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Archaeologists Colonizing Canada: The Effects of Unquestioned Categories

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ABSTRACT

The labelling and categorization of archaeological sites have consequences for the interpretation and subsequent research completed. As such, we as archaeologists must always be vigilant regarding the unintended consequences of labels we attach, or choose to omit, from official site information. These problems become compounded when governmental control codifies existing archaeological conventions and renders them rigid and difficult to change. Using the current archaeological registration database information for Brant County, Ontario, Canada, this paper demonstrates how imaginary pasts are created through archaeological convention and governmental codification and the consequences of these uncontested actions.

Résumé: L'étiquetage et la catégorisation des sites archéologiques ont des conséquences sur l'interprétation et les recherches subséquemment menées. En notre qualité d'archéologues, nous devons ainsi toujours faire preuve de vigilance face aux conséquences imprévues des étiquettes que nous apposons aux renseignements officiels de site, ou que nous choisissons d'omettre. Ces problèmes s'amplifient lorsque les contrôles gouvernementaux codifient les conventions archéologiques existantes, les rendant ainsi rigides et difficilement modifiables. En utilisant la base de données d'enregistrement archéologique de Brant County (Ontario) au Canada, cet article décrit comment les conventions archéologiques et la codification gouvernementale créent des passés imaginaires, ainsi que les conséquences de ces mesures incontestées.

Resumen: El etiquetado y categorización de los emplazamientos arqueológicos tiene consecuencias para la interpretación y subsiguiente investigación completada. Así, como arqueólogos siempre debemos estar vigilantes con respecto a las inesperadas consecuencias de las etiquetas que

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ponemos, o escogemos omitir, de la información oficial del emplazamiento. Estos problemas se ven agravados cuando el control gubernamental codifica las convenciones arqueológicas existentes y las vuelve rígidas y difíciles de cambiar. Mediante el uso de información actual de la base de datos de registros arqueológicos para el Condado de Brant, Ontario (Canadá), el presente documento demuestra cómo se crean pasados imaginarios mediante la convención arqueológica y la codificación gubernamental y las consecuencias de estas acciones no cuestionadas.

KEY WORDS

Colonialism, Archaeological taxonomy, Governmentality, Ontario

Introduction

Categories and labels of archaeological research are inherently constructed in the present by researchers' own interests, experiences, and conceptualizations of the past and the present. How the past is subdivided into manageable pieces of interpretive data allows researchers' vignettes into the past but also frames what is observed and how patterns are interpreted. This paper discusses and deconstructs how the Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian labels are currently conceptualized to frame historical archaeology in Ontario.[1] By exploring these labels through the lens of nineteenth-century Southwestern Ontario, I am drawing attention to the reality that how archaeologists have framed, and continue to frame, the colonial past serves to reify the present narrative of an imaginary colonizer-centric past. This creates a cyclical research environment where the colonizers are dominant and colonized are enclaved or invisible, which in turn acts as a feedback loop that acts to continuously colonize the past. Many of these same critiques can be examined for the pre-contact period; however, the scope of this paper is focused on the historic period in order to emphasize the ongoing, contemporary ramifications of omissions of various 'others' from the archaeological narrative. Through exploring the patterns created in the Ontario provincial site database for Brantford Township, Brant County, Ontario, I demonstrate how this habitual labelling is understood and used in archaeological practice, as well as the unintended consequences of the uncritical perpetuation of these categories for the past and present peoples. It is important to note that although I am using Ontario as an entry point for this discussion, the main issue surrounding the need for a broader consideration of how colonial tropes are engaged with and/or ignored is highly relevant in a variety of other contexts.

Process of Applying Labels

Throughout the processes of identification, excavation, interpretation, and reporting, archaeological sites are assigned various temporal and/or ethnic affiliations that then structure the subsequent interpretations and significance of the site. These categories can be broad (e.g. Pre-historic/Historic, Pre-contact/Post-contact) or narrow (e.g. Mohawk, British), but at their root, reflect archaeological taxonomy. The manner in which sites—and thus groups of peoples—are divided and grouped to create meaningful patterns and narratives is an activity practised for every site encountered. An archaeological site is assigned various temporal or ethnic labels that ultimately serve to direct the interpretation of the site in a specific manner (Gnecco and Langebaek 2014:5). The use of archaeological categories and classifications is an understandable means to make order of the past; however, these categories are contingent on specific historical conditions that are invoked in our present (Stahl 2012:160; Thomas 2004:62–63; Voss 2004:56). Therefore, they may have little, differing, or no meaning within the lived past for which they describe.

There are numerous examples of past categories and labels used by archaeologists and researchers who applied the ingrained assumptions and 'common sense' approaches of their time, and thus have since been heavily critiqued. These can include the Moundbuilder myth (McGuire, 1992:820–821), the development of the Owasco culture (Hart and Brumbach 2003), and the rigid interpretive divide between the pre-historic/historic periods (Lightfoot 1995), to name a few. In each case, prevalent conventions of the time encouraged archaeologists to understand sites within a pre-existing framework that considered these divisions and interpretations to be valid, but these assumptions were later shown to be deeply problematic frameworks that did not adequately conceptualize the reality of the lived past. The risks and pitfalls of applying inaccurate labels and categories underscore the danger in using 'common sense' approaches within archaeological labelling (Blakey 1990:38).

How archaeologists choose to label sites is an act that has very real consequences in how material culture is analysed, whether a site is designated as significant, and in many cases, whether a site is excavated. Unfortunately, the labelling of historic sites in many contexts is often considered a mundane and 'common sense' process whereby, in Ontario, a nineteenth-century site is automatically considered Euro-Canadian unless a disproportionate level of proof exists. This paper demonstrates that the site labelling process of nineteenth-century sites has significant consequences for contemporary peoples and thus deserves a far greater consideration beyond the conventional 'common sense' approach.

This paper adopts the dominant terminology and categories as they are conventionally applied in Ontario and across Canada. Broadly speaking, Canadian archaeology follows the convention of separating categories into Aboriginal[2] or Euro-Canadian categories; this division represents the standard conceptual divide between dominant and 'othered' groups in other regions. The long-standing convention that indigenous peoples are equated with the pre-contact period, whereas peoples of European descent are equated with the post-contact period is a common practice that has parallels throughout the world. As such, the discussion of this paper can be easily considered within a broader global conceptualization. For example, within the Australian context, despite long-standing research on historic period Aboriginal peoples (e.g. Harrison 2004a, b; Harrison and Williamson 2002; Smith and Burke 2007), historical archaeology remains the study of non-Indigenous activities (Smith and Burke 2007:194). Babiarz (2011) has similarly discussed how people of African-American heritage continue to be routinely removed from conventional narratives. In all of these cases, there is a power imbalance in favour of an accepted dominant narrative that is used to marginalize or silence an 'other'.

Archaeology Imbedded in a Political and Colonial System

My exploration of the archaeological taxonomic process starts from the position that the practice of archaeology—be it academic, avocational, or consultant—is embedded within a political and colonial system. Archaeological research methods are embedded within a political and professional legislative set of best practices that have continuously been re-evaluated to fit the societal perceptions of their time. In its present iteration, arguably shaped by the rise of the cultural resource management (CRM) industry, governmental standards and guidelines have become increasingly important in dictating best practices (e.g. Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport 2011). This is not an inherently negative shift, but "… many conceptual categories and techniques of governance were symmetrically applied in order to subjugate external cultural others and to subordinate internal groups" (Lydon and Rizvi 2010:24). This does not imply that state governments purposefully manipulate established best practices as a direct and purposeful method to disenfranchise various groups, but rather the relationship that these groups have with the government creates an unequal balance of power that cannot be ignored (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2006:128). Archaeology is often invoked in these contexts to support or undermine either side of the debate between the state and various others; however, the fact remains that the government ultimately regulates which archaeological sites are considered significant and which researchers

receive funding or permission to conduct excavations. This means that archaeology can be understood as an insidious tool of the nation state and nationalism.

The complex relationship between archaeological practice and the nation state is only one facet of this discussion as "colonialism and nationalism have recently been conceptualized as connected systems of thinking and practice, and archaeology often developed at the intersection of colonialism and nationalism" (Lydon and Rizvi 2010:24). Archaeology is a practice developed within the colonial process, with the majority of archaeologists being either encapsulated within and/or representing the interests of, consciously or unconsciously, the colonial state; state legislation or policy often acts as an agent of governance over archaeological practice and protections. The state often establishes the criteria, commonly through a permit- and licence-based system, through which individuals can operate as a professional archaeologist within its jurisdiction. Academic-focused archaeologists are often forced to operate within a similar, if slightly more relaxed, system as CRM-focused archaeologists (Trigger 2006:16). To conduct archaeological excavations in Ontario, whether considered an academic or CRM project, an individual is required to obtain a professional licence from the provincial Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS); the MTCS operates as the approval body for those who meet the criteria to be designated as an archaeologist. Furthermore, the creation and enforcement of a series of best minimum practices and heritage legislation by state officials firmly establishes the state as the sanctioned authority of archaeological practice and, subsequently, what qualifies as an archaeological site. As such, the requirements for sites, and their afforded state protections, are determined by archaeobureaucrats who primarily serve in administrative roles (Dent 2012:50) rather than as practising archaeologists.

Considering the various ways that the state thus governs archaeology and archaeological practices, it becomes clear that archaeology is embedded within a political system (McGuire 2008:21). Archaeology becomes a tool of the colonial nation state whose default is to maintain the status quo (Hutchings and La Salle 2014:46; Paynter and McGuire 1991:9). This does not mean that archaeologists do not challenge ingrained concepts and ideas, but rather that the doxic framework (or paradigm) in which our challenges are inserted are made more difficult to conceptualize, let alone change. As such, archaeologists must continuously be aware of any challenges that make them uncomfortable or ones they have a difficulty grasping. Challenges that make people uncomfortable are often met with aggressive responses arguing for a continued privileged positioning as archaeologists, yet without acknowledgment such a position in and of itself is privileged.

Archaeologists are self-appointed stewards of the archaeological record (Society for American Archaeology 2004) and, as such, create and perpetuate the frameworks that reify conventional interpretations of the concepts of pre-contact Aboriginal/post-contact Euro-Canadian, while imposing differences onto these categories that are embedded within an inherently colonial sensibility (Haber 2007:216). Empowered by the state, archaeologists are tools of colonial ideology and are inserted as actors within the ongoing colonial process of managing the archaeological heritage of descendant colonized peoples (e.g. Hodgetts 2013). This presents a power imbalance, wherein archaeologists are framed against other actors arguing against the colonial state, notably various Aboriginal governments within Canada, yet retain ultimate control of the archaeological record that encompasses Aboriginal material heritage (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2006; McNiven and Russell 2005; Smith 2004:92).

The significance of recognizing the state's influence upon and colonial nature of archaeological research often becomes apparent during dialogues with groups and peoples who are directly affected by the framing of archaeological narratives. During a 2012 meeting between the local Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation community and the archaeological community in Ontario, a community member told the group that archaeology is "perpetuating a lie". The speaker was referring to the role archaeologists play in legitimizing the elected band council over the traditional band council within their community. Within the speaker's community, there are two leadership groups: the traditional band council that derives its authority from pre-contact political structures, and the elected band council that derives its authority from the laws imposed by the contemporary Canadian nation state (Supernant and Warrick 2014:573–579). While this sentiment arose from a debate on the various dimensions of contemporary archaeological practice and its impacts on First Nations' communities, this comment also pertained to the continuing colonial legacies that are played out in the archaeological processes of making meaning from contested pasts. Archaeologists in Canada, especially historical archaeologists, exist in a conceptual landscape that has been framed by the archaeology of the past (Doroszenko 2009; Ferris 2007). The research that has been done, as well as ignored, sets the ground work for what is or is not considered appropriate archaeological inquiry. Even before a project's conceptualization, a limiting framework exists, from which it is that much more difficult to disconnect or shape to accommodate shifts in knowledge or broader conceptualizations. This is an inherent reality of the discipline, as interpretations are continuously justified based on previous work and often try to understand how any new data fit within the existent framework (Trigger 2006:16). As discussed by archaeologists (e.g. Johnson 2003, Jordan 2008; Wilcox 2009) and historians (e.g. Hill 2009), there exists a state-

sanctioned master narrative of the past (authorized heritage discourse) and thus must be self-reflexive regarding how practices may uncritically perpetuate this narrative (e.g. Harrison 2004b; McNiven and Russell 2005; Smith 2004, 2006).

To promote archaeological practice that critiques the status quo by understanding the effect of current habitual and doxic archaeological taxonomical practices on the world beyond archaeology, I am advocating a form of archaeological *praxis* (sensu McGuire 2008) that explicitly acknowledges the political and colonial nature of archaeology. When confronting archaeological habitus and doxa, it is often useful to consider alternative theoretical frameworks that encourage a reflexive consideration of how archaeological narratives and interpretive assumptions are created. As such, I am choosing to frame the creation of archaeological narratives within a framework of the 'imaginary', which serves to critically re-visit archaeological conventions.

The Archaeological Imaginary

The 'imaginary' is a concept that is readily adopted within socio-cultural anthropology, developed out of the works of Anderson (1983), Castoriadis (1987 [1975]), and Taylor (2007), and can be conceptualized as a "simulacra that tend towards their own materialization … [that] have the important property of defining the possibilities of future states of the real by underwriting particular logics of practice … in the present" (Whitridge 2004:240). In most instances, the imaginary is applied to concepts, such as the nation state, which are inherently abstract but made real by peoples' connections to their relative symbols, rhetoric, or practices. In effect, a group's shared imaginary conceptualization makes the imaginary effectively real through the group's actions, beliefs, and connections. For example, the nation state of Canada can be understood as a completely abstract idea, a concept that at one point in time did not exist. However, Canada has been made real through actions, laws, and shared group consent. Therefore, being labelled as Canadian—despite being derived from an abstract notion—carries with it numerous real and/or experienced physical and social consequences.

The concept of the imaginary has received limited focus within archaeology (e.g. Ballard 2006; Dykeman and Roebuck 2008; Shepherd 2007; Strauss 2006; Whitridge 2004); in most cases, it has been paired with Practice Theory (Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1979; Pauketat 2001) as a means to conceptualize habitual practices of the past. Dykeman and Roebuck (2008) used the imaginary to align oral traditions to practices, and Whitridge (2004) used it to parallel the shape of houses and their connections to the

landscape. It was also invoked by McGhee (1996, 2004) in his works based on the Arctic; however, in these instances, it was used more as a literary tool to deconstruct the reader's preconceptions of the Arctic. In sum, the imaginary is a concept that has only begun to gain traction within the archaeological discipline, and thus there exists many further potential successful applications of the concept: most significantly, perhaps, being the realization that we, as archaeologists, are continuously invoking imaginaries in all of our research.

Archaeologists continuously invoke imaginaries to provide meaning or context to interpretations. Some of these imaginaries can be considered more concrete than others, such as those relying on a pre-existing master narrative, but they all represent a contemporary individual's understandings and visions of the past. The past is framed and understood within this conceptualization, which in turn makes such understandings more real with every telling. The resulting archaeological literature becomes a series of imaginary narratives made 'more real' with every piece of additional research.

I envision a broader application of an archaeological imaginary—and specifically that of the archaeologist's own imaginary. Archaeological interpretation is based upon a set of habitual practices (the archaeologist's habitus) that structure the archaeological record in a manner from which patterns can be constructed and recognized (Haber 2007:224). The nature of the archaeological record is that the available data can never produce a complete picture of the past. Archaeological data, and all data related to the past, are fragmentary records that must be reconstructed in the present to create meaningful narratives. The Iroquoian longhouse that left the post-moulds or the log cabin that produced the keyhole-shaped midden can never be seen; to enter the archaeological record, they must be destroyed. Similarly, the person handling a chert core to decide which flake to remove or the member of the nineteenth-century Mohawk community in the local shop deciding which plate to buy can never be completely understood; these people are gone, and cannot be questions to understand their decision-making processes. The fragmentary archaeological record, along with other datasets, can be used to create an interpretive skeleton which can then be fleshed out with archaeological imaginaries to become an archaeological narrative. The lithic scatter becomes a purposeful lithic reduction sequence to create a projectile point to hunt deer; the whiteware sherds decorated with iconic European images become serving dishes that reminded a first-generation Canadian of their diasporic homeland. This is best summarized by Preucel (2010:251–252): "…all archaeology is inadequate since there is no past to be deciphered in the present; there is no original meaning that the archaeologist can uncover. There are only chains of signifiers articulating with further chains of signifiers in an endless

sequence". If the existence of an archaeological habitus is accepted, then the existence of an archaeological doxa (the set of unconscious or unquestioned realities that underlie and make sense of habitual archaeological practices) must also be considered. Doxic conceptualizations, like racism and other forms of discrimination, are more difficult to engage with because they often operate at the subconscious level and are not readily visible until they are perhaps confronted.

The labelling and categorization of archaeological sites is a meaningful act with many intended, and unintended, consequences. There are sets of regional labels and categories that serve to structure the types of excavations, analyses, and interpretations that are made from a site. At the most basic level, depending on whether a site is labelled as pre-contact or historic from the outset, its subsequent interpretations are split between two broadly differing sets of interpretive frameworks, literature, and practices (Lightfoot 1995); based on convention, the former in a deeper Aboriginal past, and the latter within a colonial or Euro-Canadian history. The labels assigned to archaeological sites are drawn from local naming conventions that use cultural or temporal diagnostic markers to insert the site into a pre-existing taxonomic system. For example, the presence of deer on a historic Aboriginal site becomes emblematic of the continuity of traditional practices despite colonial impositions (e.g. Graesch et al. 2010:213), whereas the presence of deer on a historic British colonial site becomes emblematic of a creative adaptation to the local resource base (e.g. Lawrence 2003b:29). The deer bone could be the same at both sites but has differing meaning in each. In the former, Aboriginal sites become inserted in the 'narrative of decline' and are forever justifying why traditional practices persist. In the latter, Euro-Canadian sites become inserted into the dialogue of modernity and are forever adapting to be the norm (Cipolla 2013).

The labelling and categorization of sites is not in itself a problematic practice, but the relatively uncritical or 'common sense' nature of this process makes it so. As previously mentioned, diagnostic characteristics, be they locations, artefacts, or features, are relied on from the start to begin creating meanings of archaeological data. As such, interpretations are both informed, and restricted, by existing archaeological literature and interpretive conventions (Trigger 2006:16). Individual researchers are afforded some level of flexibility in labelling their sites, but, as they become restricted by the requirements of governing bodies and peer-review, labelling practices are more and more codified. In arguing that FkBg-24 was a Labrador Métis[3] site, I was repeatedly forced to justify why the patterns observed were not simply an acculturated Inuit pattern or a European pattern that had "gone native" (Beaudoin 2008, 2014). Within the pre-existing labelling conventions, there was no space for a group that self-identified outside the dominant categories. As such, my interpretations

encountered continuous pressure to align with one pre-existing category or the other; such conventions desired "purification" of hybridized alternatives (Gnecco 2014:176–177) and did not easily allow for a group that was both, and neither, Inuit and European. This pressure to fit sites only within pre-existing conventions represents an uncritical labelling practice.

Examining the Patterns of Brantford Township, Ontario

To highlight the practice of uncritical labelling of sites, and its consequences, I have focused on Brantford Township, Brant County, Ontario. This township was selected because of its colonial history. Brantford Township falls within the Haldimand Tract, a stretch of land along the Grand River that was re-affirmed as belonging to the Six Nations of the Iroquois in 1784 (Hill 2009). There was a subsequent influx of Six Nations inhabitants from the United States who relocated, both voluntarily and involuntarily, because of the complex political fallout of the American Revolution (Graymont 1991; Hamilton 2008; Johnston 1964, 1994; Mackenzie 1896). Iroquois farms and settlements were established along the length of the Grand River, and the Iroquois inhabitants remained there until they were relocated in the mid-nineteenth century to what remains their present-day reservation (Weaver 1994). Also of note was a land survey conducted of the Township in 1833, noting the presence and location of Six Nations families, as well as African-Canadian families (Burwell 1833). Thus, Brantford Township was historically inhabited by a heterogeneous population during the nineteenth century.

Much of the Six Nations population was relocated around mid-century, but some families remained (Weaver 1994). Table 1 shows the breakdown of country of origin for families listed in the 1851 census of Brantford Township, Brant County, Ontario. The population was mostly English and Canadian born, but there were also Germans, Dutch, First Nations, and African-Canadians inhabiting the Township. This does not include families of mixed heritage, which encompassed families with parents from two different countries of origin, comprised an even broader range of countries. When these census data are compared to the registered archaeological sites within the Township (Table 2), a disjuncture is apparent.

The database of registered sites is maintained by the MTCS and is only accessible through data requests by licenced archaeologists to the Ministry; the database is thus not directly accessible to non-Ministry personnel.[4] To make a request, one needs to provide a regional, cultural, or temporal affiliation, or keyword (such as cabin or village) to the database coordinator, who then provides a report of the hits within the database. The database is populated through completed site registration forms, which are filled out

Table 1 Country of origin for residents of Brantford Township (1851 Census)

Country of Origin	Number	%
England	151	25
Canada	108	18
Ireland	97	16
Mixed	75	13
Scotland	69	12
United States	65	11
"Coloured"	16	3
"Indian"	8	1
German	4	1
Danish	2	0
Total	595	100

Table 2 Registered archaeological site categories in Brant County from the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport Database

Total Sites	406	
Historic Sites	70	
Euro-Canadian	58	
Aboriginal	12	
Neutral Iroquoian	9	
Aboriginal Cabins	3	Davisville/AhHc-138
Aboriginal Homesteads	0	

by licenced archaeologists when they identify a site that meets the criteria for cultural heritage value or interest. The licenced archaeologist is allowed to fill in the categories to their liking; however, there are various prompts in the site registration forms and/or site registration system that direct the archaeologist towards a specific way of thinking. Prior to conducting archaeological research in Ontario, a licenced archaeologist must submit a Project Information Form (PIF) to the MTCS for approval. As part of this form, there are check boxes for whether the site is 'Aboriginal' or 'Euro-Canadian' (Figure 1). The instructions indicate that one or both of the categories must be selected; the automated system will not let you deviate from this prior to submission. Combined with the established *Standards and Guidelines* (Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport 2011), the 'Aboriginal' and 'Euro-Canadian' division can be understood as replicating the pre-contact/historic era divide: 'Aboriginal' implies a pre-contact site, 'Euro-Canadian' implies a historic site, and selecting both implies a multi-component site with pre-contact and historic period occupations. If the cultural affiliation of the site is uncertain, the option to omit an answer should be provided. Additionally, the ability to indicate that a historic period site would have an Aboriginal cultural affiliation is curtailed. As such,

licenced archaeologists completing the site registration forms thus often use the proffered conventions within the *Standards and Guidelines* and PIF forms (i.e. Aboriginal = pre-contact; Euro-Canadian = historic) when completing the site registration forms.

Of the 70 historical archaeology sites in the Township, 58 are labelled as Euro-Canadian and 12 are labelled as Aboriginal. On initial inspection, it would appear that Aboriginal sites might be overrepresented, but when these data are examined further, nine of the Aboriginal sites are historic Neutral Iroquoian sites, which do not go beyond the seventeenth century, and are not truly considered contemporaneous with historic Euro-Canadian sites. The three remaining Aboriginal sites are labelled as nineteenth-century historic Aboriginal cabins/shanties. Once again, the presence of three sites might appear relatively mundane and well within the expected numbers, but what is *not* included within the database creates silences. These silences make any interpretations problematic and serve to reify the underlying pre-contact Aboriginal/post-contact European dichotomy.

First, there are known historic Aboriginal sites that are not labelled as such within the database. Most notably is the Mohawk Village site (AgHb-2), a settlement established by Joseph Brant and has been the focus of extensive archaeological research (Faux 1984; Kenyon and Ferris 1984), most recently by Neal Ferris (2008–2009, 2009) to explore the colonial process experienced by the Mohawk in this community. This is a well-documented Mohawk settlement that is currently registered as a multi-component, pre-contact village site within Brantford Township and NOT as a post-contact Aboriginal community or village. Based on the MTCS's

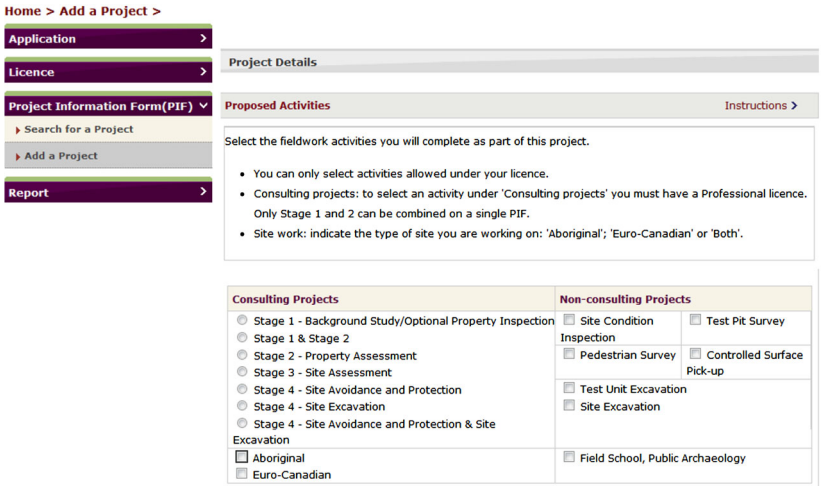

Figure 1. Screenshot of PIF submission site

Standards and Guidelines (2011) and *Technical Bulletin for Aboriginal Engagement* (2010), the omission of this well-documented and important post-contact association of Mohawk Village means that, if an archaeologist was only focusing on the historic component of this site, they would have no obligation under regulatory practice as defined by the state to consult with the local Aboriginal communities. Any post-contact Aboriginal association of Mohawk Village has effectively been erased, via omission, from this official authorized heritage discourse. Arguably, through such taxonomic processes, archaeologists create archaeological imaginaries that are maintained through their continued uncritical perpetuation. This problem goes beyond my example of the Mohawk settlement in Brant Township; according to the database, there is only one Métis site in all of Ontario. However, there are numerous Métis groups who have self-identified in Ontario (Hele 2008; Knight and Chute 2008; Lischke and McNab 2007; Reimer and Chartrand 2004) and who have been identified south of the Great Lakes (Mann 2008; Midtrød 2010). Therefore, despite even the excavation of sites associated with the Ironsides, a prominent Métis family in Sault Ste. Marie (Hele 2008; McNab 1999), the Métis in Ontario have been rendered invisible within the archaeological database.

Second, the associated categories and assumptions that accompany the labelling of Aboriginal vs. Euro-Canadian sites are problematic. Within this discussion, I must emphasize the inherent flaws in the label 'Euro-Canadian': an ill-defined label that has become synonymous with historic sites in Ontario. The term Euro-Canadian is used to refer to nineteenth-century residents of Canada who were of European, and generally British, descent, who were engaged within a white, British colonial sensibility and range of dispositions. There is no accepted standard for determining who specifically would or would not be defined as Euro-Canadian, but it is generally assumed that sometime between the first and second generations of settlement in Ontario, an ethnogenesis occurred. Akenson (1995:395) notes that it was not until 1961 that the federal government coalesced the varied British Isles identities into a single analytical category as part of the process of defining a distinct Canadian identity. This could suggest that the Euro-Canadian identity is a recent political construct, rather than a historically experienced one, and moreover, one that emerged as a category of analysis due to "the confusion of English-language culture with English national origin" (Akenson 1995:399). I do not think that the Euro-Canadian moniker is solely of recent origin, but this debate highlights the dire need for further research into what it may have meant to be Euro-Canadian in the past. The only other common standard of use, albeit an unstated one, is the exclusion of First Peoples or African-Canadians from the label.

The term Euro-Canadian implies that the peoples who created the formative history of southern Ontario were of white European heritage, and

this connection has been used to frame an 'Upper Canadian Experience'[5] (e.g. Kenyon 1987, 1992, 1997; Kenyon and Kenyon 1992, 1993); however, the term also acts as a homogenizing label to avoid engaging with the variability of its encompassed groups. As stated by Paynter and McGuire (1991:3), "…cultural uniformity should be considered a phenomenon to be explained, rather than given…". As researchers attempt to deconstruct the 'British' label in England (e.g. Johnson 2003; Lawrence 2003a; Tarlow and West 1999), a similar undertaking is needed for 'Euro-Canadian'. The continued and unreflexive use of the Euro-Canadian label is what Matthew Johnson (2003) refers to as a *muffling inclusiveness*: the assumption by researchers that the colonial identity and experience is paramount, and which in turn is used as a short-cut to avoid engaging with varied contexts and, ultimately, detrimentally affects colonial research. The normative history of Ontario encourages a perception of nineteenth-century Ontario as a patchwork of British citizens who had moved into a largely uninhabited, natural landscape to settle how they please: the white settler colony thesis (cf. Abele and Stasiulis 1989; Akenson 1995; Hutcheon 2004; Stanley 2000). This is a romanticized and problematic framing of the settlement of Ontario that "…is more of a cultural artifact than a serious history" (Stanley 2000:82).

Third, historic Euro-Canadian sites often receive the descriptive label 'homestead' or 'farmstead' as site function, invoking an image of a nuclear family taming the wilderness and eking out an agricultural existence (Ferris 2007:3). This can be contrasted with historic Aboriginal sites that are often labelled 'cabins' or 'shacks', invoking a very different image. Cabins and shacks invoke less permanence and a disengagement from agricultural practices, especially when contrasted to homesteads and farmsteads, despite the long-term history and continuation of Iroquoian farming practices well into the nineteenth century (e.g. Morgan 1851; Snow 1994; Warrick 2008; Weaver 1978). A similar pattern of differential naming has been noted within African-American CRM archaeology in the United States:

> Domestic sites associated with black occupants were listed as tenant, farmstead, or dwelling, whereas a site listed with a white occupant, whether the occupant owned the property or not, was called a farmstead or homestead. In other words, there were no white tenant sites. The recording archaeologists seem to have naturalized the binaries of white/black with owner/tenant rather than to first question their own inadvertent racial assumptions. (Barile 2004:96)

A similar pattern has been noted among Aboriginal sites in North America. Jordan (2008) effectively deconstructed the master narrative of decline among the eighteenth-century Seneca and demonstrated that the

different ways that Seneca houses were referred to and described in the present were carry-overs from the Eurocentric biases of historians uncritically incorporated into a master narrative. Jordan (2008) demonstrated that if the archaeological remains of Seneca houses were analysed apart from the conventional master narrative, a very different picture emerges that actually runs counter to the narrative of decline.

Consequences of Uncritical Labelling of Nineteenth-Century Sites

Through exploring how sites are labelled in the province of Ontario, it is apparent that this practice can have significant effects on the world beyond archaeology (Ferris 2003). In the province of Ontario, in order to trigger the Aboriginal engagement legislation within the provincial standards and guidelines, one criterion is that other Aboriginal sites need to be identified in the provincial database within one kilometre of the site (Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport 2010, 2011); however, current labelling practices and conventions remove these sites from the database before they can even be searched for. This erasure of historic period Aboriginal sites within the database is a structural problem that is perpetuated by uncritical action. As stated by Babiarz (2011:49):

> Although ideas in how to sweep back the veil that separates the experiences of those who have been "othered" from what is considered mainstream American culture have been argued over, very little discussion has revolved around the mechanisms of this erasure. Keeping the lives of individuals and communities invisible or even physically erased from the landscape requires constant, literal action.

As such, exploring and critiquing taxonomic practices is a valuable hermeneutic exercise, rather than merely an abstract ontological one. Some may argue that I am rallying specifically against the labels of a database constructed and maintained by the provincial archaeology regulators of Ontario, yet these regulators are not the agents who define how sites are labelled. Rather, it is the archaeologist that chooses how to label the sites, and the state of the database is the result of habitual labelling practices by archaeologists (e.g. Williamson and Watts 1999). Through this taxonomic process, archaeologists have arguably created an archaeological imaginary that is maintained and reified through continued participation.

The doxic imaginary that archaeologists are creating for nineteenth-century Ontario is one populated with Euro-Canadian homesteads and devoid

of numerous 'others'. This doxic process is exacerbated for more recent historic sites. The less the temporal distance between the archaeologist and the site, the more likely the archaeologist is to have a pre-existent imaginary framed within his or her own present. In other words, the same ontological reality that allows for a more complicated narrative to be created from a richer archaeological context also acts to limit discourses in other ways, based on the imaginaries within which the researchers are themselves enculturated (e.g. Atalay 2006; Murray 2011; Nicholas and Hollowell 2007; Smith and Wobst 2005; Trigger 2006:410). Archaeological framings of nineteenth-century Ontario are a prime example of this process. Based on understandings of conventional, dominant history, nineteenth-century Ontario was inhabited by Euro-Canadian farmers, who were primarily British, and who lived in single-family homesteads. These inhabitants spoke English, were mostly white, and were engaged with a British socio-economic sensibility. Archaeologists tend to translate that master narrative into archaeological expectations of the record, and thus create an archaeological imaginary. While this archaeological imaginary of nineteenth-century Ontario does not adequately represent the pluralistic reality of the past, it becomes easily assumed, or invoked, as a conceptual short-cut to frame archaeological interpretations (Ferris 2007).[6]

The elimination of Aboriginal peoples from the archaeological imaginary has several consequences for peoples today. In constructing archaeological narratives of the past, yet not acknowledging the effects of such a construction, the past risks becoming a shadow of the present. In nineteenth-century Ontario, this results in a further colonization of the past that creates a Euro-Canadian norm with colonized enclaves. This imaginary past echoes the contemporary reservation system in Canada, wherein there are politically and socially defined First Nations communities who are perceived as apart and separate from general society (Bohaker and Iacovetta 2009:430; Crosby and Monaghan 2012:425–426). This in turn conveys the impression, both within the academic community and to the general public, that the contemporary relationship between First Nations communities and peoples labelled as Euro-Canadian is long standing and 'natural', and does not require a reflexive re-evaluation.

Furthermore, the relegation of Aboriginal sites to the pre-contact period insidiously reinforces the rigid disjuncture between contemporary peoples and their more distant pasts. This serves to sever the cultural or geographic continuity that is often required to assert Native Title, Treaty Rights, or other benefits and protections associated with a connection to an Aboriginal community or heritage (Ferris 2003; Harrison 2005; Klimko and Wright 2000; Liebmann 2008). The lack of Aboriginal engagement requirements afforded to the Mohawk Village archaeological site previously discussed is a seemingly minor infringement on the protections regulated for

the site; however, it can legally serve to further disconnect the Mohawk peoples in the region from rights associated with continued inhabitation of an area. Unless this type of disjuncture is actively contested, it risks having significant detrimental consequences for future negotiation between the state and Aboriginal communities.

Finally, the broad imaginary categorization of nineteenth-century Ontario encompasses a broad diversity of past peoples, such Scots, Catholic and Protestant Irish, English, French-Canadian, German, United Empire Loyalists, African-Canadian, Iroquois, Anishinaabeg, and Métis. The process of lumping sites and peoples into only colonizer or colonized categories homogenizes, or actually erases, the colonized from the archaeological conception of the nineteenth century, and ultimately acts as a conceptual short-cut for archaeological interpretations.

If archaeologists are truly able to access the subaltern or silenced voices of the past (Beaudry et al. 1991; Hall 1999), such relationships between present-day understandings and lived material realities require constant reflection and reconceptualization. Certainly, categories of peoples did exist in the past, and their differences and labels were conceptual frames that people used to understand themselves and others in the worlds they lived: yet, these categories were relevant and logical to THEIR relative world and time, not the present-day archaeologist's, and must also be understood as having been in flux. Likewise, the past was no more homogenous than the present, with varied people internally and externally defined by various degrees of otherness, such as by gender, age, race, economic class, or ability; people were also scattered throughout urban and rural landscapes, stuck within or drifting between hard and permeable boundaries of categorization. What existed was a pluralistic and heterogeneous existence where the many colonizer groupings, colonized groupings, and people straddling or drifting between these broader categorizations were often in constant daily contact. Instead of enclaving research into colonized and colonizer categories, we should be trying to bridge the conceptual gap and embrace the messy complexities and dynamics inherent in these communities of peoples. This would facilitate the exploration of how such identities were maintained and revised (Horning 2011:68). By its nature, this process of restructuring insidious colonial and governmental power relations will create a more complex understanding of the past that is indeed more difficult for archaeologists' dispositions, assumptions, and biases to navigate or ignore (Hart et al. 2012:4–5); however, the outcomes are much more interesting.

In light of state-structured processes, archaeologists hold the privileged position of evaluating, interpreting, and even defining the archaeological record. In Ontario, 'Euro-Canadian' becomes the *de facto* designation for nineteenth-century sites, unless there already exists overwhelming material or historical evidence indicating that label to be problematic. Labelling a

historic site Euro-Canadian does not lead to contestation as long as there are historic artefacts; however, labelling a historic site Aboriginal, Métis, or African-Canadian requires a disproportionate burden of proof by the archaeologist. Site AgHb-220 in Brantford Township is labelled Euro-Canadian. It is a nineteenth-century brick pad overlooking the Grand River (Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport 2012). There is no compelling reason, from the data in hand, why this is not actually an Aboriginal site, but it is labelled as Euro-Canadian by default. Once labelled Euro-Canadian, the potential for Aboriginal or other associations becomes negated. Considering the colonial power dynamic that is implicit within archaeological practices, this positioning must be reconsidered.

Before archaeologists can move beyond unconsciously re-creating an imaginary colonial past, and shift the entwined doxic understandings, "we first need to reflexively blur the boundaries between colonialism and our present anthropology" (Pels 1997:178). Without acknowledging the complex and intertwined relationship between archaeology, politics, and colonialism, any alterations made to habitual practices risk being unconsciously subverted by unchallenged doxic understandings. Archaeologists, and arguably all contemporary researchers, are colonial actors in the present who create narratives of the past, which are imbued with the biases and foci of the present.

Taking Positive Steps Forward

After the role researchers' play in creating artificial or fragmentary archaeological pasts has been acknowledged and accepted, the potential to change these habitual practices can be explored. A first step would be to change how labels and cultural affiliations are assigned to sites. As discussed above, uncritically labelling sites Euro-Canadian does more harm than good. The cultural affiliation of sites should remain unlabelled when the cultural affiliation of the former occupants remains undetermined, so as to retain all its possibilities. Instead of arbitrarily limiting these possibilities by labelling an assumed ethnic identity, we should emphasize its associated temporal context (Silliman 2010:263–264). An emphasis on a determined temporal affiliation, rather than an unproven ethnic one, allows for the possibility for the site to be more accurately understood within its local and regional patterns of that time. There are undoubtedly differing social and material trends between a sixteenth and nineteenth-century site that must be considered; however, differences between neighbouring nineteenth-century families are much less pronounced (Liebmann 2012; Silliman 2012). The incomplete historic record often does not allow for a definite cultural affiliation, and in these instances, archaeological sites must retain the flexibility to remain unlabelled.

Alternatively, emphasizing differences in habitual practices would be another method for determining who lived at sites. In many regions of the United States, researchers have been able to identify subaltern or differing voices by looking for patterns within the site's daily lived lives of its inhabitants. A commonly cited example is Otto's (1977) research in identifying slaves based on ceramic foodways; however, researchers in colonial Spanish America (e.g. Voss 2008) have taken this further. Within their context, the colonial framework has an elaborate system of *castas* that has codified various ethnic mixtures between Spanish, African, and Native American descendants. This codification framed many different aspects of life and acknowledged that inter-cultural marriage and procreation occurred between the various inhabitants of certain regions, leading to various research projects demonstrating distinguishable characteristics in the archaeological record. This could be an archaeological practice that, once broadened and adapted to local contexts, unshackles archaeologists from the limits of historical records. Within the Ontario context, a framework that supports this methodology has already been completed for Irish, Scottish, English (Ferris and Kenyon 1983), and German families (MacDonald 2004), but needs expansion and elaboration. Additionally, research on mixed or Métis families in other regions of Canada has already demonstrated that these groups can be visible in the archaeological record (Beaudoin et al. 2010; Burley 2000a, b; Burley et al. 1992). The exploration of identities through the archaeological record is a complex and convoluted endeavour that promises to provide interesting insights into the past; however, to achieve these promises a simplistic, homogenized, or essentialized framework that relies on single objects or stereotypes needs to be avoided.

Conclusion

As archaeologists, our habitual practices and unconscious conceptualizations have influenced the narratives created; in turn, this affects how narratives become used in contexts out of our control. As such, I believe that archaeologists have an ethical responsibility to try to reflexively explore their existing preconceptions so as to mediate unintended consequences from these actions. There is no way to get entirely beyond existing biases, but the more these doxic understandings are unpacked, the better the archaeological narratives will be produced. As part of this, the more that narratives are understood as fluid reflections of an individual's understanding of the past, and not an empirical truth, the easier it will be to continuously re-evaluate contemporary doxic positionings. The role of archaeology is not to dictate truth of the past, but rather "to decide whether or not a place has a great enough *possibility* for significance" (Babiarz 2011:51 emphasis in original). Because

archaeologists should focus on possibilities and not deal in absolute truths, narratives must err on the side of allowing possibilities rather than limiting them. Within the Brantford Township data, there is a single site, AgHb-138, that its archaeologists said could be Euro-Canadian or Aboriginal. They left it open for future interpretation, acknowledging that, despite a majority of the inhabitants in Ontario being Euro-Canadian, this does not mean that ALL the inhabitants need to be assumed as well. This is a glimmer of hope and demonstrates that shifting our theoretical conceptions can work in practice and work to actively change the codified conventions within which archaeological practice is embedded. It is important to remember that the current situation emerged from the governmental codification of pre-existing taxonomical conventions. As such, by directly confronting the codified categories and creating new conventions, the manner in which the archaeological record is recorded and interpreted can be changed.

This is not an easy task, yet the tools to do so are at our feet. The CRM industry has produced a plethora of excavated archaeological sites, many of which can be associated with specific owners and could easily be archaeologically mined for patterns used to then discern the heritage of their previous occupants. This methodology would also need to consider numerous social factors, because heritage is also bisected by concepts like socio-economic class and purchasing power, all of which must be explored and accounted for (Beaudoin 2013; Silliman and Witt 2010). In sum, the framework for developing archaeologically visible patterned daily practices that suggest the ethnic heritage of their past occupants is already established and has been proven to have merit in other contexts. Along with a conceptual shift in the collective imaginary of nineteenth-century living, this is a significant stride towards repopulating the archaeological past with more representative groups and diverse narratives of people.

Notes

1. By convention, the divide between the pre-contact/post-contact periods in Ontario is A.D. 1650.
2. Within the Canadian context, there are three categories of Aboriginal peoples (Indian, Inuit, and Métis) recognized within Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution. These are the legal categories within the Federal Canadian context but often do not represent the preferred nomenclature or self-identification terms used by such individuals.
3. The Labrador Métis are a self-identified group who are the descendants of Labrador Inuit women and European men.
4. It should be noted that the MTCS has made significant alterations to the database since the writing of this paper. These changes have

begun addressing some of the issues raised within this paper, yet other issues have yet to be adequately developed.

5. The English-speaking southern Ontario region was referred to as The Province of Upper Canada between 1791 and 1841. This is in contrast to The Province of Lower Canada, which referred to the French-speaking region comprised mostly by what is today Quebec.
6. As demonstrated within the governing documents produced by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (2010, 2011).

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