

The Experiential Embodied Feminist Antimilitarist Learning Hack:
A Learning Journey Through Niagara's War of 1812 Museological Sites

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Abstract

In this Major Research Paper, I examine gendered representations of the War of 1812 at four significant cultural sites: the Niagara Falls History Museum, Lundy's Lane Battlefield, Drummond Hill Cemetery, and Queenston Heights. I employed an experiential embodied feminist antimilitarist learning hack to view exhibits, sites, displays, and epitaphs. The overarching question that guided my research was: How does embodied feminist experiential learning intersect with the ways that gender and militarism are remembered and represented in War of 1812 museums and heritage sites in Niagara, Ontario? My research concluded that the way that the stories of the War of 1812 are told at these sites serves to perpetuate the hegemonic portrayals of war, including the celebration of violent and bloody combat, war as a male-dominated condition, and the conventional roles of men and women in wartime. My research demonstrates the need for change at these sites so visitors might understand the problematic ways in which gender and violence is presented with regards to the War of 1812.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

In this major research paper, I detail my research conducting an experiential embodied feminist antimilitarist learning hack of one Niagara museum and three heritage sites that tell Niagara's story of the War of 1812 through various representations. I chronicle the reasons I was drawn to this subject matter and outline my project. I include a review of the literature with respect to public pedagogies, experiential learning, and the feminist antimilitarist lens. I explain my methodology of the experiential embodied feminist antimilitarist learning hack, introduce my research question, and discuss my data collection and analysis. I describe my analysis and findings as they pertain to the sites I explored and examine the themes I uncovered at each location. I conclude with a discussion of the implications of my findings; I also make resultant recommendations for those who might wish to make changes to the ways that the public interacts with the stories told about the War of 1812 at the sites I visited.

Project Background

When I began my Master of Education program in the fall of 2017, I fully intended to complete my degree following the course-based option; I felt that this choice was best for learning how to be a better teacher in my employment as a university Learning Skills Specialist. However, I was already drawn to research in my introductory course with the reading of an article called "How ought war to be remembered in schools?" by Robert Aldridge (2014). In the paper, the author questions whether or not the way that war is remembered romanticizes it rather than solidifying in our minds its horrors, and he asks that educators consider how and why war is remembered in the ways

that it is. To me, this was a new (and justifiable!) way of thinking about war, and my peers' reluctance to discuss the topic in class inspired me to research and write about the way war is taught. My readings in the course led me to thinking deeply about where I went to school and worked: Brock University. Both its distinctive and monumental statue of Major-General Sir Isaac Brock just outside the building's front entrance and its mailing address (1812 Sir Isaac Brock Way) celebrates a war hero and the war in which he fought, and my final research paper for the course focused on this glorification.

In the winter of 2018, I enrolled in an Adult Teaching and Learning course with Dr. Nancy Taber, and my curiosity surrounding the topic of war was amplified: in this course I learned about gender and militarism, and how the concepts of femininities and masculinities come into play when considering war. Some of these ideas were not completely new to me; I had used some of Nancy Taber's (2014; Code et al., 2014) work in the final essay for my previous course. But the ways in which militarism is gendered and the fact that militarism is a learned process that is embedded into our culture and lives was another new way of thinking for me as a white, cisgendered woman. The Adult Teaching and Learning course also introduced me to the work of Cynthia Enloe (2000, 2004) and her notions of feminist antimilitarism. Enloe's (2016) critiques of how the violence of war and militarism are tied to our everyday lives, with its roots in social justice, are of great interest to me and I was keen to learn more about this topic.

Soon after my introduction to gendered militarism, Dr. Taber's course readings opened up another new didactic avenue: museum pedagogies. Before this point in time, I had never really considered the ways that public pedagogical places (e.g., Borg & Mayo,

2010; Sandlin et al., 2011; Kawalilak & Groen, 2016) influence how and what the public learns or in what way they influence learning. With course readings focused on both gender and decolonization in *Adult education, museums and art galleries: Animating social, cultural and institutional change* (Clover et al., 2016), I found myself drawn, once again, to the gendered aspect of learning in these public pedagogical institutions. This interest, along with the militarism subject matter of the previous readings, led me to focus on gendered militarism in three different museums in Atlanta, Georgia for my final project in the course. The conclusions of this research inspired me to continue along the path that led me to this project.

The Current Project

This major research paper is an extension of my aforementioned work: it examines the gendered militarism present in museological representations of the War of 1812 in the Niagara region. I have expanded the exploration to include heritage sites alongside museums and incorporated a focus on the adult education theory of experiential learning. The overarching question that guided my research was: How does embodied feminist experiential learning intersect with the ways that gender and militarism are remembered and represented in War of 1812 museums and heritage sites in Niagara, Ontario?

My end goal is to bring awareness to the public about how museological representations influence the ways that they think, learn, and interpret not only these portrayals, but how, in turn, these portrayals affect their views of the world they inhabit. In addition, museum educators might also come to understand how their displays and

interpretations of the past influence visitors year after year. My explorations cover four significant sites¹:

- Niagara Falls History Museum
- Lundy's Lane Battlefield
- Drummond Hill Cemetery
- Queenston Heights

These sites were chosen not only because of my familiarity with them as popular tourist destinations, but also because they provide a specific focus on the War of 1812. While I had visited all these sites previously, it was not with my eye turned towards representations of the war from a feminist antimilitarist perspective. It was my hope to delve into the most valuable and extensive collection of information in my own community so that I might demonstrate the educational thrust of museological representations of the regional war.

Project Outline

I begin my first chapter with a discussion of public pedagogies (e.g., Borg & Mayo, 2010; Kawalilak & Groen, 2016; Sandlin et al., 2011; Taylor, 2010), and how museums operate within the context of adult education. Next, I explain Marstine's (2006) idea of the ethics in relation to the post-museum and connect the museum scholar's

¹ Two of the museums I intended to visit (Laura Secord Homestead and Battle Ground Museum) were eliminated due to Covid-19 closures.

research to Ellsworth's (2005) concepts of the necessity of openness and relationality to the ethical process and how these ideas tie into the notion of embodied engagement in the learning process.

I then move on to an examination of experiential learning, an adult learning theory conceived by David A. Kolb (1984), and a review of the literature that applies to this theory. I end this section with an in-depth discussion of the ways that Fenwick (2003) and Michelson (1998) adjust Kolb's (1984) theory to include a feminist reading of the theory. Following my literature review, I discuss the origins of the feminist antimilitarist lens (Taber, 2009, 2013) and how it was born out of Cynthia Enloe's (2000, 2004, 2016) ideas of gendered militarism.

In my second chapter, I discuss my methodology. Here, I detail the feminist antimilitarist hack, describing its voyage from Enloe's (2000, 2004, 2016) concepts of gendered militarism, through Taber's (2009, 2013) feminist antimilitarist research, to Clover, Taber, and Sanford's (2018a, 2018b) use of the feminist learning hack. This feminist learning hack was modified from a museum learning hack developed by de Oliveira Jayme et al., with its final adaptation inspired by Taber's (2020a; 2020b; Taber & Grover, 2020) work. I go on to explain the operation of the hack and how I apply it, in conjunction with experiential learning, in a museological context.

Following the section on antimilitarism, I state my overall research question, describe my data collection and detailed research questions, along with how I analysed my data. With the aid of the feminist antimilitarist lens, I examine how I experienced the

sights and sounds of the above listed sites, with my recorded physical and emotional reactions as I explored these areas.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I examine museums and heritage sites as public pedagogies, experiential learning, the feminist antimilitarist lens, and the way that these three topics intersect in the context of adult education. In the first section, I consider public institutions (particularly, museums and heritage sites) as places of adult learning, and the role they play in the acquisition of knowledge. Next, I explore the history of experiential learning and demonstrate how it operates in the museological context. Finally, in the last section, I discuss how I employ the feminist antimilitarist lens to the exhibits in the museums I visit. Together, these discussions reveal how learning in museums contributes to adult learning and, in the context of my research as a whole, these three pedagogical pieces work together with respect to how the War of 1812 is depicted in specific Niagara area museums in Ontario, Canada.

Public Pedagogies²

Public institutions such as zoos, heritage sites, gardens, museums, libraries, and parks are sites that, via experience and interaction, have a great deal to teach adults. These places “focus on collecting, preserving, and/or presenting a body of knowledge . . . that is socially and culturally valued by a particular community” (Taylor, 2010, p. 5), and, as Borg and Mayo (2010) point out, they are “repositories of what counts as ‘official knowledge’ and what does not” (p. 35). While museums are important sites of adult

² Portions of text in this section were published as I was completing my MRP (Drenth, 2020).

learning (Barr, 2016) that tell stories to better understand a culture (Kawalilak & Groen, 2016), at the same time they have the power to teach hegemonic knowledge as legitimate and singular.

For example, the discourse surrounding heritage sites “imparts a certain set of Western elite cultural values as being universally applicable” (Smith, 2006, p. 11) knowledge to the public. In Modern Europe, monuments, commonplace in heritage sites, were erected and expected to be “protected and managed for the edification of the public, and as physical representations of national identity” (p. 18). In *Uses of Heritage*, Smith (2006) notes that

heritage is a multilayered performance – be that a performance of visiting, managing, interpretation or conservation – that embodies acts of remembrance and commemoration while negotiating and constructing a sense of place, belonging and understanding in the present. (p. 3)

Most interesting to note in this passage is Smith’s (2006) use of the word “constructing”: heritage sites fashion the past in such a way to guide visitors to preconceived conclusions, “explicitly promot[ing] the experience and value of elite social classes” (p. 30). In fact, Smith (2006) argues that in addition to its elitist notions, “heritage is gendered, in that it is too often ‘masculine,’ and tells a predominantly male-centred story, promoting a masculine, and in particular an elite-Anglo-masculine, vision of the past and present” (p. 159).

Sandlin et al. (2011) discuss the ways in which learning occurs in cultural institutions such as museums and heritage sites and its importance to thinking in a

socially responsible and equitable manner that lies outside of the constructed “elite-Anglo-masculine” (Smith, 2006, p. 159) point of view. Working from the notion that “through these spaces of learning . . . our identities are formed . . . and shaped” (Sandlin et al., 2011, p. 5), the researchers note that “who we are with regard to race, class, gender, sexuality, and so on . . . are portrayed to us and perpetuated through various public pedagogies” (p. 5). Cultural institutions shape the way society learns and thinks. As such, identity formation through public pedagogies is a crucial consideration. Likewise, museum educator Hooper-Greenhill (2007) argues that “museums are active in shaping knowledge” (p. 2), and the learning that takes place inside their walls influences self-identity. This point is even more significant given that millions of adults across the globe attend museum and art gallery exhibits each year (“Visitor figures 2015,” 2016). In a Canadian context, government data show that Canadians are visiting museums more than ever (Hannay, 2018). In fact, a “survey of heritage institutions says there were 75 million total physical visits in 2015. That set a new record, and meant an increase of 34 per cent compared to two years earlier” (para. 3), and statistics indicate that attendance increases each time the survey is conducted (Hannay, 2018).

Museums and heritage sites have a vast outreach, and teaching that occurs in these spaces must be firmly rooted in learning that is ethical and inclusive. This includes teaching that promotes socially just thinking with regards to issues such as race, class, and gender. In a discussion of the *post-museum*, museum ethics scholar Marstine (2006) points out that this type of institution addresses important social issues and does not shy away from conflict in the process; post-museums also incorporate critical and transparent

agendas and share power with and respond to diverse groups. These practices encourage understanding and social equity via museological education.

Ellsworth's (2005) work links to the ethical teaching approach of the post-museum, suggesting that it is crucial for the teaching that takes place in a museological context to "seek to relate learners' inner selves with outer social realities" (Sandlin et al., 2011, p. 16). That is, it is important for museums to prod visitors to understand how they view those outside of their own community/culture/race and the lived realities of those individuals. Museum-goers need to be able to connect personally to the narratives within the museum walls to understand others. Moreover, it is vital that the stories not be directive, but provocative: learners need to make connections for themselves in order for deep learning to take place. Ellsworth (2005) also pushes for learning that "refuses to provide an 'ending'" (p. 104) to the narratives presented within its walls; stories are ever-changing, and learning is never finished or complete.

Building on the ideas of openness and relationality, Ellsworth (2005) explains that learning has an "indeterminate, unspecifiable future" (p. 122) and that those who are engaged in the process of learning have not "entered 'the niceness of a framed neat closed experience'" (p. 123); instead, they have "fallen into life as opened and unfinished" (p. 123). Winnicott (1998), too, argues that learners are not static subjects, but subjects that are always in motion, and always in a constant state of learning with no determinate end. Naming the space of learning as one that is "in-between" (p. 123) a state of knowing and not-knowing, Ellsworth (2005) determines this space as "the locus for social, cultural, and natural transformations" (p. 123) that resists "cohesion and unity" (p.

123). The in-between space is that which constitutes a “former self and a future self” (p. 34), one that “makes learning an assumption between self to self and self between self, others, knowledge and power” (p. 103); this important space promotes relationality and personal, emotional, and intellectual growth.

Indeed, if one thinks about the need to learn to be in relation to others through museums, one is

ask[ed] . . . to suspend who we think we are and to open to outside others as a means of converting difference from the threat that leads to violent enforcement of domination to the productive irritation that alters both ‘us’ and ‘them.’

(Ellsworth, 2005, p. 90)

Learning to be in relation to others is an important concept when thinking about war, for example, where one can see the ultimate ‘us’ versus ‘them’ scenario playing out: because there is always a winner there must also be a loser. In addition, “war glorifies violence and othering” and “works to dehumanize the enemy” (Taber, 2014, p. 110), which is, obviously, particularly counterproductive to understanding others.

In museums, visitors are faced with learning about the world that contains information that might be both new and uncomfortable. Thus, productive feminist pedagogical museum practices work to break down binaries and othering by way of demonstrating that we are all relational creatures. Exhibits that “connect learning about traumatic historical events” (Ellsworth, 2005, pp. 90–91) through, for example, the promotion of deep, contemplative reflection on the past are, although difficult, ways in which we can be “open to others” (p. 90) and see our relationality. For example, on one

of my visits to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) in Winnipeg, Manitoba, I attended the *Ododo Wa: Stories of Girls in War* exhibit and by listening to recorded histories of the girls, reading their stories, and seeing how they were captured and held by the Lord's Resistance Army, I better understood an issue about which I knew very little. Moreover, as a woman, I recalled and understood my own fears about walking alone at night in the city, and in doing so, I could feel their fear and better relate to the stories and pictures in the exhibit.

Furthermore, Ellsworth (2005) explains that a museum that employs "self-referential gestures at the impossibility of its own project" (p. 104) is one that cultivates the openness and uncertainty necessary to critical learning and works to promote social and ethical responsibility. Museological teaching strategies such as this, along with pointing out that narratives within museums' walls are partial, and that they are ongoing and can never be complete, are important approaches in museological education. I encountered a good example of this idea on another trip to the CMHR (Drenth, 2020). Here, the museum altered their tribute to Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi in their timeline of human rights milestones. The museum's placard indicated that she had "failed to condemn" (CMHR, n.d.) the genocide against Myanmar's Rohingya Muslims, and that the museum had "dimmed the brightness of her image and plan[ned] to remove her photograph entirely from the exhibit" (CMHR, n.d.). Exhibits such as this are not only transparent methods of teaching, but demonstrate that learning is an experience that must be worked at, engaged with, and constantly thought about (Ellsworth, 2005).

What is more, with regards to learning experientially, Ellsworth's (2005) work

reconsiders pedagogy as the impetus behind the particular movements, sensations, and affect of bodies/mind/brains in the midst of learning, and it explores the embodied experiences that pedagogy elicits and plays host to: experiences of being radically in relation to one's self, to others, and to the world. (p. 2)

Thinking about learning from Ellsworth's (2005) perspective, one comes to understand that learning that takes place in experience can be that which is moving and life-changing. Moreover, not only does this kind of learning help one to comprehend one's relationship to self, others, and the world, but our very "selves" (p. 2) are in the making through this process. A new "self" is born out of the experience of learning. As noted by Hooper-Greenhill (2007), "museum-based learning is physical, bodily engaged: movement is inevitable, and the nature, pace and range of this bodily movement influences the style of learning" (p. 4). This bodily engagement is why experiential learning fits well within the museological context of learning.

Experiential Learning

Experience plays an immense role in learning throughout our lives, and educator John Dewey "has had the most influence on our understanding of the role of experience in learning" (Merriam & Bierema, 2014, p. 105). One of the adult learning theories that is born out of Dewey's ideas is experiential learning, a theory that seems easily explained by its name: it is learning that is garnered through experience. However, this theory is much more complex than its name. For example, there is debate about what counts as 'experience' and when learning takes place after said experience, to name two challenges to experiential learning theory. In 1984, David A. Kolb developed a model of experiential

learning, which “remains the most widely influential and cited model” (Morris, 2019, p. 2) of the theory in adult education. Since its inception, Kolb’s (1984) theory of experiential learning has been built upon, revised, and critiqued. What follows is a brief development of the theory and how it works into the field of adult education, and, by extension, the learning that takes place in public spaces such as museums.

Kolb’s (1984) theory contends that learners move through four stages in the learning process:

Learners, if they are to be effective, need four different kinds of abilities—*concrete experience* abilities (CE), *reflective observation* abilities (RO), *abstract conceptualizing* abilities (AC) and *active experimentation* abilities (AE). That is, they must be able to involve themselves fully, openly and without bias in new experiences (CE). They must be able to reflect on and observe their experiences from many perspectives (RO). They must be able to create concepts that integrate their observations onto logically sound theories (AC), and they must be able to use these theories to make decisions and solve problems (AE). (p. 30)

In addition to the above listed abilities, there are four basic learning styles that work together with the abilities to aid in the learning process: diverging, assimilating, converging, and accommodating (Kolb et al., 1999).

The diverging learning style’s dominant learning abilities are CE and RO, and those with these skills do well reflecting on concrete situations in group settings where multiple points of view are valued. The diverging learner finds interest in others, is often “imaginative and emotional” and has “broad cultural interests” (Kolb et al., 1999, p. 5).

The assimilating style's governing learning abilities are AC and RO. These learners prefer to put various information into logical form, are drawn to abstract ideas and concepts, and favour learning platforms such as readings and lectures. The converging style's dominant learning abilities are AC and AE and they excel at solving problems, and "make decisions based on finding solutions to questions or problems" (Kolb et al., 1999, p. 6). These learners are very practical in their approach to the application of theories and ideas, preferring "technical tasks" over "social issues and interpersonal issues" (Kolb et al., 1999, p. 6). The accommodating style's governing learning abilities are CE and AE and these individuals prefer the type of learning that is practice-oriented; they also enjoy working with, and learning from, others. All four learning styles vary according to personality types, career choices, education specialization, job roles, and adaptive competencies (Kolb et al., 1999).

While Kolb's (1984) work is foundational to experiential learning theory, as mentioned above, the theory has come up against some criticism. Kolb (2015) himself defended his ideas surrounding the experiential learning process thirty years later against many critiques (Morris, 2019). Most important to the discussions in my research are two points that Kolb (2015) updates in his most recent considerations regarding the experiential learning process. First of all, critics allege that his theory and learning cycle are too individualistic and "ignor[e] the historical, cultural and social context of learning" (p. 52). In response, Kolb (2015) calls attention to the fact that individualism and individuality are very different from one another and explains that his "training as a psychological personality theorist has made [him] a great advocate of individuality" (p.

53); as such, he is a firm believer in the fact that each person's learning experience is unique. He goes on to explain that individuality is not egocentric but is tied to the greater social world in which one experiences learning. In other words, the individual is a part of the greater whole to which one belongs and cannot learn outside of being in relation to others.

In the second clarification of interest to me, which is related to the first point, critics point out the constructivist and cognitive nature of the learning cycle. Both points, once again, see the learner as individualistic and as such, she is "independent of the social/cultural/historical context, [and] representational thinking and mental process can be studied in isolation" (p. 55). However, Kolb (2015) defends himself and argues that critics have misinterpreted his theory; he states that, in actuality, there exists a "transactional relationship" (p. 55) between the learner and the social environment. He goes on to explain that this transaction is essential to learning in that once it takes place, both the individual and the environment experience change through this "interpenetrating relationship" (p. 55). Kolb uses a quotation by Mary Parker Follett (1924, as cited in Kolb, 2015), who terms this process "circular response," to seamlessly sum up his explanation:

Through circular response we are creating each other all the time . . . Accurately speaking the matter cannot be expressed by the phrase used above, I-plus-you meeting you-plus-me. It is I plus the-interweaving-between-you-and-me meeting you plus the-interweaving-between-you-and-me, etc., etc. 'I' can never influence 'you' because you have already influenced me; that is, in the very process of

meeting, by the very process of meeting, we both become something different.

(Kolb, 2015, p. 55)

Despite critiques, Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory is central to my research.

However, there are additions and modifications that are well suited to my research project which are described and explained in the following paragraphs.

Morris's Review of Experiential Learning

In one of the most recent reviews of Kolb's (1984) model, adult education researcher T. H. Morris (2019) surmises that one of the remaining unresolved issues with regards to Kolb's (1985, 2015) theory revolves around the highly contentious interpretation of a 'concrete experience.' Morris's (2019) research endeavours to answer two questions with regards to this issue: One, "what constitutes a concrete experience?"; two, "what is the nature of treatment of a concrete experience?" (p. 3). The findings emphasize several new concepts that are important to the experiential learning process; I will highlight the findings that I feel are most important to my research.

Morris's (2019) investigation into what constitutes a concrete experience reveals several authors' important contributions to experiential learning, and I use his (2019) literature review to inform my discussion of this particular learning theory. In his work, Morris (2019) describes Karoff et al.'s (2017) argument that learners need to be engaged within an environment that is contextually rich, and that the experience needs to occur in the present and cannot be contrived. Equally integral to the experiential learning process, says Morris (2019), is Jordan et al.'s (2018) argument which states that students are engaged in an embodied manner in their learning, using social, physical, and intellectual

aspects in their learning experiences. This aspect of experiential learning aligns with that of Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky's original thoughts that knowledge acquisition is a social process (Morris, 2019). Elaborating on this idea, Harper (2018, as cited in Morris, 2019) and Pipitone (2018, as cited in Morris, 2019) point out that associating and interacting with others are key features in experiential learning, and if learners immerse themselves within a space, it encourages critical engagement with regards to both established rules and societal norms. Without full engagement with people and place, one cannot acquire the kind of rich information necessary to deepen experiential learning. In addition, Morris notes that Blair (2016, as cited in Morris, 2019), too, espouses the importance of social engagement in the construction of knowledge; when learners feel part of place and community, deeper connections are made, and enhanced learning takes place. Morris continues on to say that Blair makes the case that "experience is bound in time as well as place" (Blair, 2016, as cited in Morris, 2019, p. 5), noting that "appreciation of the historical aspects of knowledge may necessitate a triangulation of learning means" (Blair, 2016, as cited in Morris, 2019, p. 5). This point too, is important to my discussion in the museological context: learners need to understand the time and place from which stories and artifacts come, and these places of learning often contain multiple educational tools to promote understanding in this way.

Morris's (2019) second research question examining the nature of the treatment of concrete experiences uncovers further nuanced ideas with regards to the learning process. The key findings are as follows: critical reflection is vital; experiential learning is "often an emotionally intense experience" (Morris, 2019, p. 6); "learning is purposeful and

demands learners to take responsibility to act pragmatically to find solutions through an inquiry process, to specific real-world problems” (Morris, 2019, p. 6); it is also problem-based, and a “key feature is that students are responsible for decision making throughout the process” (Morris, 2019, p. 6); creativity is often part of the learning process, and oftentimes an outcome cannot be predicted before the process begins; lastly, communication with others seems crucial to experiential learning work.

Recommendations born out of the review (Morris, 2019) offer up several useful changes and additions to Kolb’s (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle. Firstly, Morris (2019) suggests that the “concrete experience[s]” (Kolb, 1984) are ones that are “*contextually rich*” (Morris, 2019, p. 8); that is, as stated earlier, the experiences need to be “in the present moment, uncontrived . . . real-world primary concrete experiences” (p. 8). Kolb (1984) simply identifies the term as “experiences that occur in ‘all situations and arenas of life’ (Kolb, 2015, in Morris, 2019, p. 8) that come through the sensory cortex” (Kolb & Kolb, 2013, in Morris, 2019, p. 8). Morris’s (2019) findings show that it is important for learners to understand that knowledge is contextual: it is “situated in context [and] fluid across time and place” (p. 8). He also notes that the important piece of social context is missing from Kolb’s (1984) model. Even more importantly, in the context of my research, is the noted absence of the related socio-spacial aspect of the relevance of embodiment to experiential learning in Kolb’s (1984) theory. As Morris points out, “it is through our *body’s senses* that we are able to experience place” (2019, p. 8). Indeed, in Morris’s (2019) recommendations for future work, he suggests that researchers consider the fact that “learners [need to be] immersed *with their body*, in a

contextually rich experience . . . [because] it is thought that embodiment is essential for deep conceptual understanding” (2019, p. 11). Morris (2019) also notes that experiential learning and embodiment is a much under-researched area, and needs to be focused upon in the future (and I will detail the importance of the body to learning below).

Secondly, Morris’s (2019) recommendations call for a revisioning of Kolb’s (1984, 2015) theory to emphasize the necessity for critical reflection in experiential learning. When negotiating the difficult complexities of time and place, a deep consideration of what is presented as knowledge must be weighed out and thought through in a critical manner. Simple reflective observation (Kolb, 1984) will not allow for meaningful socially constructed knowledge acquisition. The necessity for critical reflection is related to Morris’s (2019) third point for a reworking of the original model, noting that: “again, D. A. Kolb did not make the distinction between the formation of uncritically or critically assimilated abstract conceptualizations” (Morris, 2019, p. 9). In an effort to improve upon the original model, Morris (2019) suggests that “as a human develops and matures, *contextual-specific* abstract conceptualizations are mandatory” (p. 9, italics in original). Without the criticality that Morris calls for, growth potential with regards to learning and knowledge acquisition might be limited. It is important to note, however, that Kolb (2015), in his update on experiential learning, reminds his readers that reflection is not of primary importance when it comes to the acquisition of knowledge; it is instead merely one component in the learning process that encompasses experience, reflection, thought, and action. Moreover, Kolb (2015) suggests that “a ‘pure’ concrete experience that violates the expectations of previous convictions and habits of thought is

necessary to activate . . . reflection in the first place” (p. 59–60). From this point of view then, “conscious reflection” (p. 60), while necessary, is not as vital to the learning process as a jarring experience might be.

Morris’s (2019) final advised change to Kolb’s (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle applies to the active experimentation piece. Here, Morris (2019) suggests that learners “act pragmatically—to base their actions on their concrete experience—in active experimentation with a new concrete experience” (p. 9). It is critical for learners to apply their ideas to a real-life experience, and the application of these ideas involves risk: in experiential learning, Morris (2019) posits, learners should open themselves up to novel experiences; doing so teaches that circumstances change, that problems can arise, and that sometimes it is necessary to change the way we think in accordance with the conditions in which we find ourselves. Adapting under these conditions forces us to learn and grow as understanding human beings.

The key aspects to the experiential learning process listed above are significant to my discussion of museums; however, glaringly absent from Morris’s (2019) review is any research performed by Tara Fenwick (2003) and Elana Michelson (1998). Both scholars approach experiential learning from points of view that digress even more radically from Kolb (1984) than Morris (2019). Moreover, Fenwick (2003) and Michelson (1998, 2020) argue for the missing embodiment element that Morris (2019) calls for in his review. Fenwick’s (2003) work on the experiential learning process is one of a philosophical approach; Michelson (1998, 2020) examines the theory from a feminist perspective.

Michelson and Fenwick's Views on Experiential Learning

In her work, Fenwick (2003) argues that the body's relevance to learning is widely overlooked:

The difference . . . from mentalist or reflection-dependent understandings of experiential learning is accepting the moment of experiential learning as occurring *within* action, within and among bodies. An embodied approach understands the sensual body as a site of learning itself, rather than a raw producer of data that the mind will fashion into knowledge formations. (p. 129, italics in original)

Fenwick (2003) stresses the fact that the body does not work to learn *apart* from the mind; on the contrary: she is adamant that they work together in the process of learning, with the mind engaging to make meaning of what the body learns as it experiences it.

Merriam and Bierema (2014) describe how Fenwick (2003) examines experiential learning in five distinct ways, with each view comprising a different theoretical lens. The first perspective relies on a constructivist point of view and aligns with many of Morris's (2019) discussions. Fenwick believes that learning is "the construction of meaning through engaging in and reflecting on experience" (Fenwick, 2003, as cited in Merriam & Bierema, 2014, p. 113). Fenwick (2003) terms the second perspective *situative*; this perspective posits that "knowing or learning occurs in doing or practice" (Merriam & Bierema, 2014, p. 114), and this outlook is concerned with the learning that happens in the moment, not in subsequent reflection. Fenwick's (2003) third perspective "is psychoanalytic and involves getting in touch with unconscious desires and fears" (Fenwick, 2003, as cited in Merriam & Bierema, 2014, p. 114). From this point of view,

it is important for the learner to try to understand her unconscious thoughts so that they do not get in the way of the conscious learning that is in front of her. In other words, understanding one's own biases is key to keeping an open mind to educational information. Fourthly, Fenwick (2003) believes in the importance of "the critical cultural perspective in which 'dominant norms of experience' are critically questioned and resisted" (as cited in Merriam & Bierema, 2014, p. 114). The fifth and final lens is referred to as being 'ecological,' and is tied to complexity theory; this perspective looks at the learning that occurs in relationships between humans and non-humans (Merriam & Bierema, 2014).

Since humans live in a collective environment and are interconnected with the natural world, when the "two systems coincide, the perturbations of one system excites responses in the structural dynamics of the other" (Fenwick, 2004, p. 50). That is, change always occurs even when one system acts independently of the other. For example, when humans alter the way the natural environment operates, consequences such as climate change can occur. Fenwick (2004) suggests paying close attention to what happens within the collective, believing that apprehension of these ongoing complex connections is important, because this is when "learning begins to appear inseparable from fully embodied nets of ongoing action, invention, social relations and history in complex systems" (2004, p. 52); deep, open-minded learning is born out of these communal relationships.

While all of Fenwick's (2003) perspectives with regards to experiential learning are useful to my research, I will be focussing on her lens as it pertains to the body's

importance in learning. Fenwick (2004) believes that “learning from a complexity theory perspective is ‘the continuous improvisation of alternate actions and responses to new possibilities and changing circumstances that emerge, undertaken by the system’s parts” (2004, p. 53). Fenwick’s (2003) belief in the ways in which learning occurs through the body is both multifaceted and inclusive. She explains that looking at learning in this manner “reveal[s] the fluidity between actions, bodies, identities, objects and environments” (2003, p. 129), and that experiential learning occurs “*within* action, within and among bodies” (2003, p. 129). The body, from Fenwick’s point of view, is its own site of learning and is part of a “larger collective, to the systems of culture, history, social relations and nature in which everyday bodies, subjectivities and lives are enacted” (2003, p. 129). Thinking about the body in this way, as a tool for learning about where and how humans fit into the world, helps in understanding both oneself and others. It is also significant that Fenwick (2003) concludes that learning takes place where these systems interact because it draws attention to the fluid and changing nature involved with this perspective; it is important to be aware that our learning is constantly in flux.

Michelson (1998, 2020) too, is a proponent of the idea of fluidity within the learning process, and her ideas form the basis of the way that I think about experiential learning in the museological context. Much of Michelson’s (1996, 1998, 2019, 2020) explorations on this topic revolve around the embodied aspects of experiential learning. She answers many calls put out by various educators who claim that experiential learning is too rational, too masculinist, too structured, too managed, too exclusive, too disconnected from emotions (i.e., Fenwick, 2003; Kuk & Holst, 2018; Matthews, 1998;

Michelson, 1998). Michelson (1998, 2020), through her work, seeks to change the way that experiential learning has been looked at in the past.

Michelson (1998) argues that the lack of focus on the importance of the body to learning as a result of the body-mind separation dates back to the age of Plato and took particular hold during the Enlightenment with the work of Rousseau. Believing that people were “saved from emotion by the clear light of reason” (p. 218), philosophers prized the mind over the body. Michelson (1998), along with sister feminist theorists, terms this idea ‘abstract masculinity’ (p. 218) and explains that:

the key characteristic of abstract masculinity is detachment from whatever ties the knower to a contextualised human life: emotions, loyalties and interests, memories, responsibilities to others Because legitimate knowledge is everywhere the same, its production requires the transcending of the specific sites at which human beings are always located—their own bodies, their social context, and their historical moment—an act of both corporeal and social dismemberment. (p. 218)

Because the legitimization of learning has, in the past, been tied to the mind, experiential learning and the body’s role in knowledge-making is often questioned. Even though the body is tied directly to learning that takes place in the experience, ancient male philosophers discredited bodily experiences and learning that is procured outside of the mind is still seen by many in contemporary times as less legitimate than the knowledge garnered by reason alone.

Michelson (1998) demonstrates that thinking about knowledge-making as merely a rational activity is actually an act of dismemberment; she argues that “as a function of memory, experiential learning is more properly understood as an act of re-membering. . . . Experience is itself located in the body as well as in the social and material locations that bodies invariably occupy” (1998, p. 218). Historically speaking, gendered dualisms dictate that “women’s knowledge [is] partial, emotionally laden, and concrete” (Michelson, 1998, p. 219), but Michelson (1998) contends that the body must be understood differently, and that it is important to the learning process. Since “experience is continually reworked within bodily processes that include emotions, desire, pain and pleasure, needs, and physical abilities and disabilities in addition to cognitive thought” (1998, p. 223), we need to use these processes to help us better understand ourselves and others. Because “bodies ‘speak’ not only on the grounds of subjectivity, but as texts that carry psychic and cultural meanings” (1998, p. 223), they are vital to processing experience. Knowledge-making ought to be an “interweaving of *multiple* [emphasis added] faculties” (Michelson, 1998, p. 223), bringing together interactions that involve “knowers, objects, representations of those objects, habits of self-awareness, and concrete activity” (1998, p. 225). Michelson (1998) adds that “attention must also be focused on the accuracy of emotional and physical responses, on what they teach us about the history that has shaped them, and on how they help locate us both physically and socially in a contentious human history” (p. 227). She (1998) continues on to point out that:

observation is embodied--literally so—in human sensory apparatus and techno-artefacts that interact with one another in specific relationships . . . Learning is an

active, world-creating process inscribed on the body and at the same time, subject to particular material and discursive conditions that constrain the body within culture and in history. (p. 225)

Like Fenwick (2003), Michelson (1998) asserts that bodily reactions to everything around us in the moment of learning are important to sociocultural understanding. Both researchers believe in the learning experience, one that is experienced through the body, as one that aids us in learning about humankind and our (inter)connections to others and the works around us. This kind of learning allows for a more powerful and inclusive education and begins the process of re-membling that Michelson (1998) asks for with regards to experiential learning. Museologically speaking, museum educator Hooper-Greenhill (2007) too, argues that “the embodied character of learning in museums which results from immersion in physical experiences is *essential* [emphasis added] to the development of knowledge and understanding” (p. 172). Experiential learning in museums is a powerful way to acquire knowledge, and as such, it can impact thinking and open people up to seeing the world around them in a more ethical manner.

Applying Fenwick’s (2003) and Michelson’s (1998, 2020) notions of embodied experiential learning to my research questions, I paid specific attention to “accepting the moment of experiential learning as occurring *within* action, within and among bodies” (Fenwick, 2003, p. 129, italics in original), and took notes at each chosen site. Although I reflected on my experiences as per Kolb’s (1984, 2015) insistence that reflection upon experience is essential to learning, I paid close attention to the ways in which my body reacted (both physically and emotionally) to the various representations of the War of

1812. Along with feminist antimilitarism, which is my theoretical frame, I employed these specific tenets of experiential learning to my museological research.

Feminist Antimilitarist Lens

The feminist antimilitarist lens is based on adult educator Taber's (2009, 2013) work, which revolves around a combination of feminist antimilitarism and adult education. Arguing that "militarism interacts with learning processes in daily life, permeating learning across the lifespan" (Taber, 2013, p. 141), I apply this lens to all my museological assessments within an experiential learning framework. Taber's (2009, 2013) work builds on the thoughts of Cynthia Enloe (2000, 2004, 2016), who explains that feminist antimilitarism examines the ways that militarization is woven into the fabric of human life (2000), and by extension, I argue, learning. Enloe (2004) describes militarization as "a sneaky sort of transformative process" (p. 145), that arises from militarism, which is a "concept that refers to a complex package of ideas that . . . foster[s] military values in both military and civilian affairs" (Enloe, 2016, p. 11). Militarization takes the justification of military priorities to another level: it is "the step-by-step social, political, and psychological processes by which any person, group, or any society *absorbs* the ideas and resultant practices of militarism" (p. 11, emphasis added). What is frightening about militarization is the insidious way it creeps into our lives so that militarism becomes a naturalized way of thinking. Military camouflage patterns, for example, have made their way into everyday fashion.

Militarization is also troubling in the sense that it is “deeply imbued with gendered assumptions and values” (Enloe, 2016, p. 11). Enloe (2004) suggests investigating militarization with a “feminist curiosity.” This kind of curiosity is one that provokes serious questioning about the workings of masculinized and feminized meanings. It is the sort of curiosity that prompts one to pay attention to things that conventionally are treated as if they were either ‘natural’ or, even if acknowledged to be artificial, are imagined to be ‘trivial,’ that is, imagined to be without explanatory significance. (p. 220)

For example, it is important for Westerners to question if it is natural for the mother to provide the bulk of the childcare in the family, or if toy soldiers are a trivial matter when it comes to playthings. Employing this lens also involves questioning the ideological practices of militarization, including the belief in and propagation of the following notions: “hierarchies of command” (Enloe, 2016, p. 11) are necessary; physical or armed force is unavoidable in solving conflict; having enemies is natural; men are innate protectors and women need protection; a fully realized state needs a military; refusal to take up arms in a crisis is unmanly; and, soldiers warrant glory (Enloe, 2004; 2016). These assumptions are both commonplace and invisible in society; for example, the prized (and gifted) Star Wars characters Christmas tree ornaments are ‘cool’ to my 8-year-old stepson. However, what he does not understand is that these items are linked to notions of army/military/violence, and an application of the feminist antimilitarist lens is necessary to make these seemingly innocuous perspectives visible in order to critique them. So too, the feminist antimilitarist lens can uncover the “near impenetrable

camouflage of hegemonic attitudes and practices” (Clover et al., 2016, p. viii) beneath which museums are cloaked. The lens can help to make visible trends such as the privileging of displays of men over women, valorization of ammunition over peaceful demonstrations, patriotic exhibits containing violent depictions, misrepresentations of the presence of women and people of colour in war, and so on. Entrenched systems of racism, sexism, colonialism, and militarism abound, and the feminist antimilitarist lens aids in the “fresh understandings” of which Enloe (2016, p. 13) speaks so that one can see these systems in a new and socially just light. The way this lens is used in adult education with regards to public pedagogy, and museums in particular, is covered in in the following chapter where I discuss my application of the feminist antimilitarist hack in the museological context.

Conclusion

Museums, as public pedagogies, have a great deal to teach, and because of their vast outreach, they are an important piece to the field of education. Because of the way that these institutions teach (i.e., through exhibits, displays), experiential learning is a large component of *how* visitors learn in these places. The feminist antimilitarist lens enables an analysis of how gender is enacted and accepted in military (and non-military) sites in often problematic ways. In my methodology chapter, I consider the above-mentioned Niagara area museums from a public pedagogical standpoint, and view their depictions of the War of 1812 experientially, while employing a feminist antimilitarist lens to provide myself with a fuller interpretation of this local conflict. If thought is given to the way that learning is garnered, and scrutiny is applied to what is being taught in

museological places, an adult learner can, as Ellsworth (2005) suggests, come into a new “self,” while at the same time remain open to the fact that this “self” is an unfinished (Ellsworth, 2005), ever-learning project.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

I describe and explain the feminist antimilitarist learning hack in this chapter, and how the hack is born out of Enloe's (2000, 2004, 2016) ideas with regards to feminist antimilitarism. I go on to explain how this methodology operates to explore gendered representations of the military and militarism as it relates to War of 1812 exhibits and heritage sites. Next, I describe my research questions and move on to detail the sites I visit in order to conduct my research from an experiential learning perspective. Asking these questions in this way helped me to see how museums structure images in relation to war. My research questions also encourage a fuller understanding and took me to the "in between" space of learning of which Ellsworth (2005) speaks in order to understand our place in the world in relation to our self and others.

Experiential Embodied Feminist Antimilitarist Learning Hack

The feminist antimilitarist learning hack allowed me to ask pointed and critical questions of the material I wished to examine. This learning hack is a methodology that combines the concepts of Enloe (2000, 2004, 2016) and Taber's (2009, 2013) feminist antimilitarist research with a museum learning hack created by de Oliveira Jayme et al. (2016). de Oliveira Jayme et al. (2016), who describe their process as "breaking into the accepted norms of particular museum narratives and modifying them (p. 215), work to reveal the ways in which mainstream museological narratives perpetuate stereotypical norms. Clover, Taber, and Sanford (2018a), employing the hack in their research, incorporate a feminist lens which looks at museological exhibits from a "feminist gaze that is questioning, disbelieving and dissenting to function as a practice of resistance to

messaging of gender identity and knowledge that hides in plain sight” (p. 16). The feminist museum hack is described as an "adaptable, pedagogical, methodological and interventionist practice" (Clover, Taber, & Sanford, 2018b, p. 125) to investigate displays “through questioning and analysis of images and words,” (Clover, Taber, & Sanford, 2018a, p. 17), in an effort to discern “how masculinities and femininities are performed through representation in museums” (Clover, Taber, & Sanford, 2018a, p. 16). The feminist museum hack has been employed by Clover, Taber, and Sanford (2018a, 2018b), Clover, Taber, Sanford, and Williamson (2018), and Taber et al. (2019) to uncover a host of inequitable practices in institutions around the world. In Montreal, Canada, they investigated a Barbie Expo to point out the way that the expo “privileges white passivity, exotic otherness, and traditional female roles” (Taber et al., 2019, p. 2). In British Columbia and Toronto, Canada, and England, Clover, Taber, and Sanford (2018a) employed the feminist learning hack to reveal “patriarchal obfuscation in language, image and object placement” (Clover, Taber, & Sanford, 2018a, p. 13); in a study with various colleagues, Clover, Taber, and Sanford (2018b) investigated feminist exhibitions in England, Germany, Italy, Portugal, the United States of America, and across Canada to expose the “hegemonic colonial patriarch[ical]” (2018b, p. 138) messaging perpetuated by museum representations across cultures. Indeed, the feminist museum learning hack not only exposes gender inequality in museums, but it allows one to be able to imagine the potential of a gender equitable world.

As “an adaptable tool, which changes questions and focus to fit each museum” (Clover, Taber, & Sanford, 2018a, p. 25), Taber (see Taber, 2020a, 2020b, & Taber &

Grover, 2020) modifies the feminist learning hack to adjust it to her own museological research with the addition of an antimilitarist lens. She uses this tool to “interrogat[e] the binaries of male/female, friend/foe, and winners/losers within military and societal contexts” (2020b, p. 1). Constantly shifting her focus to cover new and unexplored research areas with her learning hack modification, Taber (2020a) explores Canadian military museums and military heritage sites in Canada, England, and Europe. Along with Grover (Taber & Grover, 2020), Taber also employs the hack-like questions to examine the underrepresentation of civilians in war museums in Canada, Europe, and the UK. In these locations, the researchers alter the hack, expanding its foundations to include both discourse (Lazar, 2005, 2010) and visual analysis (Rose, 2001) to focus on how museums use “images and visual/textual displays as institutional technologies in ways that may reproduce an apparatus that represents war as necessary” (Taber & Grover, 2020, p. 272). Taken together, this research (Taber, 2020a, 2020b; Taber & Grover, 2020) has shown the usefulness of the learning hack in museums and heritage sites to expose the way that “femininities and masculinities are variously performed, privileged, and marginalized” (Taber, 2020b, p. 1). Specifically, Taber’s modified hack explores the representation of masculinities and femininities – with respect to men, women, and those who do not identify with a gender binary – in relation to war, militaries, and society. It searches for the ways in which obedience, hierarchy, and discipline are present in exhibits, as well as how they are related to the concepts of friend, foe, military member, and civilian. (2020a, p. 7)

In short, the feminist antimilitarist learning hack focuses on the “pedagogical implications of representations of gendered militarism” (Taber, 2020b, p. 4).

I altered the feminist antimilitarist hack questions to include an experiential learning lens, examining war’s representations as I experienced them (bodily and emotionally) at various Niagara War of 1812 sites. I have termed these questions the experiential embodied feminist antimilitarist learning hack; they are listed below. Employing this newly adjusted tool, I documented how I felt as I walked through elements of importance to my research, paying particular attention to my “emotional and physical responses” (Michelson, 1998, p. 227) while I made my way through the sites and buildings, bearing in mind that knowledge-making is an “interweaving of multiple faculties” (1998, p. 223). In the literature I have reviewed, there is a dearth of research on this war from a feminist antimilitarist perspective. In fact, I could only find two scholarly articles that relate somewhat to my topic: Taber’s (2020a) research involving 15 Canadian military museums in which she problematizes the masculine heroic battlefield narrative (and merely touches on the subject of the War of 1812) and Taber’s (2020b) chapter on military heritage sites in Canada (one of which is a War of 1812 battlefield), England, and Europe. Here, she points out the ways in which the intersection of “gender, nationalism, patriotism, war and historical narratives” (Taber, 2020b, p. 11) ought to be problematized. Moreover, I cannot locate any literature that critiques museological representations of the war with the feminist antimilitarist lens from an experiential learning point of view, or even museological representations of the War of 1812 in

general. As such, my research fills a gap in the field of knowledge with regards to public pedagogies in the field of adult education.

Research Question

My overall research addresses the following question:

- How does embodied feminist experiential learning intersect with the ways in which gender and militarism are remembered and represented in War of 1812 museums and heritage sites in Niagara, Ontario?

Experiential Feminist Antimilitarist Learning Hack Questions

Ultimately, as a result of my previous research (conveyed in my introduction) and my interaction with adult learning theories in my courses, my aim was to explore my bodily reactions to the sights, sounds, and smells at these sites to see how they might affect my learning. Additionally, I wanted to know if the stories told about the War of 1812 in these places were articulated in a manner that favoured the telling in some way; moreover, I wanted to know, as a woman, how these accounts made me feel and how these visceral reactions might contribute to my learning.

I asked myself the questions below to help me think about my feelings and reactions with regards to the ubiquitous nature of the ways in which museums might “structur[e] images to perpetuate and naturalise masculinised notions of gender” (Clover, Taber, & Sanford, 2018a, p. 18) in relation to war, and how these places of public pedagogy intersect with gendered notions. I recorded my thoughts in response to the questions, monitoring experiential reactions such as whether I felt, for example, anxious,

sad, nervous, angry, upset, cold, confused, proud, afraid, sick to my stomach, or thrilled as I came into contact with the sights, smells, and sounds of the exhibits, areas, and monuments.

In addition, I took detailed notes with regards to the way that I *experienced*, as a woman, the sites, displays, exhibits, and epitaphs. Specifically, I made note of how I felt within my body, emotionally and physically, as per Fenwick's (2003) and Michelson's (1998, 2020) notions of embodied experiential learning, as I walked the paths and spaces and viewed the exhibits and monuments. I monitored my feelings throughout the sites to guide my data collection and the analysis, thinking about and recording my experiential learning, both physically and emotionally (as articulated above), with respect to the following:

- The way that war was represented.
- The ways in which the military was represented: How were the military personnel represented? Who are the protectors and who are the protected?
- The potential gender (im)balance in the exhibitions, displays, and monuments: How many were about women and how many are about men? In the museums, which displays were permanent and which are temporary? What were the women and men in the displays doing? How were they positioned? What women and men were represented (race, class, disability, sexuality)? (Clover, Sanford, and Taber, 2018a, p. 19)

- The various stories that were told by the display labels/grave markers/monuments: Whose perspective was being told? Was there a privileging of a certain kind of historical narrative?
- The museum and heritage sites layout/directives/paths.

Data Collection

Conducting my museological research from an experiential (Merriam & Bierema, 2014) pedagogical perspective, I employed a qualitative methods approach whereby I collected and analysed data using the experiential embodied feminist antimilitarist learning hack. I gathered this data during museum and heritage site visits, at which time I viewed, photographed, and studied exhibits, displays, and epitaphs. While attending the museums and sites, I photographed representations of the War of 1812 and war in general so that I could later analyse the ways in which history, gender, the military, and violence is presented. My photographs included details of the museum and site layouts such as displays and exhibits' contextual relation to one another, the entrances to the sites/museums, the buildings themselves, maps of the buildings/sites, and directional paths that visitors are meant to take and those that visitors choose to take.

To answer my experiential embodied feminist antimilitarist learning hack questions, I drew on four sites to gather my data. These sites were chosen not only for their noted importance to the historical retellings of the War of 1812, but also as a diverse sampling of the war's representations. I visited the following Niagara-area museums and heritage sites:

Niagara Falls History Museum

This museum contains the Gale War of 1812 Gallery which is home to one of Canada's best 1812 collections (Niagara Falls Museums, 2021c). I analysed the museum's interpretation of the war, making note of how the displays are positioned, who the narratives are about (and, potentially, who is left out). Additionally, the museum's website encourages visitors to try on a soldier's coat, handle a musket, and feel the weight of a cannonball.

Lundy's Lane Battlefield

This is the site of one of the most important battles of the war: it kept the American troops from advancing further into Upper Canada (Turner, 2015). I walked the battlefield on my own, and then experienced it through the city's self-guided walking tour (see Niagara Falls Museums, 2021a). I compared each walk and analysed the directive tour.

Drummond Hill Cemetery

Recognized nationally as a heritage site (City of Niagara Falls, 2020), Drummond Hill Cemetery is part of the Lundy's Lane Battlefield, and is the resting place of Laura Secord, the famed Canadian heroine who journeyed 19 kilometres to warn the British forces of an impending American attack. My aim at this burial ground was to investigate the heroine's gravesite and marker and to compare them to other monuments erected at this site.

Queenston Heights

Another national historic site, this park and location of the historic first major battle of the War of 1812 (Parks Canada, n.d.-b), is of particular interest to me as it is home to a monument dedicated to Sir Isaac Brock (my university's namesake and celebrated hero of the war) and Laura Secord. I investigated the monuments and compared them to each other.

Data Analysis

I used the feminist antimilitarist hack questions as I explored each site and recorded my answers. I then drew on my notes and photographs to look determine recurring themes throughout the sites and potential noticeable historical omissions. More specifically, I read through my notes to examine my physical and emotional reactions to the sites and representations as I experienced them. In addition, I reflected on my feelings and observed any new or repeated reactions to my notes and photographs. I recorded frequent themes about what I witnessed at the sites and how I reacted to them. These themes contribute to my findings and subsequent implications.

A review of the language used in the notes I recorded as I experienced the sites revealed feelings of concern, anger, irritation, disappointment, astonishment, disbelief, and sadness. I also noted that I felt a degree of marginalization due to the number of portrayals of men versus women as well as their stereotypical renderings. In addition, my journal indicated that the prominent placement of men, the heroic stories that are told about them, and, at times, the magnitude of their representations along with the celebratory attitude towards violence in these places made me feel confused and

offended. In short, as a woman, I felt misrepresented and somewhat misguided; I was also upset by the manner in which the bloodshed of battle is remembered.

Occasionally, the size of and placement of the men's representations also served as a directive rather than the various maps I had on hand. When a cenotaph can be seen from miles away (e.g., the Brock Monument at Queenston Heights or the tribute to Lieutenant-General Drummond at the Drummond Hill Cemetery), or a portrait is illuminated by lights behind glass (e.g., Isaac Brock in the Niagara Falls History Museum), a visitor can hardly help but be immediately drawn to such appeals to the sight. These elements too, bothered me: the focus on male heroism in the war is magnified significantly by these aspects, resulting in a retelling of the War of 1812 in a manner that honours men above all and downplays the contributions of women.

In my notes, there were several instances that stand out firmly with regards to experiential learning as per Fenwick (2003, 2004) and Michelson's (1996, 1998, 2019, 2020) views. By paying close attention to the ways my body reacted *as I experienced* (Fenwick, 2003) what I was seeing, hearing, and smelling, along with my bodily reactions to the paths I walked, and the ways in which displays were positioned and artefacts were placed, I was able better understand the way that my body "spoke" (Michelson, 1998) to me in order to communicate important messages about the learning I was absorbing. My remarks indicated that I could feel my face responding to my experiences, and these facial responses were particularly indicative of my feelings about the displays, signs, exhibits, and markers I encountered. In the section that follows, I outline my strongest bodily reactions following my analyses of the themes I uncovered.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In this section I present my findings with respect to the ways that gender and militarism are represented and remembered in the War of 1812 museums and heritage sites that I analyzed as outlined above. In the assessment of my data, I identified two main themes: the bloodshed of war as celebratory with soldiering as heroic, and a gender imbalance which included stereotypical female and male representations. I discuss my analysis of these themes as they pertain to each site. I follow these analyses with detailed discussions of my reactions with regards to embodied feminist experiential learning. I then conclude with an exploration of implications and recommendations. I first begin with a general description of each site to provide some sense of their content/layouts.

Niagara Falls History Museum

Located on Ferry Street in Niagara Falls, this museum is only a short walk from the Lundy's Lane battleground, and houses historical pieces connected to Niagara Falls (both the city and the geographical feature). The building houses three galleries: the Community Gallery, the Ontario Power Generation Temporary Exhibition Gallery, and the Gale Family War of 1812 Gallery (Niagara Falls Museums, 2021c). I chose to conduct a portion of my research in this museum for its 1812 collection and its hands-on activities.

When entering the building, the visitor is drawn to walk through the temporary gallery first, followed by the community gallery, and then conclude with the Gale Gallery. As the first gallery is comprised of temporary travelling exhibitions, I will not comment on this room. According to the museum website (Niagara Falls Museums,

2021c), the community gallery aims to offer the visitor a learning experience of various aspects relating to the community of the city of Niagara Falls: “The people, the culture, geology, social life, industry and daredevils who attempted to conquer the falls are among the highlighted topics in this gallery” (Niagara Falls Museums, 2021c, para. 4). There is also a large display case dedicated to the commemoration of various wars in which some Niagara Falls residents took part. Interestingly, the website omits this information, and I wondered why such a substantial portion of the community gallery was dedicated to military uniforms and the remembrance of war.

The final (Gale) gallery seemed (to me) to be the most impressive of the three galleries. Recently renovated, it is the only gallery to span two floors, boasts floor to ceiling windows, an architecturally unique open-concept ceiling, and a handsome wooden staircase. Of course, one could argue that this gallery space is the most attractive as a result of the Gale family’s donations; however, to the uncritical visitor, it might seem that the War of 1812 is the most important part of Niagara Falls’s history, given the attractiveness of the space and the monetary contribution to the war’s commemoration.

Lundy’s Lane Battlefield

When departing the Niagara Falls History Museum, the visitor is handed a walking tour map of the Battlefield of Lundy’s Lane battle, the site of which is nearby. Following the map, (Niagara Falls Museums, 2021a) one must follow the letters (A, B, C, D) indicated on the map, and information markers along the way impart educational material about the impending historical battle. Given that one is taken along unfamiliar streets that cater to contemporary vehicles, the tour feels a little artificial, even though the

website claims that by following the trail, one will “experience the American advance and the British defence on the Lundy’s Lane battlefield” (Niagara Falls Museums, 2021a, Walking tour section, para. 1). I did not have this experience, regardless of the fact that I tried my best to imagine my way into history.

Drummond Hill Cemetery

Visualizing the past became somewhat easier once I made my way off the paved roads and onto the cemetery grounds, and the historical markers here made it easier to follow the path one was intended to take. Noted as a “rise of clear farmland, surrounded by an orchard and forest” (Parks Canada, n.d.-a, para. 2) at the time of the battle, the natural surroundings and peacefulness of the cemetery meant imagining oneself into the past took less effort. However, even though I was immersed amongst the graves of the dead, it was still difficult to conjure up the gruesome end to over 800 lives on both the American and British sides (Parks Canada, n.d.-a), which is perhaps the reason for the numerous informational boards recounting the bloody conflict along the way. It was also simple to find one’s way to the main site of the battle: one is guided there via the Battle of Lundy’s Lane Memorial, a cenotaph that is clearly seen from afar. Important graves are easily found from there, including that of Laura Secord. The only incongruity that made it difficult to find one’s way around thereafter was brought about by Lundy’s Lane itself severing a section of the battlefield; the final small portion of the tour then continues on the opposite side of the busy road.

Queenston Heights National Historic Site

This site, located in Queenston, is contained within a lovely park sitting atop the Niagara escarpment and marks the spot of the Battle of Queenston Heights, another famous battle in the War of 1812; it was, in fact, the first major confrontation of the war (Friends of Fort George, n.d.). Queenston Heights is also the location where Major-General Isaac Brock, known by many as the hero of Upper Canada, lost his life defending Niagara. In the end, the British, along with the help of Indigenous communities won the battle, and this, coupled with previous victories, “gave Upper Canadians new hope in the British cause and unified the population behind the war effort” (Friends of Fort George, n.d., The Battle of Queenston Heights, para. 5).

Brock is buried here, and a monument erected in his honour sits atop his grave. The cenotaph is 56 metres (186 ft) high and is the largest monument of its kind in Canada (Friends of Fort George, n.d.). There are a few interesting details to note about this historic site. First of all, there is no map necessary to guide the visitor to the monument; it is easily visible from afar in any direction. Secondly, the site is known by two names: Queenston Heights National Historic Site (Parks Canada, n.d.-b) and Brock’s Monument National Historic Site (Friends of Fort George, n.d.). Thirdly, the park also houses a monument to Laura Secord; her memorial is both difficult to locate on the grounds, and it is not mentioned on the Parks Canada National Historic Sites website alongside Brock’s tribute.

Bloodshed of War as Celebratory and Soldiering as Heroic

As one might expect from sites of war remembrance, scenes of violence and military honour can be witnessed at every turn at each of the locations I investigated. The Gale Family War of 1812 Gallery at the Niagara Falls History Museum contains displays replete with weaponry, ammunition, soldiers' uniforms and insignias, and potent battle scenes. Information boards containing illustrations of violent warfare and countless bodies strewn about assail the visitor at Lundy's Lane Battlefield as well as at the Drummond Hill Cemetery, which lies within the historical battlefield. At Queenston Heights, Brock's monument is flanked by "trophies of classical armour [that] stand at the corners of a low enclosing wall and four figures symbolizing victory adorn the column's capital" (Veterans Affairs Canada, 2021, para. 4). Images of military combat are carved into the stone of the base. The statue of Brock himself is set 56 metres in the air and poised in an imperious stance. While these contentious and valiant war scenes such as paintings of heroically bloody battles are typical of museological or heritage sites dedicated to war (e.g., Winter, 2012), it is important to question *why* these historical events are being represented in this manner.

Claiming to "hous[e] one Canada's best 1812 collections" (Niagara Falls Museums, 2021c, para. 3), the Niagara Falls History Museum website describes its War of 1812 exhibit as follows:

This space is designed with audio-visual ambiance of war and hands-on activities such as trying on a military coatee, handling a musket and feeling the weight of a cannon ball. The collection includes uniforms, weaponry, equipment, relics,

buttons and archival records relating specifically to the Battle of Lundy's Lane and to the War of 1812. (Niagara Falls Museums, 2021c, para. 3)

This description articulates an experiential encounter with the museum's collection: the visitor is meant to be immersed, as much as possible, into an understanding of what it might be like to be a soldier at war. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 restrictions, I was unable to try on a uniform or hold a weapon and ammunition for the purpose of this project; however, the museum website's summary of its exhibits paints a picture of the violence of war tied to heroism with its focus on these items.

As I made my way through the museum and I drew closer to the Gale Gallery, I could hear noises. At first I thought it was children playing outside; however, I soon discovered that the commotion was an audio recording playing in the background and the noise was that of battle sounds: yelling, gunfire, and cannon blasts. I found this discovery to be quite unsettling. When entering the space, I noted that I could feel myself grimacing with the realization that the distant sounds I had heard in the previous gallery were actually the noise of battle. Although the museum's aim is to provide the visitor with an "audio-visual ambiance of war" (Niagara Falls Museums, 2021c, para. 3), my guess is that their intent in this aim is to stir up feelings of excitement, pride, and heroism; however, as a person who detests violence, this environment put me on edge and made me feel distressed and uncomfortable. Noticing my facial reaction to this atmosphere revealed to me the extent of my discomfort.

The items within the glassed displays, too, added to my feelings of dismay: case after case contained representations of violence: cannonballs, bullets, guns, and scenes of

fighting and bloodshed fill the gallery space. Although the attached labels are, for the most part factual, one can pick up hints of war being construed as exciting on several of the placards; for example, the Gale Gallery's description of a battleground as a "scene of action" is not written in the language of loss, which I would expect, and I found this somewhat upsetting. As museum curator Barbara Clarke Smith (2010) notes with regards to label texts, "the language we use matters, because it can clarify our perspective, or distance or engage the reader" (p. 68). If the descriptions of war and battle focus on the cost involved in combat rather than on the heroism of soldiers, a message of the importance of peace could be put forward instead of the glory of war, and I would find myself connecting with the material in a differently engaged manner. For example, stories of pain, struggle, and loss experienced by those left behind as a result of the war that illustrate the ugliness and devastation of battle suffered by *everyone* involved conflict, along with a discussion of alternatives to fighting, seems to be a more constructive alternative to the hero narrative.

I reacted in much the same way to the displays of weaponry and ammunition in the gallery, but rather than grimacing when faced with these items, I shook my head in disapproval. These trappings cater to "visitors to war museums who come with . . . expectations and . . . wild distortions of the *thrilling* nature of war (Winter, 2012, p. 161). However, as previously noted, I deem war as unnecessarily violent and believe that "war is not a given but a social practice" (Taber, 2020a, p. 16), hence my physical response to this display. As a result, I questioned whether so much space ought to be given to tools of destruction in the exhibition.

The background art in the cases, too, paints pictures of the gore of war as valiant and heroic. Smartly uniformed soldiers in brave poses are abundant in the glassed cases, splashed across the fore- and backgrounds. Taber (2020b), in her critique of Canadian military museums, notes that “the message to visitors [in these institutions] is that war and violence is connected to heroism, that medals and uniforms represent that heroism, and that those who died are heroes regardless of the manner of their deaths” (p. 9). By linking weapons and ammunition to ornamental uniforms and shiny medals in the cases, the reality of the brutality of war is obscured, and the most prevalent story being told is that of the honourable nature of fighting. I felt dismayed by this narrative, and continued to shake my head as I walked through the gallery.

Like the Niagara Falls History Museum, Lundy’s Lane Battlefield and Drummond Cemetery celebrate war via hero-making, and the map containing a self-guided tour of the battle of Lundy’s Lane given out to visitors at the museum promotes visits to this heritage site. The battlefield is advertised as a tourist attraction by the museum and “was designated a national historic site of Canada in 1937 because . . . it was the bloodiest battle of the War of 1812 . . . and, the Americans failed to dislodge the British from their position, ending the American offensive in Upper Canada” (Parks Canada, n.d-a, para. 3). Indeed, Niagara Falls Museums’ slogan is “Come for the Falls | Fall for the History” (Niagara Falls Museums, 2021c, museum logo), which, like the museological displays, I found to be troubling: why would the city encourage visitors to fall in love with a violent past?

A memorial to the dead soldiers, the Lundy's Lane Monument, stands as the centrepiece to both the battlefield and the cemetery, with this marker flanked by both cannons and cannonballs. The cenotaph stretches many metres into the sky, drawing attention to both itself and the surrounding area. A sculpture of Lieutenant-General Drummond, the battle-leader, stands nearby, with the man placed gallantly astride his steed, his body bent over as if poised for action, his face marked by a brave and determined stare. In his right hand he clutches a telescope, seemingly calling to mind his heroic nature: he is permanently on the watch for the enemy. While I know that neither of these sites can be separated from war and death, as noted previously, it is the tethering of heroism and the glory of war to tourism that is both problematic and disconcerting. In fact, Enloe discusses the "invisible process" (2016, p. 125) of militarization in our daily lives and how ordinary it seems to those immersed in militarized living. While not an advocate of commercial *militourism* (2016, p. 125), (a term coined by Turkish activists who conduct tours by which they draw attention to everyday militarist practices) and its potential glorification of war, Enloe (2016) does find value in the way that militourism makes citizens aware of how enmeshed with violence their lives have become.

The walking tour begins at the Niagara Falls History Museum and wraps around a small city block to the Battlefield of Lundy's Lane and then back to the museum (Niagara Falls Museum, 2021a). I tried to imagine what it might be like to be a soldier marching into a battle, but I must admit that it was very difficult given that what was previously sparsely populated dirt supply routes are now car-dominated commercial and residential roads. Interestingly, I did not think to imagine myself as a civilian in fear of the battle;

my guess is this is due to the focus on men and soldiers as I walked along. Interpretive signs along the walking tour of the historic battleground telling the story of the unfolding of the battle also paint a picture of violence along with courage. The pictorials show men in blue or red uniforms in various stages of marching, combat, injury, and death. What stood out most to me about the depictions on these signs was the bloodshed of battle and the armaments. Although somewhat cartoonish, the illustrations portray death and destruction: one board depicts 21 dead soldiers, eight rifles, and three canons. Another shows numerous combatants, with guns or bayonets in hand, poised to kill the enemy. The stripes for the British and American flags in the background actually ‘bleed’ into the picture, with the splatter of paint resembling the spatter of blood. These two prominent elements (bloodshed and weaponry) suggested two ideas to me: one, the unquestionable bravery of the male figure (which will be discussed further in the following section), and two, the celebration of violence/glorification of war, the two themes that dominated the narrative in the Gale Gallery.

Once at the battlefield, with the hum of traffic from the busyness of Lundy’s Lane cutting directly through the historic site, it was again difficult to envision myself into a battlefield in the year 1814. The most visible reminder of the gruesome day is the archway that is perched over the street, marking the battle; it is comprised of silhouetted soldiers fighting on either side, and a cannon positioned between the combatants. This archway, resembling the entrance to an amusement park, once again demonstrates the celebration of violence. The graveyard entrance also includes signage that looks to be celebratory with regards to the war: with its bright blue background and yellow lettering,

it seemed more like the entrance to a fair or carnival than a cemetery. I must acknowledge, however, that I might be biased in my thinking; others might not feel the same way that I did and instead deem the signage to be neither celebratory nor sombre. Instead, it could be perceived that the structure and cemetery sign were highlighting the entranceways to history. Admittedly, the celebratory quality was lost in the cemetery: the grave markers and vaults make for a sobering mood, and I felt somewhat unsettled. This unease helped me somewhat to better imagine myself into the mindset of the brutality of war.

There was one point in the walking tour that helped me with the sense of time, and this took place just outside of the Battleground Hotel Museum, located on the Lundy's Lane battlefield. Formerly Fralick's Tavern (in the 1800s), I drew close to the building to take a photo, and as I neared the door, I could smell the age of the building: it smelled old, musty. The scents certainly reminded me of the fact that I was standing in an historical place, and I tried to imagine a reality to the metal cut-out soldiers in the distant field. But these silhouettes resembled art installations more than realistic representations of the battlefield; moreover, they reminded me of toy soldiers wielding weapons, which detracted from the serious and lethal nature of war and brought to my mind the "sneaky... process" (Enloe, 2004, p. 145) by which militarization becomes ordinary in our lives. Once again, I was disturbed and saddened by the scenes of violence being represented in this manner, and I was disappointed by the 'war as glory' story the city puts forward.

I was particularly affronted by the volume of bloody battle scenes on the markers along the path of the walking tour, just as I was in the Niagara Falls History Museum and I responded to these sights in the same manner as I did when I encountered the sounds of battle: I felt my face contort into a grimace. These violent portrayals reminded me of Winter's (2012) remark that:

war museums entail choices of appropriate symbols and representative objects, arrayed in such a manner as to avoid controversy especially among veterans, to hold the public's attention and to invite sufficient numbers of visitors to come so that the bills can be paid. Aesthetic choices, matters of selection, and designating pathways for visitors to trace the history of war are all part of the operation of creating a war museum. (p. 152)

This assertion can be applied to both the Gale Gallery and the walking tour of the Battle of 1812: these sites work to “hold the public's attention [and] to invite [a] sufficient numbers of visitors” (Winter, 2012, p. 152), observed in the museum's slogan, “Come for the Falls | Fall for the History” (Niagara Falls Museums, 2021a, museum logo). My bodily response to these images, however, demonstrated that I am not a visitor who is drawn to the bloodshed and heroism tied to war, and I thought that perhaps there should be more of a balance struck for visitors.

Another important juncture in the War of 1812 took place at Queenston Heights, which marks the place of the first major battle in the conflict; it is also where Major-General Isaac Brock was killed in his attempt to take back the hill that had been captured by American forces in the early months of the war. The Brock monument, dedicated to

the memory of the celebrated commander, set atop the hill, can be seen for many miles in multiple directions. However, this is also the location of the monument dedicated to Laura Secord, and, on a snowy winter day when no paths were visible, I set out to examine and compare the tributes to both heroes. My analysis of the monument erected in honour of Brock is discussed in this section; Laura Secord's will be examined in the segment that follows.

I walked immediately up to the Brock monument as it was obviously easy to locate; quite honestly, the sheer size and presence of the structure drew me to making this my first stop. It did not matter where I parked or initially stepped into the park; my eyes were pulled to the Brock monument and my body followed suit. Brock's stance atop the cenotaph is imposing; I felt as though it serves as a boastful commemoration. Its height makes it impossible to distinguish the details of the statue with the naked eye; however, an online aerial video (gforce118118, 2017) reveals that Brock is dressed in formal officer attire, including an elaborate uniform, ornamental helmet, and cape. In his hand he holds a telescope, a reminder of how he led his men into battle to protect his country. He looks distinguished, genteel, gallant. He looks like one might imagine a hero to look like. Clearly, this memorial celebrates the fact that Major General Isaac Brock gave his life up in a violent and bloody fight to defend Upper Canada. The irony of this veneration is that "Brock died needlessly in a battle that decided nothing" (Elliott, 2012, para. 4). Despite these little-known facts about Brock and the War of 1812, the above instances, in the museum, on the battlefield, and in the cemetery corroborate Enloe's (2004; 2016) suggestion that society deems soldiers as heroic. Again, I felt rather uncomfortable with

the way history was being told by these depictions of Brock: battle, war, violence, and death seemed to be celebrated at this place. While I expected the soldierly heroism and the remembrance of war to be honoured, I did not expect such a focus on fighting and bloodshed. Rather than grimacing or shaking my head at this site, I recorded feeling dismayed and disappointed.

Gender Imbalance Combined with Stereotypical Female and Male Representations

The Gale Gallery in the Niagara Falls History Museum was noticeably devoid of female representation with regards to the War of 1812. In fact, aside from some photos containing women taking part in the end of the war celebrations, one of Laura Secord's gravestone, and one of a programme of the unveiling of the Laura Secord Monument, there was one small corner display that held *trappings* related to women during the War of 1812: a wedding dress that belonged to the wife of a military Captain, the gravestone of the first white child to be born on the Niagara Frontier, and a bonnet that belonged to Laura Secord. When compared to all the items discussed in the previous section, these odds and ends seemed a little incongruous to me. Art and war historian Laura Brandon (2010) explains that

The problem for the present-day historian and museum curator is not only to locate art works but also to dig out objects that illustrate the important roles played by more than 50 percent of the population whose experience is one of marginalization. Finding women in the story of war requires finding accounts, artefacts, and artworks by or about women that reveal their perspectives of the

war. While it may be harder to uncover and identify, evidence in support of a female point of view does exist. (p. 109)

Although the items contained within the display case belong to, or are connected with, women who lived during the war, I do not see how these articles tell their “perspectives of the war” (Brandon, 2010, p. 109). To me, the artefacts listed above are not even remotely related to how women might have felt about the war, or about the men they knew participating in it. In fact, I was very confused about why the small child’s gravestone was in the display case: the little girl commemorated on the marker had nothing to do with the conflict.

Taber and Grover (2021) too, note that in war museums such as the one located in Ottawa, Canada, there is “an overall lack of focus on women and civilians . . . [because] war is viewed as a masculine activity, [and] with the battlefield as the most important source of stories, the collection and curation of artefacts has generally excluded women and the home front” (p. 269). Clearly the focus is on the battlefield in the exhibits I visited, and women’s stories are presented as substandard, as revealed by the display location, volume, and choice of objects. Brandon (2010) points out that this is often the case in museums, explaining that “largely absent are objects pertaining to women who experienced war in capacities as varied as prisoners; victims of violence; domestic and industrial workers; soldiers’ mother, wives, and lovers; artists; journalists; poets; prostitutes; mourners; spies” (p. 110). I was disappointed by the lack of variety in personal stories, as well as by the scarcity of objects and personal accounts (e.g. letters, journals) in the display cases. Granted, one of the placards titled “Women in the War”

does tell the story of how the war affected four separate women's lives, as sole caretakers of the home and families, and as support for the men fighting; however, these narratives are not told by the women themselves through letters or diaries. I was left with the idea that women are voiceless in this space. Sadly, it would seem that even today women suffer due to their spouses' deployments: they are "stressful on spousal relationships and create extra work for the non-military spouse" (Harrison, 2002, p. 41). Indeed, being left alone on the home front, with all the labour, drudgery, and anxiety that comes along with it, is merely another type of heroic battle.

Similarly, while there are many portraits of males in countless soldierly battle poses and dressed in various military uniforms, only one illustration of a woman directly involved in the war is displayed: a drawing of Laura Secord on her 30-kilometre trek through the woods. Interestingly though, she is portrayed as a frightened-looking young girl, looking behind while treading carefully forward. The depiction reminded me of Little Red Riding Hood rather than the heroine who saved the day in the Battle of Beaverdams. What is more, directly across from this illustration is a large portrait of Isaac Brock, enclosed in an illuminated case, in an ornate gilded frame. He looks bold, noble, and calm. I felt irritated by the disparities in these renderings and thought to myself, "Why are all the men depicted as brave and fearless, and this woman as fearful and innocent?" Taber (2020a), writing about military museums, answers this question, explaining that "there is a patriarchal gender hierarchy in these . . . museums that marginalize women's narratives and situate them within the construct of femininity" (p. 12). When these kinds of stories are being put forward at every turn in the museum, they

become entrenched in the minds of the visitor. As a result, these stereotypical narratives can become unquestioningly accepted and normalized.

I think my strongest reaction to any of the displays I took in was the rendering of Laura Secord's trek displayed in the Gale Gallery. Indeed, the black and white drawing looks like a page torn from a children's book, and when compared to Brock's large, gilded portrait, well-lit and hanging in its own glass case, I grew upset and felt myself become warm with anger. Laura Secord's illustration pales in comparison and is almost lost amongst an assembly of other illustrations of key players in the war. Paying attention to my facial flushing at this sight revealed to me the level of my irritation at these differences in representation and how unjust they were.

At Lundy's Lane Battlefield, I could not find even one depiction of a woman participant in the war on the signage that guided the walking tour. Sign after sign is filled with illustrations of weaponry and noble-looking men: marching men, fighting men, wounded men, and lifeless men. Metal soldier cut-outs that are exclusively male decorate the field and archway. While there are women depicted or mentioned on the information panels, they are related to the tourism that followed the war. One board relates the story of retired schoolteacher Ruth Redmond, who tirelessly purchased land surrounding the historic battlefield for the purpose of a tribute to "her boys"—the soldiers who died at Lundy's Lane. Another panel, which discusses the battlefield tourism, merely contains a female silhouette in a crowd of male profiles, conveyed via the figure's hair bun and dress. These two boards, one relating a woman's story, and one depicting a female figure, amongst many (14, in fact), demonstrate the tremendous imbalance of male-to-female

representation in the telling of the War of 1812 on this former battlefield. This particular rendering is one that perpetuates the notion of a “masculinized memor[y]” (Enloe, 2004):

the assignment of significance or triviality—that is visibility or invisibility—are typically based on the presumption that what men did must have been more important than what women did in determining how the war was fought, how it ended, and what its impact is on postwar society. Men are on most war museums’ [and war heritage sites’] center stage because war is imagined to be a masculinized process; women are the sideshow because femininity, it is erroneously thought, does not, cannot, shape the course and outcome of a war. (p. 196)

The absence of women on the markers throughout the battlefield reveals the masculinized process in the retelling of this conflict during the War of 1812. As a woman experiencing the former combat zone, I felt that the story being told was, at best, partial, and at worst, deceitful. I must admit that I felt left out and marginalized.

A bust of Laura Secord sits atop her gravestone in the Drummond Hill Cemetery and is the sole female figure in the battlefield to represent the participation of women in the war. However, this sculpture is nothing like that of Lieutenant-General Drummond that sits across the yard. As noted above, the leader is depicted as a strong, noble, and courageous warrior. Laura Secord’s sculpture, on the other hand, exudes a character of sincerity and innocence. Again, we see stereotypical portrayals of men and women coming into play at this site. This discrepancy between male and female representation is common in museological settings, a fact that is discussed by researcher Machin (2010)

who points out that even in natural history galleries, the “displays perpetuate the idea that males are perceived as more worthy representatives of species than females” (p. 191). Granted, the depiction of Laura Secord in this setting seems more befitting of the woman who trudged many kilometres through the woods than the portrayal at Queenston Heights (which I document below); the Drummond Hill Cemetery representation of Laura is a younger, more vivacious version and does not look nearly so austere. Also, important to note is that the forward-facing side on her marker contains her story, and it is told in a way that conveys her courage and honour. However, the epitaph in the Drummond Hill Cemetery belonging to her husband, James, who is buried with her in this place and shares her gravestone, records him as a “Collector of Customs,” whereas Laura’s epitaph chronicles her as the “beloved wife of James Secord”. These epitaphs genuinely incensed me, as revealed both by the noted shake of my head and by the sneer I felt plastered on my face. It is especially maddening that her husband is allowed to be remembered for his contribution to society as a customs collector in her epitaph, whereas Laura Secord is merely named as his wife in his. To be forever remembered as *belonging* to a man seems an insult when, in fact, she was a heroine, and he was not. It made me wonder why his epitaph did not read ‘husband to the heroine Laura Secord.’ Again, this experience, and the way I experienced it bodily, revealed the level of injustice concerning male and female representation at this site, in spite of some of the more positive points contained within the narratives here.

Laura Secord’s monument at Queenston Heights was difficult for me to find, and I was forced to consult the directive plaques in the park in order to locate it. When I

finally came upon it, I was surprised: at only seven feet tall (Laura Secord, 2021), this tribute in the form of a small cenotaph paled in comparison to the Brock monument. What is more, a statue of Laura Secord does not sit atop the cenotaph; instead, a small bronze carving of her likeness, from the bust up, is affixed to the stone. But I think that what astonished me the most was the difference in the portrayals of these two famous figures: Isaac Brock is rendered as a formidable young man (as described in detail previously), and Laura Secord is depicted as a diminutive senior, staring vacantly, with her head wrapped in a bonnet and her dress fastened tightly at the throat with a bow. She looks like a bad-tempered grandmother with a vacant stare, and I wondered: “Why is it that someone who had a hand in saving the lives of many soldiers and winning a battle is depicted in this manner, and someone who lost his life in a battle that ended in defeat depicted in such a different way?” I suspect that the answer has much to do with the celebration and thrill (Winter, 2012) of war. And while it is true that “the bronze image of an elderly Laura Secord that you see on the monument is quite faithful to the historical truth” (GuideTags.com, n.d.), it does not make sense to me that she is memorialised in her advanced years, while Brock is perpetually venerated as a dynamic young man. At 43 years of age when he was shot and killed, Laura Secord was five years his junior at the time of her long trek through the woods. Once again, I was confronted with “stereotypical and inaccurate messages, both subliminal and obvious, about the roles [and representations] of females” (Machin, 2010. p. 197). I was perturbed by these incongruities; the depictions were “imbued with [the] gendered assumptions and values” of which Enloe (2016, p. 11) writes, and need to be questioned.

My reactions to the dimensional representations and imbalance of male versus female depictions at Queenston Heights and at Drummond Hill Cemetery in Lundy's Lane Battlegrounds were produced by feelings of injustice. First of all, Laura Secord is the only woman portrayed as taking part in the war at both of these sites. Secondly, when viewing both the monument to Laura Secord and her grave marker, I felt a quizzical expression come over my face: both cenotaphs bore images of merely the heroine's bust. In contrast, Brock's monument at Queenston Heights reaches 56 metres high (Veterans Affairs Canada, 2021) and in Drummond Hill Cemetery, the sculpture of Lieutenant-General Drummond is in full battledress, set up high on his horse. These representations (and lack of female depictions) felt unfair and communicated to the visitor that the roles that the men played in the war were infinitely more important than those played by the women; in the end, I found the representational differences between the two historical figures to be exceptionally troubling.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The way that the stories of the War of 1812 are told at these sites serves to perpetuate the hegemonic portrayals of war, including the celebration of violent and bloody combat, war as a male-dominated condition, and the conventional roles of men and women in wartime. During my data collection, I attempted to “focu[s] on the accuracy of [my] emotional and physical responses, on what they [had to] teach [me] about the history that . . . shaped them, and on how they help[ed] locate [me] both physically and socially in a contentious human history” (Michelson, 1998, p. 227). By paying close attention to the way my body reacted to what I was seeing in conjunction with what I was thinking (Fenwick, 2003), that is, by employing “multiple faculties” (Michelson, 1998, p. 223), my learning was amplified. I was better able to understand how, as a woman, I was not appropriately represented in these “predominantly male-centred” (Smith, 2006, p. 159) narratives and how stories of war can be partial, or even inaccurate. Engaging in the experiential learning process according to the principles laid out by Fenwick (2003) and Michelson (1998) by paying attention to my physical and emotional responses that “occur[ed] *within* action” (Fenwick, 2003, p. 129, italics in original) at my studied sites, enhanced my understanding of the cultural meanings that are bound up in military, war, and gender.

My findings led me to believe that some work ought to be done with regards to the ways the War of 1812 is presented at these sites. As places of public pedagogy, the city of Niagara Falls, museum director, and guides might want to think about posting additional markers or interpretive texts at these locations to prod visitors to consider

alternative (her)stories. I imagine that the signage could be loosely based on the questions I asked myself during my data collection and on my subsequent findings. For example:

- How many of the displays are about women and how many are about men in the Gale Gallery? How are the women and men in the displays portrayed? How did the displays make you feel?
- When you are observing the illustrations of the War of 1812 on the informational boards that lead you through the Battle of Lundy's Lane walking tour, what stood out most to you? When observing the battle scenes, how did you feel?
- In the Drummond Hill Cemetery, how does Laura Secord's epitaph differ from that of James Secord's? How do these differences make you feel?
- At Queenston Heights National Historic Site, are there differences in the ways that Isaac Brock's story is told versus the way Laura Secord's story is told? Are there differences in their physical portrayals? How do these portrayals make you feel?

I anticipate that asking questions such as these will reveal that there is an underlying story in these places that belie "a certain set of Western elite cultural values [that is being sold] as . . . universally applicable" (Smith, 2006, p. 11). It is my hope that visitors might see that the celebrated white male war hero is one that needs to be explored, complicated, felt, and interrogated. Moreover, this revelation may help visitors learn and better understand their position in the world and how they relate to themselves and to others (Ellsworth, 2005).

In addition, I think it is important to make women more visible at the sites I visited. For example, the curators at the Niagara Falls History Museum should consider including more stories of women in the Gale Gallery explaining their roles in the War of 1812 and how they were affected by this conflict. These stories should also be told from a female perspective. The Walking Tour of Lundy's Lane Battlefield, too, ought to contain more accounts told by and about women. A more complete retelling of the war would be enacted by these inclusions. Lastly, I would recommend more prominence given to the Laura Secord monument at Queenston Heights. The fact that I could not find the commemoration to her on my own while Brock's can be observed for miles in every direction is troubling. As a woman experiencing these places honouring men and violence, I felt insignificant and suppressed.

CONCLUSION

It is not my intent to critique the establishments I visited, nor those who are employed there; instead, it is my wish to foster public awareness and provide consideration for potential future change. I went into this project knowing that I might encounter a celebration of war, bloodshed, and male heroism along with a gender imbalance and fe/male stereotyping, given my past research; however, I wanted to see and experience how local Niagara sites (sites in *my* region) portrayed a renowned local war. I suppose that, as a person who is averse to war and violence, I was hoping that regional sites might strike a better balance in their representations of war than those I had studied in the past. However, following my research, I believe that it is necessary to make changes at these sites so that visitors might understand the problematic ways in which gender and violence is presented with regards to the War of 1812. It is important to remember that museums and heritage sites have the power to not only create stories, but to also erase them. It is also important to remember that these places have the power to teach us that our learning is an ever-changing, ever-growing process (Ellsworth, 2005), helping us to be relational creatures. Examining, questioning, and *feeling* the stories that public pedagogical places tell is imperative to the revelation of a more fulsome account, and a more socially just story. The experiential embodied feminist antimilitarist learning hack showed me how paying attention to my body's reactions revealed inequities and disconcerting representations with regards to the stories told about the War of 1812; experiential education, employed in the manner suggested by Fenwick (2003, 2004) and

Michelson (1996, 1998, 2019, 2020) is an educational thrust that can facilitate learning for others as well.

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