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Re-telling, Re-cognition, Re-stitution: Sikh Heritagization in Canada

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ABSTRACT: *In Canada, the language and techniques of museums and heritage sites have been adopted and adapted by some immigrant communities to make sense of their place within their new country. For some groups, 'heritagization' is a new value, mobilized for diverse purposes. New museums and heritage sites serve as a form of ethnic media, becoming community gathering points, taking on pedagogical roles, enacting citizenship, and enabling strategic assertion of identity in the public sphere. This article explores this enactment of heritage and citizen-membership through a case study, the Sikh Heritage Museum, developed in Abbotsford by Indo-Canadians. Established in 2011 in an historic and still-functioning gurdwara, the museum is an example of a community's desire to balance inward-looking historical consciousness and community belonging, with outward-looking voice, recognition and acceptance by mainstream Canadian society. The museum has also become a site of tension between top-down and bottom-up initiatives, where amateur and local expressions butt up against professionalized government activities such as the Canadian Historical Recognition Program that seek to insert formal recognition and social inclusion policies. The article considers the effects of this resource and power differential on the museum's development, and on the sensibilities and practices of immigrant 'heritage' and 'citizenship' in Canada.*

KEYWORDS

Canada, Sikh, heritagization, recognition, citizenship

In Canada, the language and techniques of museums and heritage sites has been adopted and adapted by some 'multicultural' immigrant communities to make sense of their place within their new country. For some groups, 'heritagization' has been mobilized for diverse purposes. New museums and heritage sites serve as a form of ethnic media (Karim, 2002), becoming community gathering points, taking on pedagogical roles, enacting citizenship, and enabling strategic assertion of identity in the public sphere. This article explores this expression of heritage and citizen-membership through a case study, the Sikh Heritage Museum, developed in Abbotsford by Indo-Canadians. It offers insights into how this community enacted heritage values to support inward-looking and outward-looking goals, employing particular subjectivities and practices to serve in-group needs and external demands. Both orientations function within and respond to the distinctive context of Canadian multiculturalism, which operates conceptually, socially and politically as a central value of Canadian identity. Heritagization centred around the Sikh gurdwara was both a bottom-up activity by local community members and a top-down initiative generated through government policies. This resulted in differences in audiences, modes and practices of mediation, and sometimes conflicting goals and valuations of heritagization.

HERITAGIZATION & MULTICULTURALIZATION

Heritagization will be explored in this article as a process that places value upon places, people, things, practices, histories or ideas as an inheritance from the past. Sánchez-Carretero (2013) points out that heritagization has been a French and European term (*patrimonialisation*) and not common in English except for derogatory use initiated by Kevin Walsh, who applied it to "the reduction of real places to tourist space" (1992:4). Heritagization marks things or practices from the past as important. Who is doing the valuation, for what reason, who the demarcation is aimed at, and who is actually observing will alter the nature of the process. Placing an emphasis

on heritage as an ongoing process not as material objects helps to de-emphasize debates about what is or is not heritage: how and why any human culture is deemed 'valued inheritance' becomes the crucial question for understanding. Arguments about 'real' places and authenticity also become less relevant, since the question of inherent value is impossible. Any assumptions about '*The Heritage*' – the ascription of universality to white English heritage criticised by Stuart Hall (2005) – is then reconsidered as just one of many heritagization processes.

Understanding the transformation of places, people, things, practices, histories or ideas into diverse forms of 'heritage' becomes the interesting site of analysis. Key here is the way that heritagization contributes to community or group identity and involves negotiation and sharing this identity with others, where personal or local or national ideas of what aspects of the past have value can coalesce into group expressions. The heritagization process carries an emotional resonance about underlying values that maintains social order, collective relationships and sense of belonging. By contributing to cohesiveness with others within a group, individual members gain a sense of wellbeing, even happiness, and build self and mutual confidence. This solidarity enables the smooth operation of the social group, but it also has an ideological element and disciplinary function. The stabilizing and fixing of ideas of common heritage is an indicator of the workings of power within society (Graham et al, 2000). So while there is a rewarding internal sense of belonging about heritage, with it comes an external constraint or compulsion to adhere to the group. The appeal to accept both the pleasurable and the coercive aspects of a heritage depends on invoking a communal valuation that holds affective meaning and transcendent resonance. Heritage is then about pride and emotional solidarity. But this kind of emotive effect also places one group in opposition to another. Heritagization is then about difference—the swelling breasts and insider feeling that result from the need to proclaim 'we are not you'. This unity forged in difference-from-others is celebrated on different scales, from rituals related to the nation-state to cultural activities of minority groups.

The tension between the complex possibilities of valuation that come from differing perspectives, and the stability and solidarity that comes from shared or collective ideas about value, has been a long-term issue in Canadian society, underlying ongoing debates about issues such as national identity, culture and politics. It is within this context that 'heritagization' processes have been articulated with 'multiculturalization' in Canada. From earliest prehistorical arrival of indigenous tribes to present-day waves of immigrants – about 250,000 migrants arrived in Canada in 2013 – the human history of the country has been multifaceted and ever-changing. The modern-day nation of Canada has been defined in terms of this social complexity. 'Multiculturalism' has been interpreted as part of the country's national identity and culture — how Canada defines itself both locally and to the world (Fleras & Elliott, 2002). This multiculturalism is often represented as being especially tolerant and inclusive but that idea has been necessarily contested as social relations adjust to ongoing encounters between different people and groups. Waves of migration and cross-cultural encounter characterizes the story of people within the territory of Canada. The territory and its indigenous populations were subject to colonization by Great Britain and France from the 17th century, and ongoing relations of power have subjugated those first peoples ever since. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries to the Second World War, immigration policies placed new European immigrants in cities or unfarmed aboriginal territories, while many non-white migrants were restricted as temporary labour. Relations between these waves of newcomers may have been tolerant by necessity, but within an Anglo-French domination. In many cases peoples already residing in Canada had no desire to develop any relationships with subsequent newcomers, and reacted with prejudice and antagonism. This immigration nonetheless resulted in a very multi-ethnic population in Canada. After WWII, a flood of migrants from across the globe put pressures on the dual English-French foundational cultures, and brought demands for social, cultural, economic and political recognition and inclusion. Multiculturalism was officially adopted as public policy with the

Canadian Multiculturalism Act developed in 1985 that recognized the plural nature of its citizenry. The Act stated:

The Government of Canada recognizes the diversity of Canadians as regards race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and is committed to a policy of multiculturalism designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians.

Institutionalized multiculturalism in Canada has always been intimately linked to the institutionalized promotion of heritage. Both processes of heritagization and multiculturalization have relied on a normative ideal of multicultural nationalism which claims that both the identity of a national community and the identities of different communities within the nation can be simultaneously recognized and represented. Theoretically, such simultaneity requires a 'politics of recognition' that assures equal recognition to every citizen both as an individual like any other and as a distinct individual whose authentic identity depends upon membership in a particular cultural group (Taylor, 1994). Many have critiqued the policy, as white Anglo-dominance continues to prevail in most situations of power, including most mainstream institutions and media. Underlying these critiques is the idea that there is an official portrait of Canadianness presented in public that demonstrates a fully integrated multicultural social and cultural system in Canada, but in private spaces and the everyday world, non-whites are still excluded. The intrinsic multiplicity of the population of Canada makes claims of one shared and common history, culture, beliefs and values an impossibility. Writers such as Bannerji and Mackey have argued that ethnic groups are still ascribed a supporting role as static 'minority cultures' where multiculturalism celebrates 'diversity' as a singular concept describing its citizenry, but not 'difference' as an actual mode of seeing and living with others. The living of multiculturalism requires public interactions with others and sorting out of differences within everyday life but also on symbolic and representational levels. Multiculturalism policies have also been shown to 'culturalize' racial difference by rendering deep structural and social inequalities as superstructural cultural variations: that ethnic difference is about 'samosas, saris, steel bands' with all society held in place by the same whiteness beneath (Cheng, 2013). This has also been interpreted as 'civic' multiculturalism that uses 'soft' or symbolic approaches by government aimed at nation-building (Yan & Kun, 2013).

Heritagization has been one such process deployed by the Canadian government to promote a multicultural nationalism. Sánchez-Carretero notes that within English-speaking countries, use of the word heritagization has been uniquely important in Canada, driven by the government department of Canadian Heritage (2013: 388). As the umbrella department for arts, culture, and heritage, and until recently also all multicultural programs, Canadian Heritage was set up to oversee matters "relating to Canadian identity and values, cultural development, heritage and areas of natural or historical significance to the nation." Since the department of Canadian Heritage began in 1996 until 2013, its remit included the administration of the Multiculturalism Act and multiculturalism programmes. The department's mission and objectives were oriented towards "building citizenship" which de-emphasised heritage as a physical resource and stressed heritage as intangible. The 2004 strategic objectives for the Heritage department valued heritage activities that supported community-building, including arts and (multi)culture activities, but also promoted 'civic' values as an inherent part of heritage. Funded programs emphasized Canadian content including values, stories and symbols, as well as processes that emphasized participation and cross-community connections. Matt James (2013), however, criticizes heritagization as mandated through Canadian Heritage as a neoliberal process to contain and discipline citizens and their multi-cultures. He argues that the nation-building and social cohesion qualities of heritage are hegemonic processes. Heritagization is interpreted as a policy and practice that renders inequalities of difference into softer and powerless cultural expression of diversity. This tendency of heritage to be manipulated as a feel-good construction within authorised institutional discourses has been criticized in academia (Smith, 2006).

However, it is important to comprehend the heritagization process within multiculturalization not just centred on institutional goals, but also as a practice used by social groups themselves. The promotion of heritage within localised communities has often been deplored as ‘celebratory’ (e.g. Dicks, 1999; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). But, while the ‘samosas/saris/steel bands’ aspects of multicultural heritage are disparaged as tokenistic when viewed from a white outside looking *at* such practices (Littler, 2008), those with an inside perspective might look at such cultural manifestations in other ways: it may be about showing a strategic unity to external others, or about passing on inheritances to new generations. If heritagization is interrogated as a cultural *process* of valuation deployed by different social groups, then analytical attention can develop a more complex understanding of the functions and dynamics of these processes. Heritagization could be seen instead as a communicative and relationship-building practice of demonstrating that valuation to others, and involving multiple aims and subjectivities in the making of heritage.

The values and processes involved in heritagization at the Abbotsford gurdwara and Sikh Heritage Museum illustrates the tensions between these differing perspectives. This location was an instrument of nationally-oriented Department of Canadian Heritage policies and programmes, as well as an expression of grassroots heritage-making by local Sikh community members. The analysis will demonstrate how heritagization processes at a single site can involve a multitude of scales, functions, forms and participants whose interactions constitute the complexities of the Canadian social and cultural reality.

THE ABBOTSFORD GURDWARA

The Sikh community in Canada emigrated from India, where they were a religious minority, at the turn of the 20th century onward. They came from the Punjab region in northwest India, and viewed themselves at the time as an entrepreneurial, military serving and agrarian land owning class of British subjects travelling to a fellow-colony. But they found an unfriendly reception in Canada with labour abuse, prejudice about their beliefs and culture, and discriminatory laws (Buchignani & Indra, 1985). The Canadian government in the first decades of the 20th century, for example, passed laws to restrict immigrants from Asia, and banned wives and children from joining their husbands (Ibid). One hundred years later, more than half of the million Indians in the South Asian diaspora in Canada are Punjabi-originating Sikhs. Sikh-Canadians in B.C. are now less worried about sheer survival and have become an affluent middle class (Bains, 2013).

Satwinder Bains (2013) describes how the Sikh immigrants to British Columbia built a wooden ‘gurdwara’ or temple in Abbotsford in 1911. In 1983 another gurdwara was built across the street to serve the growing population, but the old temple continued to serve as a spiritual and community centre for the town and community. This act of continued usage of the old building can be seen as a form of unofficial heritagization, in that the place was denoted and cherished by the Sikh community. The history of official heritagization began with the designation of the temple building and property as a National Historic Site of Canada in 2002. Within this particular recognition process, the Abbotsford temple became the first named South Asian NHS heritage site in Canada, and the first heritage-designated diasporic gurdwara in the world.

National Historic Sites is a Canadian agency that plays a central role in presenting Canadian heritage. These sites are places that have been designated as possessing national significance to the history of Canada. Historic buildings, events or people of national importance are named and commemorated by the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. The agency has preserved and developed sites associated with Canada’s history by means of marking with plaques, physical protection or restoration of structures and, in a few cases, development of various types of historic museums or parks. National Historic Sites (NHS) has been a key player in deciding for Canadians what parts of their heritage are important and are worthy of

remembrance. Significant for the gurdwara, specific policies were developed in 2000 to encompass the changing demographics of Canada within this national communal identity. The National Historic Sites System Plan set out a comprehensive thematic approach to heritage commemorations intended to be inclusive of the ethnic diversity of Canada (Ashley, 2007). The System Plan placed priority on new recognitions within three areas: the histories of Aboriginal peoples, women and ethno-cultural communities.

The temple, nominated by the Executive Council of the local Khalsa Diwan Society, strongly fit within the NHS ethno-cultural heritage theme. The site was described as important for its architectural form – a “pragmatic adaptation of Sikh traditions to the Canadian context”, but also because “it is the oldest surviving example of the temples which played a crucial religious, social and political role in the pioneer phase of Sikh immigration to North America” that “continues to embody” Sikh beliefs and immigrant experience today (historicplaces.ca). The Minutes of the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board from 2002 note the architectural layout, exterior and interior details, and a verandah running on three sides as its character-defining elements. The Nishan Sahib, a tall flagpole flying the Sikh emblem, is also noted as a feature.

Distinctive in this kind of heritage recognition is the material nature of the heritagization: the building and physical attributes embodied and represented the historical and spiritual value. NHS valuation in Canada, however, is a symbolic gesture that does not affect ownership of the site or provide protection against destruction. The aim of government is recognition of value, but the end result is often ceremonial marking and plaquing, then continued life in obscurity. Some sites receive additional funding for acquisition by local communities or governments, or programs such as exhibits or further archaeology. In the case of the Abbotsford gurdwara, as a religious temple it was already in communal ownership which afforded it some protection. But its place as a marker of value by a significant minority in B.C. within the new NHS System Plan allowed it to attract additional government sponsorship for heritagization by the Sikh community. For the next five years NHS and the Khalsa Diwan Society restored the temple structure in a joint partnership, with volunteer labour, a \$500,000 grant from the federal government and matched donations from the community (Bains, 2013).

HERITAGIZATION FROM BELOW

Recognizing and designating heritage resources through formal institutions is a common policy in many countries. In this case, it was notable because up to this time this cultural group and this type of physical structure had been unmarked within Canadian historical narratives, cultural representations and resource protection – they had not been considered part of Canadian heritage. The NHS move officially confirmed a place for both within official heritagization processes in Canada, set firmly within a multicultural mythology. The site was a comfortable addition to stable Canadian historical valuation of multicultural settlement history, its interesting architecture echoing common western Canadian settler buildings and touched with the exotic idea of ‘pioneers’ who were South Asian. The NHS designation was reported in the national media and celebrated with plaques and ceremonies, and by a visit from the Prime Minister at the time. This was a case of feel-good social inclusion with society at large and this ethnic group agreeing to the heritagization of the gurdwara as symbol of recognition.

What is unique in this instance is the next step in the making of heritage at this location. In 2009, Sikh community members at the local university joined forces with business and community leaders in the Khalsa Diwan Society to do oral histories among community members and to establish an archive and museum (Bains, 2013). In 2011 this community established a new museum, the Sikh Heritage Museum, within the historic gurdwara. Museum organizers had a fairly unified desire to present their community as successful, prosperous and integrated with society at large. Oral histories, archival film, photographs, memorabilia, documents, sacred and ceremonial objects and personal effects were collected, examined and included in the museum

exhibits, and some original artworks commissioned. This museum dedicated to the valuation of pioneer Sikhs was unique, representing histories and cultural expressions not presented in other institutions in Canada.

Heritagization here must be seen as a case of re-telling from a new perspective; a process used to adapt to new lives in new lands. From the immigrant's view, being a stranger in a new, sometimes hostile land required not only survival skills and in-group supports in order to get on with living, but also cultural changes and new symbolic ideas about life. In the old country, ideas about home, identity, behaviour and values would be rooted in place, historical connections, culture, and institutions. All was new in Canada, and must be re-told. The adaptation that came with resettlement for the Sikh immigrants should not be seen as a story of bounded cultural group fixed in a timeless and unchanging homeland, travelling to a new but pre-defined place with inherent characteristics. Sorting out individual and communal sense of self and community, engaging and expressing culture, testing old ideas and boundaries, and reflecting on the past and notions of place are all part of the re-making of meaning for immigrating peoples (Buciek & Juul, 2008). The adaptive perceiving of heritage within immigrant communities must become de-territorialized, portable, ephemeral, oral, hybrid and transnational.

Doreen Massey (1992) writes about the re-thinking involved in adapting to external others in a new land. It means understanding identities, behaviours and values of those who already reside in the new land, and deciding what kinds of relationship must be developed with those others. New lives are defined through and across social relationships that are always changing. The heritagization process in these circumstances is different: it is not a process of a national institution opening its arms to represent and include new members positioned as beneficiaries, but instead a process of self-definition and self-representation in relation to lives and subject positions that are fundamentally changed. Satwinder Bains notes about the Sikh Heritage Museum: "the historical research and archival work, and its subsequent display, was positioned as a site of renewal and rebirth after tumultuous decades filled with tension and strife for Sikhs on the Canadian political scene" (2013:174).

As with other small-scale immigrant museums in Canada, the Sikh Heritage Museum has a homespun quality, the efforts of community volunteers trying to say something to each other – expressions of a kind of popular culture on an everyday level. This process required finding new purposes for old ways – including places, people, things, practices, histories or ideas seen as a 'valued inheritance' from the past. Bains views such heritagization as a wholly new process within the Sikh community. As academic and director of the new museum, she points out the distinctive experiences of community members newly introduced to the concept of an historic archive and the novel experience of having personal experiences, emotions and narratives, once silently protected in the private memories of families, entering the public sphere through oral histories and exhibits at the museum. She describes the re-telling of the past as a project of "recovered history" of colonized subjectivities that had been rejected and "untold, unheard or unseen" in the mainstream Canadian narrative (2013: 174). The emphasis here was heritagization conceptualized as a new value for this group of people, which had both inward-looking and outward-looking functions. Heritagization in this case asserted cultural capital, sought recognition, and functioned as a point of contact where the outside world is let in. The heritage site affirmed for community members the importance of people's everyday experiences, and passed on to descendants the tales, objects and sensibilities of their ancestors. The exhibits strongly conveyed a sense of promise that Canada was a land on which they pinned their dreams; that with hard work their ancestors overcame adversity. The museum itself was evidence of this success story, declaring 'we have arrived'. But as well, by establishing a public location for their re-telling of settler narratives, the organizers aimed at broader audiences, wanting to dispel myths, present a story not told in mainstream white society, and assert its legitimacy as part of the national Canadian history through self-representation of voices hitherto unrecognized in Canada.

THE SELECTIVITY OF HERITAGIZATION

The positioning of heritage that results from both official and unofficial accounts is often highly selective, with a particular, positive framing. The NHS designation, while materially-oriented, emphasizes uniqueness, centrality and pioneering spirit in its messaging. Sikh Heritage Museum builds a linear settlement narrative from impoverished arrival through to economic and even political success in Canada; it represents mainstream perspectives on Punjabi history; and celebrates the arts and culture of Canadian Sikhs today. This style of exhibitionary public face tends to mythologize, rather than dwell on complexities or continuing difficulties of the present. Racial tensions for example, tend to be historicized to the past when Sikh pioneers first arrived in Canada. In both the official and community denotations, this positive framing suggests the celebratory approach of heritage display. But the difference in this museum is that the minority group is the agent of representation. Power rests with the cultural group itself in relation to the dominant external culture, and the identity expressed is for consumption by certain audiences.

Aiello and Pauwels argue that visual representations of and by migrants involves “recontextualization” or “continually redefining the position and status of given cultural and social traits over others” (2014: 279). Anthropologist Andrew Shryock (2004), researching the Arab community in present-day Detroit, theorizes that the use of selective, essentialized representations by immigrant groups is a form of identity performance. He maintains that in-public cultural forms—such as heritage representations—are constructed in order to protect the private side of a culture from outside attention and possible invasion. Heritage representations project a performative public identity or ‘mainstreaming’, which legitimizes an ethnic culture within the broader national identity, bringing status and assuring economic prosperity. But such a performance within multiculturalism is aimed at both external and internal publics. Mythologized representations of identity involve both the construction of inward-looking heritage for pride, celebration and a sense of belonging, but also the management of an outward-looking public face for legitimation within a national culture, or for confrontation and strategic assertion of cultural rights (see Robbins and Stamatopoulou, 2004). Heritagization must then be seen as a discursive tool that demonstrates both ‘we are similar’ and ‘we are different’ (Aiello and Pauwels, 2014) deployed differently depending on the participants in the conversation.

In ‘Negotiating Narratives of Canada’ (2011), about the development of a museum exhibition by African-Canadians in 2002, the author found that while committee members reacted against an essentialized identity of ‘Blackness’ imposed by the heritage authority, most felt a need to present a unified and positive public face through the exhibit. A partial explanation for this choice lay in their position as elite or privileged community members, intellectuals and artists who act as cultural gatekeepers. Shryock points out that in mainstreaming, a minority community is often represented by certain well-positioned business or political or cultural elites, who serve as bridges to the dominant society, but tend to serve their own class interests. What get hidden in this conversation are those aspects of a community these cultural gatekeepers consider unacceptable to the broader national culture, or that are seen to debase the ethnic culture.

Such selectivity of display sometimes comes into conflict with what Shryock (2004) calls ‘insider’ culture, that informal, behind-the-scenes conversation where individuals can be themselves, where new and seemingly-unsavoury immigrants reside, and where ethnic and internal identity differences are more extreme. Formal and informal display of identity clearly came into conflict within the celebrations in 2011 that included the opening of the Sikh Heritage Museum, attended by an audience of thousands of community members and Canadian Prime Minister Steven Harper. During the Vaisakhi festival and parade in nearby Surrey, there was blatant exhibiting of portraits of Sikh extremists on T-shirts, posters and parade floats, but not within the museum (Armstrong, 2012). The movement for an independent Sikh state in India, ongoing since British rule in the mid-1800’s and inflamed by Indian partition in 1946, also has

deep roots support in Canada, and not without violence. The devastating bombing of an Air India flight in 1985 has been attributed to Canadian Sikhs. Whether they are terrorists or heroes is a deep argument within the Canadian Sikh community (Somani, 2012), and there is a continued presence of radical Sikh elements in B.C.'s Lower Mainland area of which Abbotsford is a part. The 'heritage' of some members of this immigrant community continues to be constituted within a broader, trans-national formation, where value is signified in allegiances with heritagized ideals of past history and homelands.

Museum organizers, however, have not addressed Sikh extremism in their museum. How they and the new museum institution will publically deal with this less positive part of their heritage is an issue they, as with any heritage museum, must face. Political and racial problems have become stories that are culturalized and historicized with a celebratory focus that consigns adversity to past history. But because of the museum's nature as a public platform, although organizers might want to maintain a stable and positive image of their heritage, external elements may demand that the museum reflect more controversial subjects. This is an inherent problematic of heritagization: while the Sikh museum enables new voices and self-representation on the scale of the Canadian public sphere, who gets to speak publically *within* this museum space is itself subject to unequal power relations and may become an issue for internal interrogation. The museum is situated within an active Sikh temple that serves as a community centre, thus trying to separate the mainstream from the gritty; the politically correct from the passionate, will be difficult to maintain. Whether such new spaces may be seen as a further reproduction of the limitations effect of multicultural nationalism or as evidence of strong agency in a shared public sphere, remains to be seen as this site evolves.

THE POLITICS OF HERITAGIZATION

The evolving process of heritagization at this location is not only a story of normalized practices of government heritage resource designation and protection, or the story of a local community's reclaiming and revaluation of their past. In the most recent manifestation of heritagization, governmental processes are reaching into immigrant-led heritage sites from the outside, using a new model of affective and emotional rhetoric to enforce a new type of authorised heritage discourse (Smith, 2006) in what might be called 'expedient remembrance'. In this case, the politics of recognition within Canada's multicultural society has taken on an additional nuance and peril.

In 2006, the Government of Canada announced two 'Historical Recognition' funding programs (called CHRP for short) that would pump millions of dollars into small community-generated public history exhibitions, museums and other heritage media. The programs were part of official apologies to those Canadians affected by government internments and immigration restrictions before and during the two world wars. These Canadian moves towards apology and restitution follow similar political moves worldwide in the 1990's such as the Truth and Reconciliation commission in South Africa, or the Sorry Days in Australia. Within the Canadian apologies, the government could atone for past transgressions by commemorating historical experiences of ethno-cultural communities.

There were several avenues that the restitutions with minority groups took (and this does not include Indigenous groups in Canada, as those issues and land claims are still ongoing). Apologies and settlements referred to various events: the Chinese Head Tax, the internment of Japanese Canadians, the rejection of Sikh settlers on the ship Komagata Maru, the detainment of Italian and Ukrainian Canadians during the Second World War, and even a settlement related to the spurning of the Jewish refugees on the ship St. Louis. These many financial and symbolic resolutions were wrapped up in one national government agency called the Community Historical Recognition Program administered by the Citizenship and Immigration department. The aim was to "provide a comprehensive approach to historical recognition" (www.cic.gc.ca).

The promise was made to commemorate these processes and events, and, to “educate Canadians” about the experiences of ethno-cultural communities with \$34 million dollars dedicated to that purpose above and beyond other financial settlements. Dozens of community museums, cultural centres and websites received funding to generate public historical accounts of immigrant experiences in Canada.

This process is yet another form of heritagization that targets very specific historical incidents in this ‘expedient remembrance’ process, depoliticizing differences and rendering broader issues such as racism and inequalities as a (multi)cultural issue from the past. The admission of historical wrongdoing affected how public history is remembered in Canada generally, and affected community heritage-making processes on the ground. These restitutions injected a large amount of money, suddenly, into a cluster of community organizations that changed drastically the way heritage was presented in these communities. The exhibitionary media selected to tell these new stories had a rhetorical or monumental character – exhibits, piazzas, statues, murals. The physical nature of these in-public displays was professionalized, often designed by outside consultants. This form of heritagization inserted limitations into the immigrant spaces of heritage-making: limitations on the subject matter, the tone, group subjectivities and the agency expressed in their own public histories. The narratives told in these small museums moved from stories of origins, family, Agency and success, into stories of victimization. The new narratives distanced racism or prejudice into the past, and defused any idea it might still be occurring in the present. As the Canadian Prime Minister said in his address to Parliament about the apologies and the historical recognition process, “I rise today to formally turn the page on an unfortunate period in Canada’s past,” in essence saying ‘this is what happened then, this does not happen now; let’s turn the page.’

The Sikh Heritage Museum, as well as regional Khalsa Diwan Societies, was affected by this new type of heritagization. The historical event of the Komagata Maru — the volatile story of a freighter bearing Sikh settlers who were barred from Canadian soil in 1914 — has become the central funded South Asian heritage expression in western Canada, repeated in many locations, media and school programs. The effect of this CHRP program, with professionalized media planned using consultants with stylish design and aesthetic and technological elements, has altered the sensibility of community heritage and become the defining incident of Sikh heritage in Canada. There was dissonance between volunteer-run amateur historical expressions in the temple and community spaces, and these government-sanctioned commemorations.

The CHRP program brought a different attitude to celebratory heritage positioning, foregrounding stories of Sikh victimization and injustices in the past. The subject position of Sikh Canadians is depicted as victims of dominant cultural elites, and as beneficiaries of generous apologies. While the commemoration admitted racial tensions, any continuing racial difficulties were clearly historicized to the past when Sikh pioneers first arrived in Canada. The formal apology by the government invoked a promise of restitution but side lined these narrow apologies in small public spheres, rather than making Sikh immigrant history part of the broader narrative of history in Canada in mainstream museums.

With government singling out one act of restitution for public heritagization, that part of history was elevated as the defining incident; and by placing the conversation outside of the mainstream, it did not get absorbed into Canadian popular historical consciousness. The recognition process instead subtly changed histories of self-help and celebration, flawed as they are, into narratives that adopt the subject position of victimization, with minority groups subject to the care and generosity of elites and government. This should be seen as governmental intrusion into spaces of everyday heritage-making. Some have called the CHRP programme a disingenuous promise by the nation to include minorities and their histories as part of its official record; that instead, such apologies and programs do more for those who hold power than those who do not, offering elites relief from guilt more so than actually changing the lives of peoples subject to prejudice and racialization today (James, 2013; Somani, 2012). This is a classic issue

within heritagization when used by dominant players to achieve a social end: that process acts to historicize, culturalize, and send into the dim past any problem areas, and thus side-steps current-day issues that stay unresolved. The apology presented in official representations about the Komagata Maru depicts Canada as a benevolent multicultural space, yet problems of structural racism are still an everyday reality. Canada continues to be represented in its mainstream heritage spaces as a multicultural nation but with white histories as the norm. Its ethnic subjects are still isolated as immigrants or visible minorities, despite long histories in Canada.

CONCLUSION

This account of the layers of heritagization underway at a single heritage site demonstrates the complex uses of culture and history as deployed by various actors aimed at various audiences. The subjectivities and power relations enacted and entangled within this process are materially and affectively situated in space and in performances. By inspecting heritagization as a process, more so than heritage as a thing or resource, a clearer sense of the effects of human actions and relationships can be uncovered. In the case of heritagization within pluralistic societies, differing ideas about ‘valued inheritance’ result in actions and relationships that have positive but also negative effects. While heritage as designated by government at the Abbotsford Sikh gurdwara might initially be seen as a positive force of inclusivity, closer analysis requires a more nuanced understanding of the function and effectiveness of this form of multicultural recognition, where differences and inequalities become hollow ‘diversity’. The self-generated ideals of value that emerged from heritagization by the Sikh community through their new museum can be seen simultaneously as liberating expression, mainstreaming sameness, and/or as strengthening individual historical consciousness, depending on the subject position and relationships among participants. And new heritagization processes involved in the singling out of events of trauma and conflict for commemorative purposes, such as the Canadian CHRP program, can be seen cynically as invasive and manipulative, or as a form of repentance and restitution for past wrongs that brings with it redistributive funding.

Within this complexity of heritage-making in different contexts of production, it is possible to conceptualize heritagization as a useful contribution to processes of citizenship. Within theorizing by writers such as Chantal Mouffe (2000) and Engin Isin (2008), citizenship is a practice on the social level that sometimes involves allowing room for conflicting relations among and between other citizens and institutions of varying power, often expressed by scholars as ‘messy’. The power dynamics of such relations is important, but the ‘publicness’ and transparency of this process, as exemplified by the act of making public heritage, enables sites to productively entertain such agonistic democratic processes. Couldry (2006) points out the five ‘generic processes’ that constitute the public spheres of citizenship: imagining, vocalizing, investing identities through narrative, creating social worlds and communities of support, and creating a culture of public problems—all processes potentially contained within multi scales of heritagization. Within the practice of making heritage, and within the act of understanding the heritagization practices used by others, there lies an inherent critical pedagogy: a drawing attention to how and what knowledge, identities and values are produced within and among sets of social relations (Giroux, 2011). By engaging, analysing and clarifying the multiplicity of possibilities in heritagization as a process of citizenship, it becomes possible to critically understand past histories and practices, and make moral judgments on what ‘valued inheritance’ might be shared among others and passed on to future generations.

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