can only be given by an outsider who does not take for granted that their life may be upended at any moment because they have lived civil war, dictatorship, and political instability. Westerners take for granted the stability of the state and Laferrière brings attention to that sense of security and forces us to look at our privilege and realise that those living in non-Western countries and who experience war cannot afford the luxury of living for tomorrow. In Laferrière's remark, we see the clash of two worlds and worldviews; the immigrant's, who is aware of the contrast between his former context and that of the host society, and in articulating it, brings forth the latter's privileged context that makes them blasé, confident, politically apathetic and uninvolved. Tacked to the tacit sense of privilege Laferrière points to, is his critique of the West for having "copyrighted" universal values (234), which legitimizes our intolerance to others because we think they fall outside the norm.

With warmth and candor, Laferrière also notices and articulates the contradictions over religion occurring in Québec and in Quebecers' relation with otherness. His original and disarming perspective provides a new starting point for readers to re-evaluate their

assumptions. Laferrière sees religion's continued presence in Québec's psyche and claims that as a society, it keeps these religious vestiges in its culture because "we are too young to re-establish everything" (24). Indeed, he claims that Quebecers find in religion a convenient way to avoid defining their values: "we put [Catholicism] in the attic and dust it off when we need it" (25). He adds that "even though the Church is no longer a power in Québec, the Church's values are still present… Every time a religious problem springs up that we thought we had pushed to a recess of our memory: nothing is settled, and we see that in the emotional way we approach the veil issue" (222). Behind Quebecers' argument that immigrants ought to adopt Québec values and practices—as the saying goes, 'when in Rome…'—Laferrière sees an important contradiction: Quebecers like to see themselves as autonomous but they fear they may not be strong enough to shake up their culture and values (246) and instead will stick to what they know.

The Quebecers' relations with Otherness is further complicated by yet another dilemma within Québec identity, namely that while Quebecers want integration, they also love and have a fascination about outside things and tend to denigrate that which is local (246). Perhaps Laferrière sees a lingering complex of inferiority overcompensated by a tendency towards xenophobia (which would be behind the demand for integration), although Laferrière notices that the mere presence of the immigrant has already contributed to changing Québec. The replacement of morals with identity is a clear indication for him: "we no longer speak, as we once did, of what is good or bad, but of what identifies us or what does not" (55). He notices that Quebecers have turned their religious attachment into cultural and patrimonial connections, an argument they believe is easier to win.

While having a keen sense of observation about Quebecers' contradictions and problems of identity, Laferrière is also versed in the culture of his province of adoption and uses it skillfully to subvert the "us vs. them" perception to which he points. He brings up the myth of the "survenant" (the outlander) for whom Catholic families once set a place at the dinner table, should someone in need knock at the door. "Outlander" describes the main character of a 1945 novel of the same name by Germaine Guévremont, but is also deeply connected to the Catholic notion of charity. Laferrière uses the myth to appeal to Quebecers' emotional connection to religion to remind them that the stranger is constitutive of Québec's secular and religious identity, and so is receiving him or her into one's home (151).

Laferrière does not blame Quebecers for their reserve towards a newcomer's insight. He explains that one should not expect a host society to hear one's remarks and to accept them right away. The reticence towards the Other exists on the basis of time. He tells Mongo that one who is used to their mother's soup will not eat a stranger's soup, even if the stranger is adamant that theirs is better. After a time, he will be welcome to offer his soup but he must wait (200). Laferrière himself, in having lived in Québec and related his own experience for decades, can offer his own soup: he will be heard when he contributes to discussions about Québec identity and his insight will be deemed valuable.

Writing in various styles, often combining several in one book, Laferrière keeps the readers on their toes. He travels between works of fiction and memoir and his protagonist is usually a semi-fictional version of himself. Laferrière's approach to writing is to "warp facts in order to get all the juices out of them" (109). In walking the line between fiction and facts, he presents the reader with his view of Québec, in a way that eschews knee-jerk

reactions because of his disarming vision. Quebecers love to be talked about and Laferrière gives them this pleasure, while forcing them to look at themselves through his eyes, which are, in a way, theirs also. With Laferrière's work, the tacit is brought forth by an outsider (albeit familiar and respected) who is still removed enough—he has a double nationality, he lived ten years in the United States, and presently spends his time between Québec and France—to see the tacit identity at play in in the province's contradictions, and describes it as a culture's particularity.

Laferrière's book has an important message for both Mongo and his readers, which is that integration takes time, not only for the immigrant, but also for the host society. He looks back at his own journey into Québec culture and reminds his readers that it took him 40 years to understand Quebecers the way he does. Expecting immigrants to immediately blend unnoticed into the host culture is not only hypocritical, it also robs society of the desire and the opportunity to enrich itself with all that the immigrant has to offer, not the least among which is their outlook on their host society. In this message, Laferrière is echoing Charles Taylor's assumption that minorities and host societies, through interaction, can end up changing one another toward a peaceful and enriching coexistence, Taylor himself taking a cue from Gadamer's fusion of horizons.

Laferrière disarms his readers because his love for his place of adoption, and his active participation in attempting to answer questions of identity that Québec currently faces, trumps any anger or resentment toward his sometimes pointed critiques. As an *immigré*[41], he has reflected for a long time about what it means to belong to a place and to

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[41] In French the word *immigrant* signifies someone who immigrates, whereas the word *immigré* signifies someone who has immigrated. Laferrière, having lived in Québec for nearly forty years, is no longer immigrating. Given there are no equivalent in the English language, I find the use of the French word proper here.

a people, and he is still trying to find answers, which is perhaps why Quebecers appreciate his insight. Laferrière reminds us that "identity is not simply about pride. Having an identity is also the capacity for facing one's past and daring to open the closets and take out the skeletons" (Coates 1999, 916). Whereas he has no quick solution to Québec's contradictions about otherness, the process of questioning himself and sharing his thoughts offers avenues that could be explored for an answer. By pointing at sensitive spots via a common language that is both familiar and new—by bringing his own soup to the collective meal—he brings forth the tacit identity and points to some of its consequences, thereby opening up opportunities for discussions, thinking and questioning.

United States

Historical Parallels

With *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, author, Civil Rights lawyer, and legal scholar Michelle Alexander brings forth and articulates the American tacit identity of White superiority by connecting a contemporary phenomenon with a historical period that was notoriously discriminatory and racist to the African-American population. She aims to bring forward the underlying systemic racism that is expressed through Mass Incarceration but that tacit prejudices and assumptions about Black people have pushed out of awareness[42].

Michelle Alexander brings to the fore, articulates, and challenges the taken-for-

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[42] Alexander is one of many authors who have looked into the subject of mass incarceration and its racial connection, among which: David G. Embrick, 2014; Paul Butler, 2017; Angela Davis, 2005, 2017; Ta-Nehisi Coates, 2015 and; Robyn Maynard 2017.

granted White superiority and privilege present in American society through a methodical account of all aspects behind the making of what she terms the new racial caste system and its effect on Black lives. In comparing Mass Incarceration with the years of Jim Crow, she argues that racism is as present now as it was then, in spite of the post-racial discourse and ideology currently in vogue. She presents the reader with a portrait of America whose attitude towards Black people has not changed but has simply become cognitively dissonant. Working against the tacit assumption that White perspective and standards are universal, challenging a system reaffirming this assumption, and calling out the colourblind language that makes any constructive discussion about race almost impossible, Alexander attempts to force a difficult shift in perspective by recalling a past system that has been broadly understood as racist.

The New Jim Crow, Alexander tells us, begins with the "war on drugs," initiated by trying to counter a crack cocaine epidemic[43]. Briefly put, her claim is that Black people are disproportionately arrested for non-violent crimes and law enforcement, the justice, and prison system is rigged to keep them in a racial undercaste. To begin with, mass Incarceration is maintained by an enlarged mandate given to police officers to fight the drug war (Alexander 2010, 132-133), which leads to the rise of selective enforcement, arrests, and searches, thereby setting up Black men—in treating them automatically as criminals—for a life of crime (332). Police officers and departments are provided with incentives to wage war on drugs such as new equipment and the opportunity to keep the goods acquired during a search (141-143). In addition, the justice system, rather than

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[43] Ta-Nehisi Coates, for instance, makes a comparison with the opioid crisis, which largely affects a White population and is met with sympathy, and the crack epidemic, which was largely a problem of Black communities and was met with enforcement and mass arrests (2017, 79).

helping those who have been charged with non-violent, drug-related offenses, contributes to mass imprisonment of Black people; public defenders are overworked and cannot properly defend their clients; drug offenders are given mandatory sentences and; prosecutors' tactics—pleading guilty to get a lower prison sentence, for example—ensures those arrested end up in jail, whether or not there were evidence against them (173). Moreover, even when out of prison, parolees are entered into a game they cannot win, being responsible for court fees, having to abide by strenuous restrictions that make it almost impossible not to fail to comply to the conditions of their parole (178-9). The portrait Alexander paints is one of a cottage industry efficient in keeping a population in jail, but also efficient in keeping itself profitable. As she notes, Mass Incarceration has become a system difficult to dismantle because it provides employment and is a great source of revenue to the states (402). Her book gives us a picture of a system of discrimination that has its roots in the culture and is deeply embedded into the economy and, as such, is difficult to stop.

Alexander proceeds to describe the similarities between the Mass Incarceration system and Jim Crow, starting with "a familiar stigma and shame. There is an elaborate system of control, complete with political disenfranchisement and legalized discrimination in every major realm of economic and social life. And there is the production of racial meaning and racial boundaries" (319). First, Jim Crow and Mass Incarceration both come to the fore as attempts "to exploit the resentments, vulnerabilities, and racial biases of poor and working-class whites for political or economic gain" (319), The racially-coded rhetoric did not propose solutions but promoted a crackdown on the problematic "other," and in both cases politicians competed amongst themselves to demonstrate they were tougher on

crime than their predecessors (320). Discrimination against black people is still as legal nowadays as it was during Jim Crow, as long as someone is labeled felon (321). Once a black felon enters the age of majority, he is for the rest of his life living in a parallel society in which legal discrimination is widespread and keeps him form fully integrating society, which is also reminiscent of Jim Crow (320). During segregation, black voters were discouraged to vote—although it was their legal right to do so—with poll taxes, literacy tests and restrictions on voting if one had committed a felony. Mass incarceration upholds the felony disenfranchisement law and adds to it the new version of a poll tax that must be paid by ex-felons who wish to regain their right to vote (323). Another parallel with Jim Crow is that currently, claims of racial bias are increasingly difficult to legally challenge, especially as it pertains to any step of the Mass Incarceration system, from stop-and-frisks to sentencing, recalling the "separate but equal" claim of Jim Crow which rendered moot cases trying to argue for racial discrimination (325).

To these parallels Alexander adds physical and residential segregation. During Jim Crow, laws ordered that black and white people live in different parts of town, and black people lived in areas that lacked basic services like roads and sewer systems. The result was that whites, who rarely had to see where black people lived, largely ignored their situation. With Mass Incarceration, Alexander compares the packing away of black men in prisons away from large residential population in a way that also keeps them and the reality of Mass Incarceration out of sight (326). In addition, if parolees are made to return to inner-city neighbourhoods, where most African-Americans live, the mere presence of other former inmates concentrated in a small area means it is difficult to not violate the conditions of their parole (328). Finally, Mass Incarceration draws a parallel to Jim Crow in that both

have defined Blackness: under Jim Crow Black people were second-class citizens, and with the Mass Incarceration system, they are criminals. Arrests focused on Black people cover the fact that White people have a similar behaviour when it comes to drug use, but are simply not randomly stopped by police like black people are (Alexander, 330). While "Black crime" is a familiar term, the term "White crime" is nonsensical, which points to the double standard[44]: "[w]hiteness mitigates crime, whereas blackness defines the criminal" (332). With the "war on drugs" the racial stigma has taken the form of a stigma against criminality, which is not racist on its own, although in the public imagination, the archetypal criminal is usually Black (333).

Restrictions imposed on Black people, in the Jim Crow era sound familiar with the new racial caste system, from arbitrary arrests, to the type of defense available, to the undercaste to which they are labeled, and, as with Jim Crow, those restrictions limit their voting rights, their access to affordable housing, employment, food stamps, etc. However, the major difference with Jim Crow is that the language used to justify Mass Incarceration is purposefully non-racial, that is to say, there is no overt racial hostility associated with the "war on drugs." As such, the argument for the colourblindness of Mass Incarceration holds, even if 90% of the incarcerated population is African-American (342) and the assumption that Black people have more of a criminal behaviour than Whites is thereby confirmed.

Alexander makes a point to challenge post-racial discourse by presenting the reader with a detailed portrait of the racial caste system that has been created and maintained

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[44] Coates illustrates another aspect of this double standard when, referring to the behaviour of then presidential candidate Donald Trump, bragging about sexually assaulting women and claiming he could shoot someone on 5th avenue and still keep his popularity, he points to the fact that no Black candidate could ever have gotten away with such claims (2017, 77).

without uttering the word "race" (16). Whereas there can be non-racist explanations for each aspect of the Mass Incarceration system, the overall picture that all those constitutive elements paint bring forth a strong feeling that the game is rigged (446). Her thorough articulation of every aspect of the system points to White privilege and its assumption of superiority and universality as the cause behind the new racial undercaste, which itself contradicts another aspect of American identity: the much loved American creed with its claim to universal freedom and equality. Her account challenges readers to reflect on their own biases about race and the Mass Incarceration system and on what they think is behind those biases.

By providing the reader with a systematic account of how Mass Incarceration is biased against African-Americans, Michelle Alexander puts to question the association of Blackness with criminality. She demonstrates how prejudices that have been present for generations do not disappear as soon as they are rejected, but rather remain powerful in new formulations adapted to the present context. Mass Incarceration embodies the persistent historical racial bias against Black people in a way that adapts to the aspect of American identity which embraces universal equality, takes pride in having elected a Black president, and is blind to the underlying systemic racism that comes with white privilege. From this perspective, Mass Incarceration is merely a reflection of a problem isolated to a certain group of people who have chosen a life of crime and therefore who deserve to be arrested. Alexander demonstrates how the underlying tacit identity which still considers Whiteness as superior continues to impede the attainment of the American ideal of freedom and equality with which all Americans identify by turning a racial bias into a cultural issue. With her methodical description of the Mass Incarceration system, she invites readers to

question their assumptions and to reflect on the reasons behind the continued presence of the tacit White superior identity and on its effect in American society.

Humour and Satire

For nine years, *The Colbert Report* (2005-2014) poked fun at every aspect of American Politics and Stephen Colbert established his reputation as a brilliant satirist, "problematiz[ing] notions of certainty, stable reality and absolute truth" (Combe 2015, 298). Playing the part of a neo-conservative pundit à-la Bill O'Reilly or Sean Hannity, Colbert brought to question the post-racial discourse and certain conservative pundits' strategies, or what he calls "truthiness," that is, "truth that comes from the gut, not books" (*Report.* 17-10-2005). The satire of Colbert's performance is based on remaining in character, even during interviews, and pretending to hold conservative views while at the same time lampooning the conservative arguments he appears to defend. Colbert, in his role as a conservative pundit, seems non-threatening and familiar to White conservatives, and utilizes his character to twist familiar discourses around to point at their absurdity or lack of logic, thereby forcing the audience to check their own beliefs.

Colbert's comedy comes in the age of post-racism, where "[r]ace becomes this antiquated signifier that marks only how far the nation has come in redressing racial injustice and ignores how far we must go" (Rossing 2012, 47). Thus, to bring up issues of race in this context would indicate one's refusal to embrace the end of racism, thereby making one racist—or reactionary—simply by articulating reality in terms of racial power-dynamics. Colbert subverts the post-racial discourse in a way that brings forth the tacit White superiority identity: he uses the language of White privilege in a way that brings it

out of hiding behind post-racism and that challenges the normativity of both discourses. "Colbert's work is an implicit critique of post-racism and Whiteness from the position of a White male who ostensibly advocates postracialism" (Rossing 46). He takes advantage of the authority his Whiteness and his gender give him and uses it to destabilize his audience. For instance, never breaking out of character as an embodiment of post-racial openness, he asks *Beloved* author Toni Morrisson whether he would be a racist if he thought about racism, subsequently repeating his familiar post-racial jibe: "I don't see race. I don't even see my own. People tell me I'm White and I believe them because I have never read any of your books" (*Report*. 19-11-2014).

Colbert's comedy moves beyond the post-racial language and ideology by pointing to the ever present disparities between Black and White American experiences. For example, he pushes the colourblind language to its absurd extreme when he refers to slavery as America's "Unpaid African Internship Program" (Colbert 2012, 14). Elsewhere, he also brings forth and problematizes White male privilege, arguing that "male Caucasians in America were politically powerless. As colonial subjects of the English these White men were oppressed by an even Whiter man" (Colbert 2008), thereby equating Whiteness with oppression. Colbert also frames equality as a zero-sum game when he claims, in his Esquire editorial, that with Barack Obama came a "historical opportunity…for all White men to feel powerless" (Colbert 2012, 14) thus declaring White privilege under threat of equality: indeed, if Whiteness loses its privilege, it can only become inferior because it is no longer 'more equal than others'. Indeed, by appropriating Martin Luther King Jr.'s speeches, Colbert points out the White assumption that freedom is not meant for all, but is rather a privilege: "Who knows? With John McCain as our ghostly White beacon to guide us, we

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may finally re-reach that mountaintop… and proudly proclaim, "Free at last, free-er at last, thank God almighty, we are free-est at last!" (Colbert 2008).

Colbert is aware that his humour comes from a place of privilege, one that a Black comedian is less likely to have. He holds a "fun house mirror to contemporary culture" and thereby "distorts, exaggerates and reframes in ways that invite audiences to see themselves and society from new vantage points" (Rossing 46). As an example, in a segment on the Ferguson shooting in August 2014, Colbert contrasts the events in Ferguson with the standoff between the federal government and the armed Cliven Bundy clan in the spring of 2014[45]. In this segment, he asks Black people why they cannot be like the Bundy supporters: "They were armed, and they dared the cops to shoot them and nothing happened. Just figure out whatever was different about them and you'll be fine!" (*Report*. 27-08-2014). On the first degree, this joke suggests that it is Black people's fault if they are shot by police and that acting like Whites would solve their problem. This brings out the assumption that White standards are universal, and that, once again it is a matter of character flaw if Blacks are mistreated: they just do not act the proper, that is, the White way. "Since context gives rise to meaning, Colbert will displace the concept from the truth-system that supports it, thereby unmasking its basic absurdity" (Combe 301). In this case, the satire of Colbert's statement brings to the fore the stark difference with which law enforcement deals with Black and White folks. Merely imagining what would happen if

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[45] In the spring of 2014, Cliven Bundy and hundreds of his supporters held an armed standoff against the American Government. This was the culmination of a 20-year-old dispute between Bundy and the Federal government, which claimed the former had been letting his cattle graze on Federal lands without paying the necessary fees. When armed government agents came to confiscate the cattle, the standoff threatened to become violent and the agents backed down. Colbert used this example to point to the blatant discrepancy between the relatively low level of violence in the handling of a white, armed mob, and the killing of an unarmed black man suspected of the robbery of a convenience store.

Black people were to organise a standoff similar to that of Bundy and his supporters not only highlights the bias present in members of the law enforcement and in the justice system, it also reveals the inherent unreflective bias present in White identity that is the assumption of racial superiority. In a context where White privilege is unnoticed, colourblind discrimination and postracial discourse will seem reasonable.

Through his satirical approach, Colbert points to the inherent and unreflective assumptions behind post-racial discourse and "truthiness" without being unequivocal, thereby leaving a large space for the audience's interpretation, not in terms of the tacit identity pointed at, but also with regard to the personal connections associated with it. Yet, the strength of Colbert's message is in unsettling the viewer, giving the semblance of familiarity in being, yet another White male voice on television, but expressing views that challenge the viewer's expectations. By making the familiar unfamiliar, Colbert opens up the possibility of questioning one's assumptions: "it is within spaces not marked as necessarily pedantic or particularly threatening that folks might actually become open to questioning their ideological presuppositions—whether during their spectatorial experience or in their postviewing musings" (Haggins 2007, 243).

However, it has been suggested that perhaps Colbert's comedy plays too much with ambiguity for his message to be at all effective. In fact, some critiques claim that even this attempt at challenging the familiar is lost on people because some may not be sophisticated enough to understand satire and consequently only see what they want to see in Colbert's act. His comedy requires active participation and critical thinking from the viewer, which is a dramatic change from the passive receptivity 'serious' pundits expect from their viewers (Combe 302). Because Colbert does not get out of character, and is not providing

his audience with context and external cues that "aids viewers' interpretation" like John Stewart did during his years at the helm of *The Daily Show*, it is argued that Colbert "created conditions under which biased processing is likely to occur" (LaMarre et al. 2009, 216), which assumes that people will only take his comedy at the first degree. Critics either point to the ambiguity characteristic of satire as a risk to reaffirm the realities it hopes to ridicule (Paroske 2016, 211), or refer to the lack of sophistication of the viewership, only seeing what benefits them when faced with ambiguous information (LaMarre, 213). Indeed, a study demonstrates that conservatives will take what Colbert says as genuine and as a support of their own opinion while liberals will also see Colbert's comedy as aligned with their own political views and "just kidding" about his holding conservative views (LaMarre, 223-4).

Deadpan satire forces the audience to question what they are told and to use some critical thinking in paying attention to who the messenger is, what the context is, and what is said in that context. It is patronising to assume that an audience will not be sophisticated enough to grasp this kind of humour. Whereas "[t]he possibility of problematic interpretations of racial humour is inescapable…that possibility cannot be cause to reject artistic and creative critical discourses" (Rossing, 53). In forcing people to question the information they are given, in challenging certain discourses, and in bringing forth the absurdity of certain claims, Colbert can be seen as having a function akin to that of a "public journalist" (Faina 2012, 542). Indeed, "the combination of Colbert's incongruous humour and engaged discourse about the comedy has potential to intervene progressively in racial politics" (Rossing 54).

Thus, Colbert articulates the tacit identity of White superiority and its conflict with

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the explicit identity that genuinely promotes and believes in the American creed. He does so through satire which forces the audience to reflect on what he says and engages his comic discourse as a tool "of interrogation and moral rebuke in the contemporary landscape of mediated politics" (Jones et al. 2012, 37). In shaking up his audience, lulling them with familiarity before pulling the rug from under their feet with satire and absurd statements, he opens the way for a re-evaluation of one's assumptions and how they contribute to society's bias. "Humor offers a tactic for rendering Whiteness visible and salient without the need to name it explicitly" (Rossing 49) and in the case of Stephen Colbert, he counts on his White male privilege to make his White audience more open and more subjective to the message behind his satire. Whereas Colbert's message may be misinterpreted, "the possibility of multiple readings augments the imperative for scholars and educators to engage these popular comic discourses" and "may be a key to mobilizing these …discourses and including broader audiences in the message of progressive racial education" (Rossing 53). Colbert provides the beginning of a dialogue, and not a solution to the contradicting identities that gave rise to post-racial ideology. It is therefore up to us to use and deconstruct his comedy to more explicitly bring forth the tacit identity, the process of which can still give room to questioning our personal attachment to it.

This chapter has demonstrated what tensions between the tacit and explicit identities in a majority culture look like in reality. Each example's specific context has also served to illustrate how a tacit identity comes to have such influence on a population and cause tensions with minorities. On the one hand, Québec is caught in an impasse where its tacit attachment to its Catholic root as source of meaning clashes with its attempt to deal

with minorities under the claim of secularism. On the other hand, the United States still grapples with a detested but tacit assumption of White superiority that conflicts with explicit belief in equality and liberty for all and hides behind post-racial discourse. In the case of Québec, the result is disingenuous arguments for getting rid of ostentatious religious symbols and garb in the public space, all the while justifying the presence of Catholic Religious symbols under the claim of culture and history. In the case of the United States, the result of the conflicting tacit and explicit identity manifests through the historical back-and-forth of Black people's condition, from the Reconstruction, to the Black codes, to Jim Crow, to the Civil Rights Movement, to the current war on drugs, Mass Incarceration and the post-racial discourse.

We can see the political consequences that the tacit identity of majority cultures can have on minorities, especially when a society is built around the values, assumptions and preferences of the majority. Québec's uneasiness with religious minorities led to a law that regulates the most visible—and vulnerable—members of a religious minority, giving Muslim women who wear a niqāb the choice between uncovering, or not engaging fully in society. Bill 62 requires, without pointing explicitly to any religious denomination, that all people receiving or providing public services must have their face uncovered, which ends up restricting the sort of work and interaction in which Muslim women who cover their face with a veil can engage. The United States' systemic racism is also a demonstration of the political effects of the tacit identity on minorities, restrictive voting laws, lack of funding for inner-city schools, acquittal for White policemen accused of killing unarmed Black men, being but a few examples.

For minorities, it is easy to be mindful of their particularities when they are living

among people who live according to different standards. Yet, majorities, as we have seen previously, are not as inclined to see minorities as a proof that their perspective is not the only valid one because their number tells them that it is. The examples above are used as possibilities to bring forth and articulate the conflict that is so difficult to see when an aspect of one's identity is tacit. Through those examples, we have seen that it may be difficult to point to contradictions in a population's identities, especially when there is a discourse in use that already provides a way to justify and maintain the status quo that proves very useful whenever the majority culture is challenged in its assumptions.

To echo the conclusions of the last chapter, namely that the familiar must become unfamiliar in order to emerge from the background and noticed anew, we have provided examples of articulations of the tacit, that uncover and question it in a way that challenges its normality in a way that seems non-threatening. Using the majority culture's language, each example begins from a familiar place and leads the reader or audience to challenge its assumptions without turning to its usual defences. Whereas the authors cited as examples are not expressly referring to the tensions between tacit and explicit identities, they are however sensing that a contradiction exists that needs to be pointed out. While Colbert and Alexander point in their own way to the remaining presence of latent racism in American society, despite the arguments to the contrary, Laferrière and Bouchard depict Quebecers as full of contradictions and idiosyncrasies, which makes the religious attachment to Catholicism appear as one quirk among others.

Those examples in addition give us a framework from which to begin a discussion about the tacit identities, and give us a better sense of the connections between individual and collective identities. Stephen Colbert emphasises systemic racism through the

discourse of denial of his white male conservative character; Michelle Alexander appeals to the collective acknowledgment of the racism of the Jim Crow era to appeal to her readers' own sensitivity and sense of outrage in the face of Mass Incarceration; Jacques Bouchard gives a portrait of Québec that leaves the readers to mix and match which chord resonates with their own identity and which resonates with their perception of Québec society, and; Dany Laferrière gives his readers an intimate glimpse into his own interpretation of Quebecers as a whole and shows it its reflection as seen through the eyes of an old *immigré*.

The examples combine familiarity with controversial issues, and increase the receptivity of the audience as it faces a contentious aspect of its identity. They also leave room for each person to make the connection to the tacit identity and their own assumptions from a personal standpoint. We have seen that tacit identity affects not only personal perceptions but also shapes the larger society which reflects its premises and claims in its institutions. It is therefore clear that personal attachment to a group identity perpetuate its presence and contributes to its effect on the political. The tacit aspects of a group identity, especially when it comes to a majority culture that has built its institutions around this identity, is an important factor, not only affecting policies and institutions, but also influencing a population's self-conception, its place in the world, and its view of what it should want.

The above examples, however, are not enough on their own to articulate a tacit identity and to lead a culture of the majority to notice and question what it takes for granted. Such articulation must enable discussion and questioning as part of a societal project. The issue is then to find out how to enable an open discussion about a people's identity without

being hindered by the tacit identity peering through the standards and rules regulating public discourse. While the use of subtler languages can point to sensitive spots and provide a possible avenue to explain contradictions in identity, it remains open-ended, and leaves its interpretation largely free and personal. Is it then possible to bring forth and address tacit identity as a people? What is the place of the tacit aspect of identity in the political?

Conclusion—A Political Outlook for Tacit Identity

Tacit aspects of identity provide us with a framework from which an understanding of contradictory elements in a culture can emerge. We can notice such contradictions when a culture of the majority promotes and proudly identifies with certain values but appears to undermine those values through its institutions and its policies regulating the presence of minorities. Consequently, regardless of which values a society chooses to promote, this project calls for a conscious awareness in majority cultures of the presence of a tacit identity, and of the contradicting values it implies. With this awareness, a cultural group would be able to make a decision about what part of its identity—and the values associated with it—is most important and worth defending because it defines its people. For instance, acknowledging that liberal values are contextual and non-universal might enable cultures that take liberalism for granted to review its values from a critical standpoint. Indeed, for both majority cultures in Québec and in the United States, the tacit elements of identity that seep through the liberal myth must be brought to the fore so that each majority culture can finally determine which of these contradicting identities are most important: the liberal values that promote freedom and equality, or the attachment to an old worldview that explicitly denies those values.

To begin, we based this project on a specific assumption of human nature, that is, its conception as embedded, dialogical and cultural, which means that, as beings who are thrown in the world, our environment shapes our view of reality. As contextual beings, our outlook on the world and our place in it will differ according to the context that is

specifically ours. It will influence our own self-concept and determine the kinds of dialogue we will enter into with the people close to us but also with the community at large and this interaction will in turn contribute to shaping our identity. Identity is therefore crucial to orient us in the world, both in relation to others and in terms of what we consider our purpose, and as such we feel very strongly about the meaning it provides for us. Thus, identity is not simply something that we can arbitrarily change, without consequence, if it no longer suits us because it is connected to our way of seeing the world and ourselves, which is not easily replaceable. This outlook on the world and our self-conception, in turn, shape policies and institutions in society, reflecting the attitude it has towards its population, most specifically towards minority groups. Briefly put, then, identity is at the root of our perception of the world and of our actions upon it, but it is also shaped by that world and the specific context to which we are exposed, our identity perpetually entering into dialogue with our world and mutually changing the other.

To be fully aware of our context is, as we have seen, an impossible task. As multifaceted and complex as it is, our context will never fully reveal itself to us. In other words, we can never be entirely cognizant of everything that influences or shapes us and our view of the world. Indeed, we are aware that different languages lead to different ways of thinking, or that different cultures have different practices, but we cannot tell in precisely what way our language shapes our thoughts, or what specific practices are directly attributable to our culture until we learn a different language, or are exposed to other cultures. As the saying goes, fish do not know they live in water.

Just as fish have an existence contextualised by water, the alternatives among which we choose are a product of our context and can only make sense within it. Thus, our choices

will express our context and its influence. Although we are rational actors, able to decide and think for ourselves, our context nonetheless provide us with a framework from which certain things are possible and through which we exert our agency. In other words, the influence of our context does not preclude being an agent: our agency is possible within a framework of possibilities that we have not chosen. Thus the act of choosing, even though it is from a limited range of plausible alternatives and partly the result of unconscious biases, is the act of an agent.

In the debate over individualism or community, therefore, the embedded, contextual and cultural self comes as an alternative to other conceptions of identity, like the conceptions coming from the liberal and communitarian ideal types. Indeed, agency is not impossible in the presence of any external forces: to be in dialogue with our context—whether it is through our community, our friends, or through our family—implies agency to reject or embrace their influence. As embedded individuals, the impossibility to bracket our world means that we can never be entirely objective, but it also means that we can never be a thoroughly unencumbered self either. While, as individuals, we can use our agency to embrace or reject certain influences from our world, this agency nonetheless depends on whether we are aware of these influences. We have seen how complex identities are, and because of this complexity, we have also seen that it is impossible for us to be fully and thoroughly aware of all aspects of our context, of all our interactions with it and the extent to which it influences us. This is especially the case when we are so familiar with our particularities that we cease to notice them and assume that they are simply a feature of reality for everyone else.

The world within which certain possibilities can make sense, and the elements in

our context that affect our decisions are often tacit and thus influence us without our awareness. Our embedded nature also means that we will make decisions about our world based on how we interpret our context, and this interpretation will shape our context in turn. For majority cultures, this means that their perception of a minority will be shaped by their context and their decisions relating to coexistence will reflect the context's influence. In other words, the ethnic and cultural homogeneity of old-stock Quebecers, combined with its Christian background and its minority status in Canada has shaped its relationship with minorities within the province, whether it is with First Nations, or with the Muslim population. A context will also affect the political, whether it is in terms of its institutions, its discourses, or in terms of certain decisions made by the state's representatives.

The presence of others can confirm our view of the world when they identify with the same elements as we do, but their presence can also serve as a challenge, and as yet, another source of influence that becomes part of our experience. From a political perspective, the sharing of a group identity means that the world view of a majority culture—which in both our examples hold the balance of power—will inevitably transpire in the policies, decisions, and in the discourses made in an official capacity: it will reflect the biases and perception of the cultural majority, tacit and explicit. In effect, the white superiority assumption present in the United States demonstrates that the racial bias, even if it is openly rejected, remains present in the structure of the state through its policies. From a dialogical standpoint, therefore, our interactions with our world and with the people in it within the particularities of our context shape our identity and our outlook on the world. Consequently, a tacit, yet institutionalised discrimination against a minority group in a dialogical context will influence the larger population's perception of that group, but

it will also influence that group's perception of itself. In Canada, for instance, the widespread tacit and explicit discrimination against First Nations, which not only comes from Canadian institutions but also from the general population—and which is demonstrated by the indifference with which issues concerning First Nations are discussed or ignored in the media—contributes to project a negative image of Indigenous peoples, not only to the population in general, but to the First Nations population as well. Our dialogical nature means that a prevalent discourse, which is reflected in every aspect of a society will certainly influence members of that society.

Identity, we have determined, is not free-standing and disconnected from those around us: it has different levels that define our membership to certain communities, our relationship with our significant others, and our self-conception as independent individuals. As such, we share language, customs, beliefs, myths, and values, sometimes with society at large and sometimes with a few of our peers. The elements constituting our identity may be chosen for us, or we may choose them. Yet, regardless of the provenance of those elements of our identity, the meaning we attach to them is largely determined individually. Moreover, while it is possible to hold values and beliefs in direct opposition to those of our significant others or to society as a whole, their articulation remains within a certain language that allows for intelligibility with others sharing a similar context. This is what we identified as the cultural aspect of our nature. The necessity to be intelligible restricts the range of possible interventions that can happen in the political realm, not only in terms of languages, but also in terms of values, references, and customs. In both our examples, majority cultures have determined the realm of intelligibility but also of acceptability to which one must comply in order to effectively participate in society. In a majority culture

that harbors tacit biases against certain minorities, the range of intelligibility may be so stringent that it simply shuts down the ability of some groups to be heard.

What transpires in the restrictions over acceptable interventions is that they are often based on tacit elements within the identity of majority cultures. Indeed, when we share the same context with a large group that is not competing with any other group, we tend to forget what would otherwise be noticed as contingent and not universal in a different context. This is where tacit identity comes in to influence politics: in a culture of the majority, which determines power relations, majority cultures will frame political interactions within its own language, to its own advantage, and will approach otherness from the assumption that the majority context is universal and by definition right. Such position towards the values and self-conceptions of minorities not only limit the range of interactions possible with minorities, it also sidesteps any opportunity for the majority culture to be aware and evaluate its own motivations.

Thus, in societies with a majority culture there is an assumption of universality and the reinforcing conviction that majority is a proof of rightness, which inevitably renders "others" as wrong. This, we have seen, is how a society's tacit identity contrasts with the explicit elements of its identity: with the tension between secularism and the preservation of Catholic symbols in Québec and the systemic racism that contradicts the liberal values that the United States champions. In both cases a tacit element of identity undermines an explicit identity's values and narrative and when something brings it to the fore, it is explained away with claims of culture preservation, in the case of Québec, or of postracial discourses, in the case of the United States. The above examples show that majority groups are quite happy to keep a status quo that preserves their privileged position, which does not

require any self-evaluation or an adjustment of their assumption of universality. Unfortunately, events such as the Charlottesville protests or the mosque shooting in Québec city will keep underlining the unsustainability of the status quo and will keep pressuring majorities to adapt to these changes. Unless cultures of the majority are ready to address the presence and influence of a tacit identity, it will continue to cause tensions and undermine the explicit identity it embraces.

Political thinkers emerging from such majority cultures tend to take for granted the universal applicability of their theories, which are rooted in their specific context, and as a result overlook the exclusion implied in their views. Hence, taking into account the tacit identity and its contextual character gives a new angle to evaluate such theories and emphasizes the dimensions in which they fall short.

The appeal of a theory like liberalism[46] is that it takes into account the inevitability of plurality in any group of people without assuming that this diversity makes a cohesive state impossible. A people who has gathered together and established a society with a political system to regulate it will inevitably hold a diverse conception of what the good life is. Liberalism thus emphasizes the freedom necessary to express plurality and limits the role of the state to enabling individual freedom to pursue people's own ends. It is therefore not the purview of the state to decide for its population what the good life is. This way, by shifting questions about the good to outside of the political, the state can have a universal and neutral appeal and focus on pursuing freedom in the form of individualism

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[46] This section evaluates certain major theories from the tacit identity perspective. The reference to these theories is, once again to their ideal type, the aim here being to point out the tacit bias on which they rely, and not to provide a comprehensive account of these theoretical traditions.

and self-interest.

From the incommensurable conceptions of the good, a people can enter into debates about the best way to enable and protect individual freedoms through a reliance on reason. More specifically, John Rawls has asserted that political debates can avoid biases and interest-based arguments because they would rely on a "reasonable" conception of pluralism, or in other words, on the interaction and debates among "reasonable comprehensive doctrines" (Rawls 2005, xviii). This view of political liberalism thus claims to provide a set of neutral rights, principles and procedures within which debates among incommensurable pluralism can take place, tossing aside contentious issues of religion and morality and limiting debate to issues the political can address (Mouffe 1993, 139).

Critics of liberalism have broadly challenged its claims to neutrality and universality by pointing at the values implied in such concepts as individuality and self-interest. The notion of reasonableness itself also implies a context-based value judgment that takes for granted its liberal framework as a universal standard. To describe reasonableness reflects the language of the culture in power and, consequently, cannot be neutral. Rawls' claims that "a conception of justice for a democratic society presupposes a theory of human nature… which presupposes a theory of how democratic institutions are likely to work" (Rawls 2005, 346) could suggest that if such view of justice is contextual, so will be its institutions but he assumes his theory of justice can be free from valuations and be neutral, which would make democratic institutions neutral themselves. The liberal theory of human nature fails to consider that, given our contextual nature, there is no theory about human nature that is not somehow shaped by preconceived notions associated to a society's context.

Certain branches of liberalism also take for granted that it is possible to determine what is objectively right by simply bracketing our particular interests, so that they do not skew our universal view: we see this with those standing behind Rawls's veil of ignorance. If, however, we acknowledge that, as embedded beings, we cannot escape our context in its entirety, we see that such bracketing is merely a failure to notice a context that is so familiar it has become tacit and part of the background. Liberal political thought overlooks the presence and influence of power dynamics in its theory, which affects its perception of conflicts over race, gender and ethnicity, even when deliberation and debates are framed within communicative rationality as Jurgen Habermas proposes[47]. A government is often reflective of a majority culture, which, as a result of being contextual and having tacit elements in its identity, holds its own conception of the good, even if it claims to be neutral, and will treat its citizens according to its preference, which leaves plenty of room for inequality and for the preference to tacitly affect its judgment.

As liberal thinkers fail to recognize the contextual aspect of their own theoretical premises, those under the communitarian label readily acknowledge the interpretive dimension of their own theories when they claim that identity, interactions, and institutions are "socially constructed" (Frazer 1999, 18). They argue that trying to avoid promoting any conception of the good via neutral and universal procedures and institutions will inevitably

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[47] Simply put, Jurgen Habermas' theory of communicative action is based on the agreement between interlocutors over the validity of a language (in terms of its truth claims, its values, its authenticity, etc) upon which to base communication (1981, 8-23). With communicative rationality, whenever interlocutors disagree on the language use in communications, the background assumptions that frame the language is put to question until a consensus is achieved between interlocutors. However, even with the notion of lifeworld, which comprises the background within which such communications make sense and which is largely unreflective (72), Habermas relies on the assumption that 1) the background is not entirely incompatible between interlocutors and that 2) the background is not affected by assumptions such as tacit racial biases, which would shape one's communication with certain interlocutors.

fail, given that individuals are shaped by their communities, with their values and their conceptions of the good. Communitarians thus see the moral culture—on which rests a social group and around which a political structure can be built—to be necessary for its members to get a sense of belonging[48]. However, promoting one version of the common good over others raises questions over resulting restrictions on freedom and equality: it limits the freedom to have and pursue one's own notion of the good and it denies equal status to those who do not embrace the chosen common good. Thus, communitarianism stands out as a theory that embraces the parochial context of any political structure but, as a consequence of choosing one conception of the good as more desirable than others, it reinforces the tacit group identity behind that notion of the good as well as its assumption of universality. Moreover, critics have pointed to the untenable consequences likely to result from a community's focus on only one version of the common good—the possibility of oppression and intolerance towards a portion of its population with a different conception of the good, for instance (Gutmann 1992, 132; Dagger 2004, 172).

The communitarian discourse has made a contribution to the shaping of several versions of the liberal critique, which oftentimes can be more or less distinct from liberalism, but have remained mindful of the tight connection between identity and community[49]. The attempt to mitigate communitarianism's exclusionary problem has led to broadening conceptions of the common good in order to include as many people as possible (Dagger 2004, 173). However, defining a common good upon which all can agree

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[48] It can be argued that because we are socially constituted, our identity should be reflected in our institutions and policies but the claims to our identity do not provide a specific indication of how the political should be constituted (Miller 2000, 101)

[49] David Miller in "Citizenship and National Identity" (2000) rather argues that it is not so much an evolution as an indication of the confusion in the theory itself that communitarianism exists in the political right, left, and centre.

largely limits its conception to agreements on basic behaviours and to a notion of the good so broad as to verge on meaninglessness (Miller 2000, 109). Nevertheless, any attempt for communitarianism to broaden its reach and increase its inclusivity to diverse populations is still rooted in the tacit identity of those who determine what the good is. The contextual character of identity points to the impossibility of basing a common good on something that is not somehow exclusive of a group of people. With regards to multiculturalism, a communitarian outlook as Charles Taylor proposes to address requests for accommodations on the presumption of the equal worth of all cultures (Taylor 1995, 256). This proposition is itself based on the view that cultures are crucial in the development of identity and agency, which emphasizes the importance of preserving cultures in a plural society. Nevertheless, to presume that all cultures have equal worth might not only be problematic when some cultures have practices that are clearly conflicting with the values promoted by the state, but it also cannot account for the tacit biases that are likely to affect the majority culture's interactions with minorities in spite of a conscious effort to see all cultures as equally worth preserving.

Shifting the focus from a common good to civic participation, civic republicans believe that being active participants in the political is the best way to build a cohesive society, and that requires the state's proper education of its citizens. They claim that civic participation facilitates the coexistence of diversity and of incommensurable notions of the good while creating an attachment to the state—something they claim liberals cannot do—through active participation in its functions (Dagger 1999, 191). This theory is not only compatible with liberalism but is very similar to it (201). From a tacit identity perspective, we can see that civic republicanism approaches citizenship from a set of values and

standards that come from a specific context, and which still hints at a common good, although it will claim to be neutral. What this perspective points to is not necessarily that a state must be based on neutral principles to include all citizens equally, but rather it points to the impossibility to base civic engagement on neutral values because such values do not exist. It also emphasizes the contextual nature of any form of political organisation and to the need to, at the very least, acknowledge it rather than claiming universality. Tacit identity helps to cover values and principles behind a veil of universality and both liberalism and civic republicanism are based on such assumptions. Even from a "context of choice," as Will Kymlicka phrases it (1985, 89)—where a people, who is coerced to adapt to a strange society and culture, will experience a higher level of hardship to integrate than a group who has chosen to adopt a culture different from theirs—the tacit elements present in the identity of the majority culture will interfere with both groups of minorities in ways that the majority will struggle to notice. In addition, the normalizing result that comes from the state embracing the majority's values may hinder the majority's ability and willingness to accommodate minorities accordingly.

Tacit identity, however, can be a useful criterion of evaluation for proponents of a multicultural outlook based on freedom from domination and could enrich the theory. The theory claims that it is the role of the state to reduce domination in all its forms and it uses this standard to determine the state's range of accommodations towards minorities, so that it accommodates cultures and practices that do not involve domination. Adding the tacit dimension of identity to the theory of non-domination, however, can point to and help rectify the state's own practices of domination that come from certain assumptions about minorities, as the example of the tacit assumption of white superiority in the United States

demonstrates. The theory does not only look at intra-group relations but also looks at patterns of domination in inter-group interactions. Approaching such interactions while being mindful of tacit elements of identity could open another aspect of tacit identity and further deepen our understanding of domination.

Agonistic pluralism claims to sidestep the liberal and republican assumption of neutrality and to avoid the communitarian problems that come from imposing one notion of the good on a population, by embracing plurality as an indication of the health of the political[50] especially over the debates diversity inevitably occasions. Chantal Mouffe directly contrasts her preference for political confrontation with Habermas' deliberative democracy based on consensus. Indeed, Mouffe's theory rejects the possibility of achieving a consensus in the political, an aim which is also central to civic republicanism. However, she does agree to some extent with civic republicanism's allowance for debates and civic participation. With agonistic pluralism, issues of pluralism and community are addressed through the acknowledgment that the political is by nature conflictual and never neutral (Mouffe 2005, 158). Passions are behind human behaviour: it would then be absurd to expect that debates in the political should be devoid of passion (Mouffe 1993, 140). According to this theory, various parties enter into debates, not as enemies, but as adversaries who disagree on the character of the political and agree on the democratic process that makes these debates possible (Mouffe 2003, 149). The same democratic process also picks a winner, which allows a group to have hegemony in the state, until next

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[50] Mouffe distinguishes 'political' from 'politics': "…by 'the political' I refer to "the dimension of antagonism which I take to be constitutive of human societies, while by 'politics' I refer to the set of practices and institutions through which an order is created, organising human coexistence in the context of conflicts provided by the political" (2005, 153). We can equate her distinction to associating 'the political' with the discipline of political theory and 'politics' with political science.

time. This conception of the political as debates among adversaries reflect a conception of identity based on exclusion simply by defining what one is, because it automatically excludes what one is not (Mouffe 2005, 18). In other words, defining a "we" in the political inevitably implies the exclusion of those who are not part of that "we." Consequently, for Mouffe, the political reflects the values and priorities of the group that has won hegemonic power through political debates (2003, 156), although the ruling hegemony is never permanent and can always be superseded by another. With agonistic pluralism, society is not solely structured around conflicting factions, however: the sense of unity still exists in society, and it is based on an abstract notion of a common good which serves as a social imaginary that can never be reached in actuality (Mouffe 1992, 30).

This theory claims to embrace human plurality and its contextual nature by promoting and enabling their cultivation in society. Mouffe's understanding of pluralism, is, however, limited to political plurality, which consequently fails to address matters of race, religion and culture from a tacit identity perspective. Whereas these are issues that can be overtly addressed and debated in the political, if they are part of a tacit identity, they will permeate and color any explicit political position, and agonistic confrontation will not be of any use to bring it forth. Agonistic pluralism does not address the presence of tacit identity behind one's political affiliations and how it will affect those political debates. For instance, tacit identification with white superiority can permeate any position in the political spectrum and the same is true with the tacit attachment to religion. Mouffe's theory takes for granted that everything can be sorted out within the political but when an assumption is tacit, it affects the political but also everything else (institutions, policies).

From another angle, political plurality restricts diversity to ideologies and positions

along the political spectrum, and, as such would ensure that, while all positions can be represented and have a voice in the political, a democratic process would nevertheless give hegemony to ideologies appealing to the majority. In other words, more often than not, the hegemony that would win out through the democratic process would be largely centrist and rarely on the fringes. Moreover, while diversity can be addressed in the political, the adversarial context is arguably not very conducive to the introspection and openness necessary to acknowledge a group's tacit identity. Because agonistic pluralism takes for granted that diversity can be channelled and defended through political debates, it overlooks the influence of tacit identity in its structure.

Mouffe states that the political reflects the hegemony's values, processes and institutions and the only way to avoid one faction dominating the political is to have a "plurality of hegemonies" (2005, 171). The political will therefore also reflect the hegemony's own tacit identity and assumptions of universality, which means that pointing out the tacit in the political will be difficult when the tacit contributes to framing the political.

If we conceive of the political as a space of confrontation—albeit based on a "common symbolic framework" which all parties accept (Mouffe 2005, 165)—then achieving hegemony will be each faction's aim. It would not be misguided to then assume that the desire to win and to become the hegemony will influence debates in the political, if each faction is trying to be the most convincing to the larger population. Such vested interests in those pursuits would undermine the openness necessary to address the sensitive issues that come from the interplay between an explicit identity and a contradicting tacit identity. What Mouffe describes as agonistic pluralism—at the risk of oversimplifying her

claim—seems to boil down to a change of outlook on political debates, that is to say, unlike a search for consensus, participants acknowledge that some conceptions of the good are incommensurable and that, inevitably, one side will win and the other sides will have to wait for another opportunity to be heard. Consequently, even if her theory aims to embrace plurality, it remains unaware, and therefore unable to address how tacit identity would affect the nature of the debates taking place in the political. What this critique demonstrates, however, is that it is the character of political debates that they are interested and combine discussions about each conception of the good with the need to appeal to a majority. Consequently, the articulation of the tacit should not take place via political debates.

We have seen that tacit identity can serve as a goalpost to evaluate the soundness of a political theory. If a theory claims universality but is premised on context-based assumptions, it leaves unnoticed the majority culture's tacit identity and strengthens the belief in a theory's universality. Looking at a theory through the perspective of tacit identity can be useful to bring to the fore, to better understand and to explain contradicting behaviours present in majority cultures, which inevitably affect their political decisions. Thus, political theorists need to be mindful of the parochial nature of their context and wary of the claims they assume to be universal. An outlook on tacit identity can also provide a background to phenomena that may appear to contradict a society's official position—as we have seen, the province of Québec's official position as a secular society contrasts with the struggle of the majority culture to account for its attachment to Catholic symbols. Finally, questioning one's assumptions can also bring to the fore tacit power relations which are present in various conceptions of community, society, and family and in other relationships.

Thus, if its presence is so important to the political, how can we bring forth the tacit, while keeping the political away from it? As the previous chapter demonstrated, there is no unique way to articulate the tacit. First, the interpretation of a group tacit identity would have to speak to all those who share it, and this means, either leaving room for interpretation so that individuals can insert their own meaning into it, or to cover all the possible meaning individuals can give to the tacit identity, which can itself remain largely tacit. Secondly, the person who succeeds in bringing forth the tacit identity will do so from its own contextual perspective, may not resonate with all, and will have to be interpreted in turn. It therefore seems that what suffices to bringing it forth is a pointing out to the presence of a tacit identity that would make it difficult to explain away.

Perhaps a variety of articulations may help bring a society's tensions forward to the extent where the tacit becomes explicit. For instance, Chantal Mouffe points to public spaces and art as places where contestation, critique and re-evaluation of a people's assumptions can take place, and where people can be exposed to challenges and respond to them in their own way (2013, 87). Art can be a source of challenges that shakes up a people's givens and forces it to question its world. Because art does not use a designative language, but rather creates a world that requires the viewer or the audience to complete the picture with their own meaning, it leaves plenty of space open to interpret, take a position on, and learn from the work of art.

In addition, the Bouchard-Taylor report, back in 2008, proposed several avenues to encourage interactions with minority cultures and exposure to plurality (Bouchard and Taylor 2008, 266) which can be of use here. Bouchard and Taylor's aim was to increase familiarity with otherness to the point where the other ceases to appear threatening. In

seeing ways in which others' outlook converge with our own, our own notion of an "us" may enlarge as a result. Moreover, interaction may prepare cultures of the majority to see some of their assumptions as contingent. Going back to Mouffe's conception of identity in terms of 'me' versus 'them', it suggests that different aspects of our identity will come to the fore as we are faced with and contrast our selves to the various others we encounter (2005, 157). Thus, we can presume that plurality in a context where we increase our interaction with diversity could facilitate the bringing forth of aspects of our identity to which we might not have paid attention until exposed to certain others.

Mouffe's work is also helpful to our purposes with her claim that there is no universalist notion to the political (2005, 166), nor to the shape a society takes, which would require the constant awareness that one's society is in constant re-enactment and that there is no clear final shape towards which to aim, aside from an ideal that serves as code of conduct (Mouffe 1992, 30). To acknowledge the plasticity of society gives majority cultures the opportunity to defend their values and preferences for the right reasons: "instead of putting our liberal institutions at risk, the recognition that they do not have an ultimate foundation creates a more favourable terrain for their defence. When we realize that, far from being the necessary result of a moral evolution of mankind, liberal democracy is an ensemble of contingent practices, we can understand that it is a conquest that needs to be protected as well as deepened" (Mouffe 1993, 145). An important benefit in acknowledging the presence of a tacit aspect of a group identity, then, is for the culture of the majority to acknowledge that its values and institutions are benefiting their own beliefs and practices and are not a reflection of universal standards.

This project calls for cultures of the majority to take into account the presence of

tacit elements in their identity and to be able to be mindful of it when entering into conversations and debates with minorities. When a tacit identity frames debates from a universal standpoint, it ruins the opportunity to look at the other openly and as their equal. Rather than claiming to use universal statements to express judgments and to justify the rejection of a population ('this person or this view is unacceptable') majority cultures must acknowledge the contextuality of their views ('from my liberal standpoint, this person or this view is unacceptable'). Rather than taking their position as inherently right, neutral and universal, majority cultures may be more inclined to re-evaluate their position or to confirm it without relying on claims of rationality or universality. From this perspective, majority cultures might perceive requests for accommodations as an attempt from certain cultural groups to compensate for their minority status in a society built around the preference of another culture, rather than seeing them as sustained denial of the values the majority holds dear. The latter perspective portrays minorities as reactionary and unwilling to integrate into the larger society, whereas the former perspective pictures them as merely needing help to become part of it. Being mindful of a people's tacit identity and of their associated biases can shift the perception and debates from a tug-of-war between right and wrong, to a more cooperative and diverse coexistence.

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