

The 'Heritage Minutes' and Canadian collective memory: An
analysis of the use of nostalgia and nationalism to build a unifying
cultural memory

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Table of Contents

I. Abstract:	i
II. Introduction:	1-9
An explanation of the ‘Heritage Minutes’ and the theories of heritage, nostalgia and nationalism	
III. Chapter One:	10-20
Canada’s identity crisis	
IV. Chapter Two:	21-33
An analysis of the ‘Heritage Minutes’ in relation to the theories of nostalgia and nationalism	
V. Chapter Three:	34-40
A consideration of how the ‘Heritage Minutes’ have become pieces of Canadian cultural memory	
VI. Conclusion:	41-43
VII. Appendix:	44-49
The ‘Heritage Minutes’ plot summaries	
VIII. Bibliography:	50-55

Abstract

Since its beginnings as a nation, Canada has been a country characterized by plurality, regionalism and internal differences. It struggles in search of a unifying national identity and self-definition. Owing to its multicultural status, proximity to the United States, the vastness of its territory, its colonial past and its high immigration levels, Canada endures an on-going identity crisis. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the political and cultural elite in Canada became preoccupied with this identity crisis. In 1991, the privately owned Charles R. Bronfman Foundation initiated a series of television vignettes called the 'Heritage Minutes'. These spots were intended to encourage Canadian collective cultural memory and help to build a unifying Canadian national identity. This dissertation examines the 'Heritage Minutes' as examples of how the nation's past can be used as a resource to aid in the formation of collective national memories and create a sense of national unity and identity within Canada.

Christian memory; liturgical memory; commemoration of the dead; lay memory; memory and ethnicity; early medieval historical culture; uses of history; historical memory and genealogy in the medieval Ireland; transition from oral memory to written memory ; official history-writing; noble and urban memoria; Renaissance and historical relativism; protonational narratives; changing attitudes to death; changing memory of an event (Battle of Bouvines); antiquarian.Â Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies. *History & Theory*, 41(2), 179. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0018-2656.00198>. Kansteiner, W. (2004). Even though memory travels transnationally, the nation-state still is the most powerful translator of this past. Save to Library. Download.Â Relating non-identification to the politics of nostalgia, this essay also introduces a larger cluster of essays on "Stranger Things and Nostalgia Now" at Post45 (<http://post45.research.yale.edu/sections/contemporaries/stranger-things/>). Save to Library. Download. Two media endeavours, the Heritage Minutes and the CBC documentary *Canada: A People's History*, hope to serve as a corrective to Canadians' lack of interest in their history and to bolster national identity. However, the producers do not want to appear propagandistic in a country where there is conflict about what the shape of the nation should be.Â Even more importantly, not only did the public help rein in two of the offenders, a majority of Canadians acknowledged both the unacceptable nature of the event and the importance of the NWM: a *Montreal Gazette* poll showed that 75 percent of respondents were in favor of Fernandes receiving a criminal record ('Cast Your Vote', 2006); a.