MA MAJOR RESEARCH PAPER

Imagining the Farm:
Spectacle, Nationalism, and Agri-tourism in Canada

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The Major Research Paper is submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Joint Graduate Programme in Communication & Culture
Ryerson University — York University
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

April 14, 2004

People in cities may forget the soil for as long as a hundred years, but Mother Nature's memory is long and she will not let them forget indefinitely.

-Henry A. Wallace

The nation that destroys its soil destroys itself.

-Franklin D. Roosevelt

When tillage begins, other arts follow. The farmers therefore are the founders of human civilization.

-Daniel Webster

Small towns that seemingly belong in a Norman Rockwell painting are being turned into rural ghettos. The hardy, independent farmers whom Thomas Jefferson considered the bedrock of American democracy are a truly vanishing breed. The United States now has more prison inmates than full-time farmers.

-Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation*

Introduction:

I was raised on a family farm in rural Manitoba where my parents continue to farm to this day. Growing up on a farm in rural Manitoba has provided me with an interest in the small Canadian farm and a unique perspective on farm tourism. I remember that harvesting season was always hot, itchy, tiring and made my parents and siblings edgy. I also recall having to catch chickens by hand; waiting for my father to clear the driveway of snow after an intense snowfall before anyone was allowed to leave the yard; that there was never time for family vacations because something always needed to be done on the farm; and wondering how different my life and my parents' lives would have been if my dad had chosen a different profession—and sometimes wishing he had. Because I have grown up with experiencing the kinaesethetics of life on the farm—the *smell* of farming, the sounds of farming, and the

physicality of farming—I found this topic particularly interesting for its romantic look at farming and rural life. Rural life, in media, literature and tourism, is almost *always* depicted as more wholesome, more honest, and, in the case of farm tourism in Canada, more *Canadian.* For many, being in touch with the soil means that you are in touch with yourself. Urbanites need to get back to the farm so that they can prove to themselves and their children how wonderful it is to touch a cow or a sheep or to pick their own fruit. Set up as a dichotomy against urbanism, farm and rural life positions the farm as the refuge from the concrete jungle of hectic city life.

In fall of 2002, I overheard a CBC news reporter telling the story of a Quebec farmer who was nearly bankrupt when he decided to turn to agri-tourism as a way of making farming fun, entertaining, and financially viable. As it turned out, turning the farm into a *sign* of the Canadian farm was a financially brilliant decision for this farmer. From near bankruptcy to being able to support several generations on his farm earnings, the moral of the story was that the Canadian farming landscape was changing and that this was *good.* No longer just a place where food is produced, the family farm is becoming a sign for what tourists imagine the ideal farm to be. Baudrillard argues that "the very definition of the real becomes: *that of which it is possible to give an equivalent reproduction*" (146). The farm, then, as a tourist site becomes more real than the farm that my parents currently own and operate, more real than the farm I grew up on. If tourists were to arrive at my parents' farm, they would likely not feel as though they are experiencing authentic rural life in Manitoba because the *signs* are not there telling them this is a 'real' farm; there is no gift shop selling miniature experiences for them to purchase.

My decision to explore the spectaclization of rural and farm life in Canada was fuelled by the desire to answer the following questions:

- What motivates the nostalgia and the longing that people have for farming, pioneer and rural life?
- Why are people longing for this? What is it about modernity that is so disrupting and fragmenting that people would pay money to visit an old farm, to milk a cow, to pick some apples?
- How are farm tourism and nationalism connected? Is the farm as tourist site a physical manifestation of the desire to locate a strong national identity?
- What are the implications and complications of this transformation of the farm?

The nature and length of this research paper is insufficient in dealing with the topic of farm tourism in all its detail. Rather than offer a conclusive discussion on the nature and implications of farm tourism, I hope this paper will bring to light issues of local and rural manifestations of nationalism, otherness, longing and fragmentation as well as call attention to the implications and complications that potentially arise out of agri-tourism.

Knowing that my parents would never turn their farm into a tourist site—farming was always and continues to be "serious" business for them—I was immediately intrigued by the changing agricultural landscape. Canadian farm tourism is banal and yet, in its banality lays the crux of an interesting debate. It matters because it offers interesting insights and questions into what it means to be Canadian, what it means to regard farming as a nostalgic practice, and what it means in the larger context of nationhood, longing, and culture.

Farm tourism in Canada—known in the industry as agri-tourism or agri-tainment—is a rapidly expanding phenomenon across the country, evident in the proliferation of corn mazes, u-pick farms, farm bed & breakfasts, harvest festivals and farm fairs. Manitoba Agriculture and Food defines agri-tourism as "the economic activity that occurs when people link travel with agricultural products, services or experiences" (2001). Newfoundland & Labrador Agriculture explains:

> Agri-tourism is the bringing together of agriculture and tourism when people link their travel with products, services and experiences of agriculture and the food system. Currently, there are two main categories of agri-tourism. The first includes agri-tourism events such as festivals and fairs which include various farmers' field days, agricultural fairs and festivals across the province which are attended by approximately 64,000 people each year. The second category is agri-tourism operators which include: u-picks, farm bed and breakfasts, and farm tours. [1999]

Some of the reasons offered to explain the viability of such an endeavour include "a desire for peace and tranquility, interest in the natural environment, disillusionment with overcrowded resorts and cities, nostalgia for their roots on the farm, rural recreation, [and] curiosity about the farming industry and lifestyle" (Manitoba Agriculture and Food 2001). Furthermore, Katherine Adam writes that "the idea of catering to the public desire for a 'farm experience' remains," and she identifies three basics of agri-tourism: "have something for visitors to see, something for them to do, and something for them to buy" (2001). Farm tourism, then, involves the gaze, embodied experience, and consumerism. While the economic benefits have been recognized, the cultural implications and the

interesting questions that arise as a result of the Canadian family farm turning into a site of tourist spectacle have been largely ignored.

When I have attempted to explain my research to friends and family, they attribute my interest in this topic to my having grown up on a farm, but beyond that, they do not quite understand *why* anyone should care about whether people visit farms or not. In fact, many of them wonder why anyone would pay money to milk a cow, pet a horse, or pick their own apples. Such an experience is "new" for those who do not have a direct relationship to rural life or farming, and yet might be considered "familiar" for many as well; for example, there are those who see the farm as familiar due to a sense of popular myth and there are urban people, typically, who see the farm as offering a new experience. The paradoxical nature of farm tourism is that it must be close enough to a large urban centre to allow for urban tourists to visit and yet in the "country" so as to be considered a respectable farm tourism location. Farm tourism speaks to our cultural and national psyche; it imagines a past for us and packages it as a spectacle for us to consume in the face of modernity.

One example of agri-tourism in practice is the Boonstra Farm near Stonewall, Manitoba. They have a detailed website (www.boonstrafarms.com) that offers information on the history of their farm, and the activities they currently offer, including farm tours, a u-pick strawberry patch, and possibly the largest corn maze in Canada. Their website offers pictures of real and cartoon animals, catering to school tours and families through their romantic depiction of the farm. During the Halloween season, their maze becomes haunted, adding an aura of the uncanny to the farm in an attempt to

garner greater sales, including two coffins placed throughout the maze, a fog and light show, and a headless horseman hayride.

Similarly, Chudleigh's farm in Ontario (www.chudleighs.com) is another example of the farm as tourist site. Their chief selling features include an apple u-pick farm and the sale of their homemade pies in mass quantities, even boasting an international market. They offer the following mission statement as a way of describing their practice:

> At Chudleigh's, we nurture an environment that provides our guests, staff and associates with...AN ENTERTAINING TASTE OF THE COUNTRY! We will entertain you naturally, both on and off the farm, so that you can relax, enjoy and learn from what Chudleigh's has to offer. Everything we do will be as wholesome as a freshly picked apple. From the flavour of our foods to the attitude of our service...the taste says "Chudleigh's." We will continuously earn your trust and confidence by always remembering the traditional values of the country. Never compromise on quality. Honesty always works best. Most importantly, there is nothing more valued than family and friends. [Chudleigh's Farm 2002]

An analysis of this statement indicates that studying farm (and rural) tourism offers evidence of our cultural values and may indicate changes taking place in our national culture (Graburn 1983:29). Tourists, by definition, are searching for new experiences, but it is important to note that the phenomenon of farm tourism offers new experiences packaged and sold as familiar, traditional, and nostalgic glimpses into our national heritage in Canada. In these two examples of agri-tourism, the farm and rural culture are identified as being places of wholesome values, community and honesty, a representation that is worthy of further exploration.

Throughout this paper, I will explore how and why the search for one's roots on the farm is embedded in nationalistic insecurities. Furthermore, I will argue that the making of the farm into a site of spectacle is partially a result of the fragmenting nature of modernity and the associated longing that accompanies harkening back to the past and the essence of what it means to be Canadian. The rise of rural/farm tourism is more than an attempt at diversifying the agricultural landscape; rather, it is fuelled by a desire people have for wholeness that has been shaped through the sense of fragmentation and alienation produced by capitalist modernity.

First, I will discuss theories of authenticity in tourism research. While I recognize that the search for authenticity is part of the desire to visit these sites, it does not answer all the questions raised when analyzing farm tourism and is, therefore, insufficient in dealing with the topic. Beginning with MacCannell's theory of "staged authenticity," I will demonstrate that the transformation of the Canadian farm is rooted in nostalgia and the modernization of work relations and nature that has detached people from what is believed to be their traditional roots, inevitably resulting in the Canadian farm being turned into a tourist practice (MacCannell 1989:91). However, while authenticity plays a large role in the development and understanding of rural and farm tourism, I will also argue that theories of authenticity as developed thus far are insufficient in dealing with the practice in its entirety. A move toward understanding tourism as an embodied experience will be considered as a more suitable way of discussing farm and rural tourism in Canada. People visit these farms in order to *do* something; the gaze is not the primary mode of 'consuming' rural culture in this setting;

rather, the experience is multi-sensual one. Urry's notion of the tourist gaze, therefore, falls short in explaining why people visit farms and rural destinations.

Debord's concept of the spectacle will also analyze how rural tourism has been organized around the consumption of rural life and experiences. Paradoxically, those searching for their roots on the proverbial farm will always be greeted with a planned spectacle that is but a construction of an imagined past and national history. Following this, I will draw on the work of Richard Handler on folk society in Quebec and his expansion of C.B Macpherson's idea of "possessive individualism" to show that through farm tourism and the constructed spectacle of the past, comes a sense of trauma that can be attributed to Canada's constant unease about the (in)stability of the Canadian national identity. The nervousness that accompanies the search for a national identity (assumed to exist in close relation to the farm, the land, and the history of the settler) is expressed through the sense of loss. However, this nationalistic insecurity will not go away, as Handler argues, because "a collective individual can only realize itself through constant production, through a continual objectification of what is imagined to be its authentic culture" (1988:194).

Furthermore, this paper will also explore the development of the farming discourse in the Canadian psyche, and how farm traditions have to do with the unease people have about what constitutes Canadian nationalism. The sense of loss and the discourse of the vanishing is a contemporary problem that reproduces origins that are always a displacement of the real, resulting in the farm turning into a site of spectacle. It must continue to define itself against the "other" and in doing so, it naturalizes the "imagery of nationalism (the nation as family and local community) [thereby creating]

boundaries of exclusion...Family, in this moment, means cultural sameness. Toronto is implicitly set up as multicultural, and therefore, incapable of being 'really Canadian', whereas the small town is more Canadian" (Mackey 2002:137-38). The "other" is diminished, yet is constantly in the background threatening to disrupt the search for self-fulfillment through the mythologizing of the Canadian farm, causing a constant sense of trauma and nervousness from those intent on preserving imagined images of the past; this results in the constantly produced images of the past as seen in the farm and rural ideology. Lastly, I will discuss the uncanny and the farm through the image of the abandoned barn, commonly associated with death, ruin and loss that helps to explain the proliferation of farm tourism, as modernity leaves people feeling fragmented and incomplete.

MacCannell and the search for authenticity

Authenticity as a concept has played a significant role in the development of tourism research. Beginning with MacCannell and his investigation of "staged authenticity," authenticity has been touted as one of the main reasons for why tourists seek out particular sites and experiences. Along with the discussion of authenticity as a concept for understanding tourist practices comes the debate over whether authenticity is a constructed ideal of Western thought or whether it is something that can in fact be measured and found in objects and certain activities (constructivism versus objectivism). As Jane Desmond reminds us, "Tourism is not just an aggregate of merely commercial activities; it is also an ideological framing of history, nature, and tradition; a framing that has the power to reshape culture and nature to its own needs" (1999:xvii). Authenticity in tourism research, then, can be viewed from a constructivist perspective

in order to move beyond the dichotomy of the inauthentic and the authentic. This binary can be overcome if the understanding of authenticity is expanded (not abandoned) through the use of embodied experience theory and an understanding that different types of tourism perhaps require different tools of analysis. For example, in the case of farm and rural tourism, tourists are, on one level, seeking experiences in which they can feel they have seen or experienced an 'authentic' farm; however, they are also participating in activities rather than simply consuming them visually. The difficulty tourism research has had in moving beyond authenticity cannot be solved by simply abandoning theories of authenticity in favour of those that respond more to the kinaesthetic experiences tourism can offer. Rather, they need to be modified and expanded in order to effectively explain the growing phenomenon of tourism. It is no longer sufficient to argue that "touristic consciousness is motivated by its desire for authentic experiences," because some touristic experiences often include revelling in the inauthenticity of experiences or objects (MacCannell 1989:101). Furthermore, Urry's notion of the "tourist gaze" must also be expanded upon to move beyond the primacy of the visual in tourism research.

Tourist practices have been framed as being a quest for the authentic. However, approximately forty years of debate has resulted in the recognition that the concept of authenticity is an ambiguous one at best. There has been a shift from objectivist arguments as seen in MacCannell and Boorstin's work, to constructivist arguments put forward by Bruner and Handler. Objectivist conceptions of authenticity regard it as a property evident in toured objects and one that can, therefore, be measured. Constructivists, on the other hand, view the meaning of authenticity to be something

that is *not* inherent in toured objects, but rather a socially-constructed set of meanings that scholars have come to understand through critical semiotics.

According to Boorstin, travel has become "diluted, contrived, pre-fabricated...a lost art" (1985:77,79). Attributing this to consumer culture, the commodification of cultures and places, and tourists' willingness to be 'duped' by inauthenticity, Boorstin writes:

> Formerly, when the old-time traveler visited a country whatever he saw was apt to be what really went on there....Today what [the tourist] sees is seldom the living culture, but usually specimens collected and embalmed especially for him, or attractions specifically staged for him... The tourist seldom likes the authentic (to him often unintelligible) product of the foreign culture; he prefers his own provincial expectations. The French chanteuse singing English with a French accent seems more charmingly French than one who simply sings in French. The American tourist in Japan who looks less for what is Japanese than what is Japenesey. [1985:102,106]

Boorstin's musings on tourist motivations for travel express two distinct values. First, his analysis is marked by elitist undertones, as he deems tourists incapable of desiring or recognizing the authentic. Second, it is clear that his understanding of authenticity is objectivist in that for him, authenticity is something that exists and *can and should* be sought after in tourist practices. Coleman & Crang have aptly described Boorstin's analysis as part of "the ideological structure whereby academic travel is seen as good and tourist travel as inauthentic still remains within a game of taste and distinction

internal to the field of tourism. The differentiation of those who 'really' know places is surely still part of a game of authenticity and claims of backstage knowledge" (2002:9).

In response to Boorstin's assertion that tourists "prefer contrived pseudo-events to authentic cross-cultural encounters," MacCannell argues that touristic spaces exist to satisfy the desires for authentic experiences (Kelner 2001:2). "Staged Authenticity" is his influential work on tourism in which he argues that all tourist practices are motivated by a search for authenticity. Drawing on Goffman's work on front and back regions, MacCannell identifies "back regions" as places that are staged for tourists to facilitate the feeling of authenticity through the penetration of a false front. He argues that the fragmenting nature of modernity has made it "necessary to *act out* reality and truth" (1989:92). The back region, as MacCannell explains it, is that which conceals the nature of the performance. As he writes, "A back region, closed to audiences and outsiders, allows concealment of props and activities that might discredit the performance out front. In other words, sustaining a firm sense of social reality requires some *mystification*" (MacCannell 1989:93). MacCannell continues to argue that tourists are motivated by their desire to see life as it is really lived and since "no one can "participate" in his own life; he can only participate in the lives of others" (1989:106). This results in other people's lives being turned into a spectacle for tourists to consume at will. However, MacCannell argues that what seems to be real or authentic is likely only "staged authenticity," prepared for those wanting to consume authentic experiences. However, like Boorstin, MacCannell doubts the possibility of tourists to ever encounter the authentic in other cultures because the "staged authenticity" makes the tourist's goal of experiencing the 'real,' impossible. Because sites are arranged to

appear as though they are authentic, it becomes impossible for the tourist to ever get to the real authentic back stage, making the search for authenticity a fruitless one, according to MacCannell. He explains:

> Closer examination of these matters suggests that it might not be so easy to penetrate the true inner workings of other individuals or societies. What is taken to be real might, in fact, be a show that is based on the structure of reality. For example, Goffman warns that under certain conditions it is difficult to separate front from back, and that these are sometimes transformed one into the other. [MacCannell 1989:95]

Thus, his argument hinges on there being an authentic experience or original that exists in reality. As MacCannell writes, "Touristic consciousness is motivated by its desire for authentic experiences, and the tourist may believe that he is moving in this direction, but often it is very difficult to know for sure if the experience is in fact authentic" (1989:101). This is one major point in MacCannell's argument that is questionable. He believes that there is an original or a true authentic experience that does exist, but that it is beyond reach by tourists. His assumption that he, as an academic and a sociologist, can make the distinctions between what is and what is not authentic is questionable. He maintains that "settings are often not merely copies or replicas of real-life situations but copies that are presented as disclosing more about the real thing than the real thing itself discloses" (MacCannell 1989:102). How can it be determined that there is a "real" thing that MacCannell is referring to? There is an overall elitist attitude that accompanies his analysis of why tourists behave in particular ways and the suggestion that he has

managed to extract himself from the ideological framing of a tourist site while everyone else has been "duped" by what he has dubbed staged authenticity. MacCannell argues:

> The touristic experience that comes out of the tourist setting is based on inauthenticity and as such it is superficial when compared with careful study. It is morally inferior to mere experience. A mere experience may be mystified, but a touristic experience is always mystified. The lie contained in the touristic experience, moreover, presents itself as a truthful revelation, as the vehicle that carries the onlooker behind false fronts into reality. The idea here is that a false back is more insidious and dangerous than a false front, or an inauthentic demystification of social life is not merely a lie but a superlie, the kind that drips with sincerity. [1989:102-3]

According to MacCannell, then, it is impossible for a tourist to ever get to the original or the authentic because a site is tainted by inauthenticity by virtue of it being a tourist location. For MacCannell, authenticity lies in the place, the object or the time itself and is not simply a Western value. He criticizes Boorstin for separating intellectual study and tourist travel, despite the fact that he does not quite succeed in moving beyond that distinction. MacCannell writes, "Rather than confront the issues he raises, Boorstin only expresses a longstanding touristic attitude, a pronounced dislike, bordering on hatred, for other tourists, an attitude that turns man against man in a *they are the tourists, I am not* equation" (MacCannell 1989:107).

Nonetheless, one can question whether MacCannell does in fact succeed in moving beyond Boorstin's analysis of tourists as 'cultural dupes' controlled by false consciousness. As Ken Little concludes in his article, "On Safari: The Visual Politics of a

Tourist Representation," "the problem with this concept and the way MacCannell uses it is that it assumes that there is a particular performance out there to which tourist productions can be compared, some 'natural' reality just behind the cultural performance that is taken as the reference point" (1991:160).

Furthermore, many theorists have criticized MacCannell's work for its monolithic definition of what authenticity really is. According to MacCannell:

> The modernization of work relations, history, and nature detaches these from their traditional roots and transforms them into cultural productions and experiences. The same process is operating on "everyday life" in modern society, making a "production" and a fetish of urban public street life, rural village life and traditional domestic relations. [1989:91]

Because, in MacCannell's understanding, modernization has disconnected us from our past (which is *always* depicted as more wholesome, more authentic, and better), there is a longing to return to that place and time. This analysis, of course, depends on there being "traditional roots" that everyone has connections with and that these roots actually existed and continue to exist at some point in time. In this regard, MacCannell's notion of authenticity is flawed because it requires that cultures be pure, incapable of change, yet beyond the reach of tourists. As Coleman & Crang argue, "these views of the performative representation of authenticity rely upon a particular idea of place and its relationship to culture. This idea sees cultures as not merely located but circumscribed and rooted. Firstly, we might question the idea that people and cultures are, or still need to be, rooted in places" (2002:5).

Stuart Hall (1997) outlines the constructivist perspective that views meaning as constructed through the arbitrary relationship of signs to signifiers. In this analysis, the only thing that signifies is difference, and the marking of difference is essential to understanding signs and codes, making it easy to get stuck relying on binaries as a means of defining things. As Handler has noted, cultures cannot be viewed as fixed and bounded entities. In the constructivist worldview, words shift their meanings, codes are not fixed, and cultures cannot be understood as frozen. If this is the case, then it is difficult to accept MacCannell's argument that authenticity is objective and not a cultural construct. Hall explains the significance of this theory:

> It means that signs themselves cannot fix meaning. Instead, meaning depends on *the relation between* a sign and a concept which is fixed by a code. Meaning, the constructionists would say, is relational...If the relationship between a signifier and its signified is the result of a system of social conventions specific to each society and to specific historical moments—then all meanings are produced within history and culture. They can never be finally fixed but are always subject to change, both from one cultural context and from one period to another. There is thus no single, unchanging, universal 'true meaning'...the important point is the way this approach to language *unfixes* meaning, breaking any natural and inevitable tie between signifier and signified. This opens representation to the constant 'play' or slippage of meaning, to the constant production of new meanings, new interpretations. [Hall 1997:27, 32]

What becomes important as a result of this analysis is interpretation and the acknowledgment that interpretation is a complex system involving coding and decoding,

thus providing a space in which tourists, in this case, have some agency. MacCannell's assumption that tourist travel is always motivated by a search for authenticity is too simplistic, since tourist motivations cannot be explained by one universalism. Because language is open-ended and unfixed, it is impossible for MacCannell to argue that a true authentic culture exists.

Constructivist approach to authenticity

Richard Handler offers a constructivist explanation for tourism and the search for authenticity when he attempts to expand the concept. In his article "Authenticity," he argues that it is "a cultural construct of the modern Western world. That is has been a central, though implicit, idea in much anthropological enquiry is a function of a Western ontology rather than of anything in the non-Western cultures we study. Our search for authentic cultural experience—for the unspoiled, pristine, genuine, untouched and traditional—says more about us than about others" (Handler 1986:2). Furthermore, he connects authenticity to individualism, using the term "possessive individualism" to explain the search for authenticity, as he argues that the "anxiety about existence that characterizes nationalist ideologies, whose fundamental premise is always that a nation, bounded and distinctive, exists" (Handler 1986:3). There is a need to possess one's culture, according to Handler, and an anxiety results in the creation of spectacles that work to authenticate culture, thereby proving that a nation exists. This is where the constructivist perspective emerges again because, just as Hall also asserts, difference is what signifies. In order, then, for a culture or a nation to exist, it must define itself against other cultures and the 'other.' Therefore, authenticity is a Western construct validated through various tourist sites and locations that promise an 'authentic'

experience. The obsession with experiencing an authentic culture is one way of identifying difference and thereby authenticating one's own culture and nation.

Moreover, Edward Bruner (2001) attempts to de-familiarize our understanding of authenticity by introducing us to three performances of Maasai culture, each portrayed as the authentic representation of the culture. One representation is designed for foreign tourists and depicts a "19th-century colonial narrative of Maasai men as exemplars of an African primitive;" another "national folklore troupe...presents the dances of Kenyan ethnic groups...primarily for an audience of modern urban Kenyans;" and the Sundowner performance where "Hollywood pop culture images of Africa and blackness are enacted for these foreign tourists as they sip champagne" (Bruner 2001:883). Using these three distinct representations of 'authentic' Maasai culture, Bruner successfully raises important questions about the nature of authenticity, including who determines what an authentic representation is, who controls the production of these representations, and whether tourists have any agency.

In addition, Bruner's analysis raises the question of whether it is possible to freeze culture. Graham Dann, writing about selling nostalgia, argues, "Just as 'almost everywhere and everything from the past may be conserved' so too can it be retained by making it a spectacle, a commodity or a service. Part of this process is museumization, the freezing of heritage and the selling of the frozen product" (Dann 1998:34). Since Maasai culture is always changing, it is impossible to say that one authentic version exists. This process does not stop the search for an authentic national culture, as Handler so aptly points out in his study of Quebecois culture, arguing that the

preservation of what has been perceived to be authentic culture becomes singularly definitive to the culture in question. Coleman & Crang write:

> Richard Handler has neatly problematised the issue of authentic originary culture where, in his studies of Quebecois culture, he points out that folklore study and preservation have been carried out for so long that they themselves are almost traditional occupations and concerns. Many local customs and traditions are indeed self-conscious and evolving performances. So we want to move the field away from a model that sees an authentic culture as singular and local, and thus as necessarily degraded through tourism. [2002:6]

Another consequence of Bruner's article is that it becomes evident authenticity is closely tied to the tourist gaze, as put forth by Urry, since tourists need proper signs indicating that a particular site or performance is 'authentic.' Sites need to be set up in order to be consumed, an unusual paradox since this will invariably produce spectacle despite one's desire to see or experience the 'authentic.' Don DeLillo illustrates this in his novel *White Noise*, where the characters discuss "a tourist attraction known as the most photographed barn in America" (1984:12). He writes:

> Soon the signs started appearing. THE MOST PHOTOGRAPHED BARN IN AMERICA. We counted five signs before we reached the site...A man in a booth sold postcards and slides—pictures of the barn taken from the elevated spot...No one sees the barn...Once you've seen the signs about the barn, it becomes impossible to see the barn...They are taking pictures of taking pictures. [DeLillo 1984:12-13]

Until it is understood that authenticity is something that is communicated symbolically instead of through objects and places, MacCannell's unfulfilled search for authenticity will continue.

The tourist gaze, the primacy of the visual, and the move toward embodied experience

John Urry's seminal book, *The Tourist Gaze*, has helped to privilege the visual in tourism studies by focusing on how tourists *see* the world, thus reinforcing the "scopic regime" of vision, which, along with the concept of authenticity, is predominantly a Western principle. Urry argues that tourism is fundamentally a visually dominated fascination, since "it is the gaze that orders and regulates the relationships between the various sensuous experiences while away, identifying what is visually out-of-ordinary, what are the relevant differences and what is 'other' (1990:145). The gaze, therefore, helps to organize and frame what we see and how we understand other cultures. [1] Similarly, tourism research explains that tourists have the power to gaze and thereby reduce the 'other' to brief and stereotypical images. For example, Desmond (1999) studies Hula dancers and concludes that tourists view them as signs of what Hula dancers are imagined to be. That vision has gained such primacy in tourism research, then, is further evidence of a Western-centric view of tourist practices and tourism studies because "enframed performances provide a perspective, mould interpretations, and encourage particular experiences" (Little 1991:150).

Urry also disagrees with MacCannell about the purpose of tourism. Instead of placing an emphasis on the search for authenticity, Urry argues that tourist practices are

[1] Feminist scholars such as Laura Mulvey have used a psychoanalytic understanding of the gaze to demonstrate how the gaze is a phallocentric system which places the power with men as they are the ones gazing at women as sexual objects.

motivated by a desire to go beyond "one's normal place of residence/work and the object of the tourist gaze" (1990:12). Because some (post) tourists take pleasure in the consumption of inauthentic experiences, Urry reasons that *why* tourists partake in certain activities or visit particular sites must be a result of their search for the extraordinary, and as Urry writes, "The visual gaze renders extraordinary, activities that otherwise would be mundane and everyday" (1990:13). This analysis of tourism has, however, tended to overlook the importance of understanding how the "quotidian" operates as a tourist spectacle. As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett explains, "One man's life is another man's spectacle" (1998:47). Franklin & Crang have recently reasoned that one of the problems with tourism studies is that it has tended to ignore the ordinary by focusing on the exotic. They write, "It seems all too clear that the theoretical net needs to be cast much wider so that tourist studies is constantly renewed by developments in social and cultural theory and theory from other disciplines...One way forward may be to de-exoticize the activity from what other people do when they are somewhere else" (Franklin & Crang 2001:6,8). Therefore, in order to adequately study and understand tourism of the everyday (such as farm and rural tourism), it is necessary to advance tourism studies beyond the study of the visual and the static, to include a more active engagement with tourist practices.

There are several other concerns that come as a result of privileging vision in tourism research. First, as Urry himself notes, "Focusing though on the gaze brings out how within tourism the organizing sense within the typical tourist experience is visual. And this mirrors the general privileging of the eye within the long history of Western societies...However, there is nothing inevitable or natural about this organizing power of

vision" (Urry 1990:146). Experiences are mapped out for tourists long before they partake in any tourist activity. Hotels and other landscape markers are designed with the eye in mind, offering privileged views of countries, cities, or other settings. The visual metaphor in tourism studies is closely connected to the politics of semiotics that mark the tourist landscape. Tourists are directed to look at particular things that are framed in particular ways. Their experiences are framed through the window of the hotel that overlooks the ocean and not the poor slum neighbourhood; or through the camera that seeks to capture the perfect view of the Eiffel Tower; or through the postcard that presents the archetypal view of a particular site. Timothy Mitchell refers to this as the structuring of life and experience in *Colonising Egypt* where he writes:

> Spectacles like the world exhibition and the Orientalist congress set up the world as a picture. They ordered it up for an audience as an object on display, to be viewed, experienced and investigated...Exhibitions, museums and other spectacles were not just reflections of this certainty, however, but the means of its production, by their technique of rendering history, progress, culture and empire in 'objective' form. [Mitchell 1988:6-7]

The visual metaphor allows 'us' to capture 'them' from a distance, and because we have seen them with our own eyes, we feel content in our knowledge of cultural practices of the other, even though the postcard images we consume have little or nothing to do with reality.

Historically, there was a connection between observation and the possession of knowledge, with vision understood as an authoritative means of discerning the world. In the "Origins of Sightseeing," Judith Adler traces the historical development of

sightseeing and the eventual primacy of the gaze in touristic practices. She explains that the "emotions aroused by travel sights received no public elaboration. The "eye" cultivated in this initial period of sightseeing was deliberately disciplined to emotionally detached, objectively accurate vision; its commanding authority could only be jeopardized by evidence of strongly colored emotional response" (Adler 1989:18). This objectivity was valued as a method of acquiring factual knowledge, as one is required to see for oneself the wonders of the world. However, the concern with this is that it suggests that to see something with one's own eyes means that something is more true or real, and yet in tourism, signs and signifiers are what tells that tourist what is an 'authentic' or 'extraordinary' experience. As Little writes:

> Having an experience of the exotic other was, and is, a matter of controlling the otherwise heterogeneous world 'out there' by gaining a vantage point and forming a perspective in order to make authoritative sense of what one sees...but because the world is always being constructed as a representation, as an 'object lesson,' arranged before an observing subject as a system of signification, signifiers or something else, it becomes impossible to find the authentic reality for which modern individuals so ardently look. [1991:157]

Urry's tourist gaze helps to account for the positioning of the other in Western tourist practices. He writes:

> This visual sense enables people to take possession of objects and environments, often at a distance...It facilitates the world of the 'other' to be controlled from afar, combining detachment and mastery...Areas of wild, barren nature, which were once sources of sublime terror and fear, were transformed

> into what Raymond Williams terms 'scenery, landscape, image, fresh air', places waiting at a distance for visual consumption by those visiting from towns and cities. [Urry 1990:147]

In essence, the primacy of the visual in tourism studies offers little explanation for the role of tourist agency. Because "tourists do what they came to do—to look in safety and with authority and to 'take pictures,'" it is sometimes presumed that all tourism is then an unacceptable act (Little 1991:154). Tourist agency, therefore, is reduced to looking at packaged pictures. However, as Chaney writes:

> This way of understanding tourist experiences cannot be accepted. It makes all tourism intrinsically and irretrievably morally repugnant, and surely it is inadequate in an era of mass tourism when the everyday life of the metropolis as well as rural idyll is as likely to be the objective for travel as national monuments or specialized pleasure zones. [Chaney 2002:199-200]

Both MacCannell and Urry, in their analyses of tourist practices, make little or no allowances for tourist agency. In Urry's *Tourist Gaze*, tourists are depicted as consuming other cultures visually with little mention of the encoding and decoding practices that such consumption entails. Many tourists, when presented with an 'authentic' cultural practice, doubt whether what they are seeing is in fact real or authentic. Bruner dubs this the "questioning gaze" to help "describe the tourists' doubts about the credibility, authenticity, and accuracy of what is presented to them in the tourist production. The key issue is that tourists have agency, active selves that do not merely accept, but interpret, and frequently question, the producers' messages" (Bruner 2001:899). Bruner continues with his analysis of the tourist gaze:

> Urry's tourist gaze is too empiricist, too monolithic, too lacking in agency, and to visual to encompass these varied tourist reactions. The tourist gaze does not have the power of Foucault's panopticon, for it is not all-seeing and enveloping. It is variable, and there are seepages and doubts. [Bruner 2001:902]

Another criticism of Urry's tourist gaze is that it generalizes the gaze to every tourist. MacCannell, in his article "Tourist Agency," makes this critique clear. He writes, "The gaze of a tourist woman is not the same as that of a tourist man...the upper classes gaze upon different things than the lower classes...In earlier times tourists may have gone in search of the inauthentic, but postmodern (post-) tourists know better and delight in the inauthentic" (MacCannell 2001: 24). Chaney agrees with Urry's connection between tourism as a visual interrogation and the over-arching culture of consumption, he too maintains that the gaze "is not uniform" (2002:196). Because gender, class and age differences might account for varying motivations in tourist practices, Urry cannot, in good faith, suggest that the tourist gaze is unanimous and universal.

The logic that informs the producers as they create these sites and frame them for tourists is also important to the discussion of the gaze and the move toward embodiment. Financial motivations are often one of the driving forces behind the creation of tourist sites because they will generate employment and economic revenue. Urry notes that buildings need to "appear not merely old but historically important; and in turn the buildings signify that the place is 'properly old'" (1990:108). The barn is a good example of this as tourists want to gaze on an old barn and feel that it is authentically old, not designed to look that way.

However, farm tourism involves more than the gaze—people want to *experience* rural life which is why I am arguing that farm tourism is indicative of a move from passive visual consumption of images to experiencing and embodying. Urry discusses this notion, arguing that "reminiscing involves performance – both by those 'real' performers who are there to stimulate memories, and by visitors who often have to work co-operatively with others in order to produce their memories" (1990:101-2). This "performativity of reminiscence" is often realized through spectacles such as live performances and an active participation by the audience (Urry 1990:102).

Similarly, Abercrombie and Longhurst motion toward a new paradigm for understanding performance and argue that there is a connection between spectacle and performance, as people, object and events perform. The tourist spectacle consists of the framing of the sites as spectacles, the perception of the sites as spectacles on the part of tourists, and the representation of the spectacles through things like photography, souvenirs and travel brochures (Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998:81).

Thus, tourist locations are presented in such a way so as to involve the audience. For example, Bagnall, in a study of heritage sites such as Wigan Pier in Britain, argues that there is an increasing tendency for spectaclization to involve place and person, suggesting that tourism is moving beyond the visual, but still involved in the creation of spectacle. She notes that there is a physicality involved with particular types of tourism, and I would argue that the farm is one of these types. Bagnall cites a tourist's impression of a tour that involves re-enactment and goes beyond the tourist gaze:

> I think now there's a feeling that kids today are getting less and less of a feel of what the past was really like so I think that the *smells and sounds are very*

> *important in creating that feeling without which they would just sort of be images to them...* [2003:90, emphasis added]

Producers of tourist sites, therefore, help to create places where the tourist is physically involved in the "embodiment of consumption" (Bagnall 2003:93).

Farmers who become involved in agri-tourism frame the farm in such a way as to involve the tourist, be it through a pick-your-own attraction or through the kinaesthetics of the experience—as a farm tourist, you will also *smell* and *hear* things that contribute to what Ang has described as the overall "emotional realism" that is necessary for having a successful tourist attraction (1985:1). The gaze, then, does not adequately account for all tourist motivations, making the move toward embodied experience necessary.

For example, Ning Wang attempts to redefine authenticity as a concept in tourism. Because there has been and continues to be debate over the concept of authenticity itself as well as its value in explaining all tourism, "critics question its usefulness and validity because many tourist motivations or experiences cannot be explained in terms of the conventional concept of authenticity" (Wang 1999:349). In response to this conceptual dilemma, Wang attempts to redefine the meaning of authenticity by introducing the term 'existential authenticity' as an alternative to objectivism, constructivism and postmodernism. In doing so, Wang suggests that "even if toured objects are totally inauthentic, seeking otherwise is still possible, because tourists can quest for an alternative, namely, existential authenticity to be activated by tourist experience" (Wang 1999:365).

It seems that Wang is attempting to move beyond the primacy of the visual in tourism research in a gesture to get at what David Crouch later identifies as embodied experience in tourism. However, Wang concludes that seeking authenticity in tourism is still possible. Wang writes, "Once it is turned into a kind of tourist *activity*, it constitutes an alternative source of authenticity (i.e. existential authenticity) which has nothing to do with the issues of whether this dance is the exact re-enactment of the traditional dance" (1999:359). This is problematic because, as Crouch identifies, there is a need to let go of theories of authenticity in order to discuss tourism and embodiment.

This is quite evident in the case of farm or rural tourism. While it is on one level true that tourists want to see and touch "old" things like farm implements and barns, this sort of tourism is about the spectaclization of rural life and nostalgia for an imagined past in Canada. People visit these farms in order to *do* something; the gaze is not the primary mode of 'consuming' rural culture in this setting. Rather, the experience engages all the senses. Urry's notion of the tourist gaze, then, is inadequate in explaining why people visit farms and rural destinations. Therefore, a move toward understanding tourism as an embodied experience rather than a static visual one, as Wang attempts to introduce, provides a new way of looking at things. However, it is important to remember that "the dismissal of authenticity as no longer relevant is too hasty and is based upon a particular understanding of the meaning of authenticity" (Chaney 2002:199). Then, the point of analysis should no longer be whether or not there is an original, endlessly trying to determine whether a performance or site is more or less authentic, but how authenticity is used to structure and facilitate meaning.

Crouch expands on Wang's attempt to rearticulate authenticity in tourism theory and argues that tourism is "an encounter with space and as something that is made through space" (2002:207). He theorizes tourism as something that is mediated through our bodies as an active, ongoing process. However, "embodiment presented only as a physical phenomenon is incomplete. It is necessary to relate that physicality to imagination, to social contexts and to 'making sense' of practice and of space" (Crouch 2002:209-210). In essence, encounters within touristic space are what inform experience. It is important to note that Crouch does not mention authenticity at all, abandoning in order to move beyond the dichotomy between finding the authentic and the inauthentic.

The significance of moving beyond determining whether a representation is authentic or is not authentic becomes less important than questioning how the debate surrounding authenticity and the gaze has neglected to account for active engagement within tourism on the part of the tourists. The move away from the tourist gaze as something that consumes the 'other' from a distance is important to developing tourism studies in more complex ways because it allows for the study of non-Western tourism, something Alneng suggests has been ignored thus far. Instead of continuing to exoticize tourism, it is becoming increasingly important to study the everyday and the banal as sites of tourist spectacle. This can only be done through the rearticulation of *why* tourists do what they do, and it is something that must advance beyond arguments concerning authenticity and the tourist gaze without abandoning them entirely. Rather, as Franklin & Crang conclude, "It seems that tourism studies must investigate the

sensual, embodied and performative dimensions of change in tourism cultures" (2001:14).

The farm as tourist spectacle

Farm tourism, as seen in the proliferation of small family farms in Canada offering u-picks, corn mazes, petting zoos, etc., is problematic because it is best understood as an example of the spectaclization of rural life and the farm. I will argue that the reason the farm has become a site of spectacle is a result of the fragmenting nature of modernity and the sense of loss that accompanies this fragmentation. However, before I begin such an analysis, Debord's concept of the spectacle and its implications for the farm as spectacle must be examined.

The idea of the farm and of rural life is increasingly being made into a spectacle, from the reality television show *Pioneer Quest*, where 'average' people rough it out in the harsh northern Manitoba climate for a cash prize, to *The Simple Life*, where socialites Paris Hilton and Nicole Richie live with a rural Arkansas family for a period of time, learning how to milk cows and other rural activities. The spectacle, however, extends well beyond the passive consumption of images of rural and farm life on television. Family farms across Canada have been transforming themselves into tourist sites, complete with things for the tourists to *see*, to *do*, and to *buy*. The White Hutchison Leisure & Learning Group, for example, explains the phenomenon of agri-tourism by observing that "many farms are taking advantage of their unique nostalgic, rural and outdoor appeal by developing entertainment attractions as additional sources of income" (1999). The economic motivations that help to explain this change in the dynamics of the family farm are quite simple. Small farms cannot complete with

corporate factory farms, so the agriculture industry has encouraged small farms across Canada to "diversify."

The "farm crisis" that has engulfed North American farmers has left them with an unprecedented debt load and a significant drop in income over the past several years (Shields 2003:11). The 2001 Census of Agriculture indicates that the number of farms in Canada was down 10.7% from 1996 (Statistics Canada 2001). Furthermore, The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, in their study entitled, "The Farm Crisis and Corporate Power," states that "net farm income has returned to Depression-era levels...[and] realized net farm income has fallen to 1930s levels for grain and hog producers in Alberta, Ontario, *and across Canada*" (2001:6). Moreover, it was reported that in 2002, "Western farmers experienced one of the poorest growing seasons in the past quarter-century," the total net income for farmers in 2002 was the lowest in more than three decades, and the 2001 production season was "one of the worst in the past 25 years, [which] forced Canadian farmers to empty their bins to their lowest levels since 1998" (Statistics Canada 2003).

There have been varied responses to the farm crisis in Canada. Organic farming has been one of these reactions, with farmers turning to this niche market in order to sustain themselves financially, realizing that consumers are concerned about food safety. However, farm tourism is one of the more remarkable attempts at diversifying and sustaining the family farm in Canada by producing the farm as pure representation. It is very interesting to note that Manitoba Agriculture and Food explains that "such on-farm diversification is income generation, as well as increased awareness and education of the non-farming public about farms and their products" (2001). On this

same web page, Manitoba Agriculture and Food provides a brief section entitled "Assessing Your Farm and Family," where they pose the following question: "Will you be ready for visitors/ customers with a groomed farm and family at all times?" (2001).

The paradox, then, is that while this new farming venture is supposed to provide educational awareness for the (urban) public, it must be a 'cleaned' up version of what farm and rural life really is. Those searching for their roots on the farm will "always already" be greeted with a planned spectacle that is but a construction of the imagined past and national history of Canada.[2]

Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* is vital to understanding the implications of the farm as a tourist site for tourists to consume. The farm as tourist spectacle is significant for several reasons; first, everything including everyday life moves into the realm of representation, and second, things become organized around consumption, both operating, according to Debord, as ways to anaesthetize the public. He argues, "When the real world changes into simple images, simple images become real beings and effective motivations of a hypnotic behavior" (1995:17). Best and Kellner, in their article, "Debord and the Postmodern Turn: New Stages of the Spectacle," write, "For Debord, the spectacle is a tool of pacification and depoliticization; it is a "permanent opium war" (#44) which stupefies social subjects and distracts them from the most urgent task of real life—recovering the full range of their human power through revolutionary change...for in passively consuming spectacles, one is separated from actively producing one's life" (1999:para.11). Where the spectacle prevails, people no longer directly live experiences but passively consume them. The danger in this, according to

[2] An area of farming that has been overlooked here due to space constraints is hobby farming. Hobby farming is, potentially, a very rich aspect of farm tourism and the pursuit of rural values and tradition through farming as a leisure activity. This is an area for future research.

Debord, is that people do not live up to their full potential as creative and thoughtful human beings; instead, they are indoctrinated with the dominant ideologies of modern capitalism.

That acts of everyday life, such as farming, are being made into spectacle highlights the all-consuming nature of the spectacle. It appropriates everything, turning every mode of resistance into another mode of accommodation (Debord 1995). Furthermore, in the case of farm tourism, the spectacle is not something that is simply consumed passively—participation in the spectacle and belief in its objective framing of agrarian heritage in Canadian history is of the very essence of the spectacle. As Debord writes, "The spectacle is the moment when the commodity has attained the *total occupation* of social life. Not only is the relation to the commodity visible but it is all one sees: the world one sees is its world. Modern economic production extends its dictatorship extensively and intensively" (1995:29). One person's life becomes another's spectacle, worthy of consumption to the financial benefit of a few (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998:47).

The central dilemma that occurs as a result of the spectaclization of the farm is that everything moves into representation. This is well articulated in Timothy Mitchell's book *Colonising Egypt* where he examines the implications of the world exhibitions in Paris, offering a look into the bewilderment felt by Egyptians visiting Paris and finding themselves confronted by representations of Cairo. Europeans organized "the cultures of the world [as] objects arranged under glass, in order of their evolution," resulting in social reality being ordered and rendered objective and certain (1988:6). Mitchell argues:

> Outside the world exhibition, it follows paradoxically, one encountered not the real world but only further models and representations of the real...Everything seemed to be set up before one as though it were the model or picture of something. Everything was arranged before an observing subject into a system of signification, declaring itself to be the signifier of a signified... World exhibition here refers not to an exhibition of the world but to the world conceived and grasped as though it were an exhibition...Reality was that which presents itself as exhibit, so nothing else would have been thinkable. Living within a world of signs, they took semiosis to be a universal condition, and set about describing the Orient as though it were an exhibition. [1988:12-14]

The agricultural fair is another example of rural and farm life being made into spectacle and the essentializing nature of such images. Douglas Looney, writing about the country fair, an extension of what once was an agricultural fair, writes, "The fair reminds us of what we want to be—nice people with good families leading decent lives in simple ways. We want to enjoy ourselves, not bother others and not be bothered by others" (1998:11). Yet another author, Douglas Wood, mourns the loss of traditional agricultural fairs that are being overtaken by spectacle and entertainment. Rather than highlighting serious displays of farming and agricultural life, critics argue that the emphasis has shifted from being based on farming and animals to midway rides and amusement park-style entertainment for the children. Hence, a loss of what is deemed traditional values is mourned by an older generation who recall the smells and sounds of an agricultural fair and find objectionable the spectaclization of it.

Displays of "ruralism" are important to understanding the farm as spectacle. Rearick's analysis of World's Fairs in *Pleasures of the Belle Epoche* helps to illustrate how displays are set up for consumption. He writes that the Eiffel Tower, for example, was part of the thrill of gigantism and as such, offered the tourist a physical experience of climbing the tower. The allure of the exotic and of the historical marked the World Fairs, with a reconstruction of the Bastille located next to a rollercoaster, for example. In addition to these spectacles, other exhibitions "all appealed to a nostalgic interest in traditional, distant settings and ways of life" (Rearick 1985:141).

In the case of farm tourism, Mitchell's understanding of the term enframing is useful in explaining how the farm is set up in a display of ruralism. Geometry, according to Mitchell, acts as a means of control through the division and regimentation of the spectacle. There is a structured visual representation (enframing) that uses techniques such as dividing, framing and simulating in order to set up the farm for tourists. Corn fields are transformed into geometrical mazes; old barns are presented as historical or haunted; and simulated acts of milking cows, feeding sheep or plowing the field are performances that are indicative of the farm spectacle. Furthermore, the production of the images is masked through enframing—there are no diseased or dead animals, for example. The farm "is set up before an observing subject as though it were the picture of something" (Mitchell 1988:60). Farmers and farms become living signs of themselves (Kirsheblatt-Gimblett 1998:18) with acts of performativity and the gaze structuring and enframing the rural experience.

What happens when social reality is organized through representation and exhibition? Rydell and Gwinn argue that such exhibitions, including World Fairs, inform

reality through the construction of a particular gaze, a specific vantage point from which to view and consider the world. The power of representation lies in its ability to "affix meaning to individual and collective lives" (Rydell and Gwinn 1994:3-4). While some agency must be prescribed to audiences who consume these spectacles, it must also be recognized that ideological structures support each of these sorts of exhibitions. It results in people not even realizing they are viewing the world as exhibition and representation becomes a universal condition, with everything geared toward consumerism.

Through representation and the farm as spectacle, limited ways of imaging the agrarian landscape emerge. Charles Springwood identifies an example of this in his article, "Farming, Dreaming, and Playing in Iowa," where he tells the story of a Japanese man who built a replica of the farm/baseball field seen in *Field of Dreams.* The film, which plays on the ideas of nation, sport and agrarian heritage, is turned into an imagined past. Like Canada, Japan is preoccupied with securing a national identity with continuity to the past and tradition, believed to exist in rural culture. Ironically, the reconstruction of the image of rural culture as depicted in the film is merely another representation which has reduced the attempt to recapture "traditional, rural villages of Japan [which have] seemingly vanished" to the level of representation and spectacle only (Springwood 2002:178-9). Furthermore, the images that come to represent rural culture and agrarian heritage are ideologically charged, with rural life equated with an idealized notion of community, tradition, and heritage—a romanticized past that is "naturally" harkened back to. In another example, Jeffrey Hopkins conducts a semiotic analysis of the format, content, and signs used to promote rural culture in Southwestern

Ontario, concluding that everything is designed to sell a brand of rurality, a "place-image" to those willing to consume it (1997:142). Mitchell communicates the outcome of this when he writes:

> In short the entire machinery of what I am going to refer to as 'representation': everything collected and arranged to stand for something, to represent progress and history, human industry and empire; everything set up, and the whole set-up always evoking somehow larger truth. Spectacles like the world exhibition and the Orientalist congress set up the world as picture. They ordered it up before an audience as an object on display, to be viewed, experienced and investigated. [1988:6]

Where a desire to construct "the countryside as the authentic space of the national spirit" has emerged, only representation and spectacle has surfaced, resulting in the unease felt by Japanese, and in this case, Canadians, over their national culture and its transmission.

In their article Best and Kellner attempt to update Debord's concept of the spectacle to allow for a greater interactivity on the part of the consumer. Debord's analysis of the spectacle understood the audience as passive in their consumption of images and ideologies. Best and Kellner want to move toward a more involved version of the spectacle because they argue that there is an increasing degree of interactivity to the spectacle, using cyberculture as an example. They write, "The concept of the spectacle therefore involves a distinction between passivity and activity and consumption and production, condemning passive consumption of spectacle as an alienation from human potentiality for creativity and imagination" (1999:para.39). In the

case of farm tourism, I have argued that it cannot be adequately explained through Urry's concept of the gaze, as it is not predominantly visually based. Rather, it is a kinaesthetic experience in which tourists actually participate in activities. Debord identifies the gaze as the source of the society of the spectacle. He writes, "The spectacle as a tendency *to make one see the world* by means of various specialized mediations (it can no longer be grasped directly), naturally finds vision to be the privileged human sense which the sense of touch was for other epochs; the most abstract, the most mystifiable sense corresponds to the generalized abstraction of present day society" (Debord 1995:17).

An important consequence of the farm turning into a site of spectacle is that everything becomes commodified so as to offer up an array of consumable exhibitions in place of real social transformation. Best and Kellner write, "The spectacular society spreads its narcotics mainly through the cultural mechanisms of leisure and consumption, services and entertainment, ruled by the dictates of advertising and commercialized previously non-colonized sectors of social life and the extension of bureaucratic control to the realms of leisure, desire, and everyday life" (1999:para.12). Agri-tourism has become an institutionalized type of farming, touted by provincial and federal agricultural sectors as the solution to the drop in income on the family farm. The spectacle, for Debord, also "refers to the vast institutional and technical apparatus of contemporary capitalism" (Best and Kellner 1999:para.9). Farming is reduced to pre-packaged and commercialized images for the public to consume, and the farm is left to sustain itself through the commodification of everyday life on the farm.

There are interesting questions and implications that arise from such farm transformations. For the farmers, for example, there are financial gains that help small farmers to buoy an otherwise economically challenging profession. However, there are also some internal contradictions that arise from this new type of farming. Farms are places where food is produced; yet, farm tourism often concentrates on spectacles such as corn mazes that grow corn for the purposes of making mazes rather than feeding people or animals.

There are also issues of producer agency that emerge as a result of farm tourism. Urry, for example, argues that producers of tourist sites create and market their sites according to a basic formula that will capture the interests of tourists. This seems to be the case for farm tourism as well. However, this formula does not seem to leave much room for agency on the part of the farmers.

Perhaps a useful way to approach questions of agency is through Stuart Hall's work, "Encoding/Decoding." He proposes an active model of communication through the interpretation of messages and texts. However, the problem lies in the fact that discussions of agency tend to focus on the role of the audience. Much of the debate has centred on whether one can consider pleasure gained through consumption to be a legitimate act of resistance. In the case of farm tourism, should the farmer be considered the producer? There are external motivations for turning a farm into a tourist spectacle, so should these forces be considered the real 'producer?' Are farmers bound to their representation of the farm as 'cultural dupes,' or is there an emancipatory potential in farm tourism? Are farmers dupes once they turn their farms into tourist sites? What are the implications and complications of the changing agrarian landscape?

These questions continue to disturb this thesis because further research is needed in order to consider the role of the farmer in creating the farm as pure representation. However, the work of Hall (1980), Grossberg (1997; 1998), Thomas Frank (1997; 2000), Bourdieu (1998) and Fiske (1992) would be useful places to begin the discussion of producer agency with respect to farm tourism. In order to get to the crux of questions about agency and resistance, there is a need for in-depth fieldwork on this subject. These are complicated and complicating issues that are best dealt with through the analysis of the varying and shifting fields of power and meaning.

Nationalism and representations of the agrarian landscape

Canadian identity—or what it means to *be* Canadian—has been and continues to be highly contested terrain. This question has been disputed across the Canadian historical landscape, from Margaret Atwood to Pierre Trudeau, with people searching for a definitive solution to the lack of national and cultural identity in Canada. However, the creation of a national identity in Canada has been seen, by many, as unsuccessful, with people continuing to search for what they believe constitutes what it means to be Canadian. Eva Mackey, in her book *The House of Difference*, problematizes what it means to be (or not be) Canadian by highlighting the "conscious cultural production" of 'Canadianness' (2002:13). She writes:

> The desire for and the necessity for *a* national identity are seen as common sense, it is taken for granted. Yet, if we listen to people, the project of creating identity has also apparently been terribly unsuccessful. Everywhere, Canadian identity is seen as crisis-ridden, as a fragile and weak entity constantly under attack and in need of vigilant defence...Bennett et al argue that new settler

> societies, unlike traditional European nations, have had to 'undertake the process of nation formation urgently, visibly, defensively. They are always being caught in the act, embarrassed by the process of construction'. [Mackey 2002:9]

This unease and instability can be attributed to several things: Canada is a very young country; Canada is caught somewhere between being a British colony and a victim of American imperialism; Canada is divided along French/English lines as well as regional diversity; and Canada is a nation of other nations—a land of immigrants that 'celebrates diversity' in the institutionalization of multiculturalism. In fact, one of the most defining characteristics about 'Canadianness' is the unease about our collective identity. We want to be able to identify some things that are indisputably Canadian, but without the dangers of getting entwined in oversimplification and essentialism. It is true that "few of us will die from a lack of cultural identity, but...it does not diminish the federal government's conviction that its own legitimacy depends on the strength of a certain kind of Canadian culture" (Straw 2002:95).

Haunted by the spectre of a weak national identity, Canadians are searching for something that will help them to define themselves. Margaret Atwood, in *Survival*, her seminal book on Canadian literature, attempts to solve this dilemma by providing a 'formula' for identifying Canadian literature, and by extension, what it means to be Canadian. She writes:

> I'd like to begin with a sweeping generalization and argue that every country or culture has a single unifying and informing symbol at its core [and] the central symbol for Canada...is undoubtedly Survival, *la Survivance*...For early explorers and settlers, it meant bare survival of a crisis or disaster...for French Canada

> after the English took over it became cultural survival...But the main idea is the first one: hanging on, staying alive. Canadians are forever taking the national pulse like doctors at a sickbed...the survivor has no triumph or victory but the fact of his survival. [1972:31-33]

I would, however, like to supplement her definition of survival by suggesting that it is not simply a harsh climate or cultural survival that renders palpable the unease that Canadians have of their national identity. Handler makes the point of survival explicit through his labour theory of value, the idea that the value of something is determined by the amount of labour it incorporates. The attachment one has to *la terre* or *la patrie* is considered, by nationalists, to be a very natural and fundamental attachment (Handler 1988:33). The connection between people and land, as Handler articulates, is the result of the work that has been put into transforming it—harsh environments of forest and rock are made into culture and nation. Using Groulx as a starting point for developing the connection between the blood and sweat that has gone into the land, Handler argues:

> The soil has been conquered, developed, "humanized" by the succession of human generations living upon it. The people mark the land with their soul and personality, and above all, they love the land...The people transform the virgin earth and leave their mark upon it; the earth bears fruit and supports the people and their children... the land mirrors the features of those that settled it [and therefore] there is a permanent bond established between people and the place of their birth. [Handler 1988:34-35]

This results in a strong connection between the identity of the people and the place of their birth and labour; the relationship between the land and the people, then, is seen as natural. The land is humanized and made to reflect who "we" as a nation are. One's place of birth is seen as having a permanent effect on one's personal attributes; changing countries "would indicate a fundamental change of state" (Handler 1988:35).

The connection between Handler's labour theory of value and the loss felt at the disappearance of the small farm in Canada is then evident. Small farms are a disappearing breed, making the survival theme appropriate at another level because the history of the pioneer, the settler, the farmer—those that turned land into culture through their blood and sweat—is a "discourse of the vanishing" (Ivy 1995:1). For example, Marilyn Ivy argues that there is an anxiety due to the "unease about culture itself and its transmission and stability. This anxiety indicates, conversely, a troubling lack of success at the very interior of national self-fashioning" (Ivy 1995:9). The sense of loss and the desire for wholeness and continuity with the past is what marks the Canadian national identity, and in order to survive or overcome this sense of loss, Canadians turn to physical manifestations and cultural productions of what is means to be Canadian.

Because there is such a close connection and "natural" connection between the land and the self, the sense of longing and loss that Ivy speaks of comes as a result of the land being vulgarized in spectacle. Nature is made human and becomes "who we are" and the desire to "get back to the land" is seen as a natural need that cannot be fulfilled because of the spectaclization of the farm. Without being able to reestablish what is seen as a natural connection between land and culture, land and nation, land and identity, there will be that perpetual sense of loss. As Ivy explains, such a sense of

loss results in a consumption of nostalgia that claims that the past can be recovered, yet depends on the "sense of absence that motivates its desires" (Ivy 1995:10).

One of the physical manifestations of Canadian culture is seen in the spectacle of the farm. The Canadian wilderness has been transformed by the labour of the farmers and settlers, preserved in the heritage of the farm and an associated historical closeness with the land. This mythology of being connected to the land continues to this day, perpetuated by images of agrarian and rural life as a central unifying theme in the Canadian psyche. From farms as educational sites to pioneer heritage museums, settler history and rural mythology make up much of the "conscious cultural production" of Canada. Take, for example, Douglas Coupland's musings in *Souvenir of Canada*, where he writes:

> A lot of Canadian literature deals with small towns or rural life...CBC national radio also feeds this trend, with a hefty number of programs ending with a moral along the lines of *I think we all know there's a small town in each of us*...So these days, if someone's working on the farm, it's likely they really enjoy doing it, as opposed to farm work being a life sentence handed to them at birth. Even still, the stories will undoubtedly go on forever. [2002:106-107]

The narratives that help to create Canadian nationalism are imagined, harkening back to a past that conceives of rural and farm heritage as something essential to the Canadian consciousness. As Handler explains, "Modern culture demands unlimited appropriation, the unending production of cultural specificities that will at last prove the existence of a healthy nation" (1988:181). [3]

[3] An important area of research that has been overlooked here to due the constraints of this paper is a discussion of media representations of the farm and rural life, specifically Canadian farm representations.

Carla Corbin (2002) argues that there is a connection between representations of the agrarian landscape and nationalism. Stories, folk culture, heritage-type museums on farm history, and historical narratives all help to maintain the ideal of the farm in the American psyche, according to Corbin. What is interesting, as Corbin also identifies, is that there has been an increasing amount of attention paid to the agricultural landscape as a part of America's cultural identity, something that is remarkable in an age that is predominantly urban. Corbin writes:

> First, references to agrarian life and landscapes are present at significant levels in a culture that is increasingly removed from the actual experience of farming. Second, the range and diversity of the representations—kitsch and commercial, historical, digital—demonstrate broad engagement and acceptance that crosses most segments of the American population...This investigation begins from the basis that our collective relationship with the agricultural landscape has been, and continues to be meaningful...This suggests that a part of the answer is the role of farm life and landscapes in national identity, fueled by settlement-era who protected and provided for their families, ideal and idealized citizens of the new democracy. [2002:65]

To link the agricultural landscape with nationalism demonstrates that there is something fundamentally historic and important about the values the agrarian lifestyle is believed to encompass.

There is a rich collection of such representations, in television and film, including *Green Acres*, *All Creatures Great and Small*, *Jake and the Kid*, *The Red Green Show*, and the most recent Canadian take on rural life, *Corner Gas*, among others. While a study of this is beyond the scope of this paper, it is an important and interesting aspect that would help enlighten the role of farming and the response to farm tourism with regard to Canadian nationalism.

Handler defines nationalism as "an ideology about individuated being. It is an ideology concerned with boundedness, continuity, and homogeneity encompassing diversity. It is an ideology in which social reality, conceived in terms of nationhood, is endowed with the reality of natural things" (1988:6). Handler challenges the notion that nationalism and culture exist as clearly bounded and homogenous social units, and as a result, ends up finding nationalistic ideology in what were (or are) considered non-political places. In his study of Quebecois culture, he questions what every Quebecois he interviews assumes—that the Quebecois are a nation *because* they have a culture. Handler explains, "Like a thing, the nation or ethnic group is taken to be bounded, continuous, and precisely distinguishable from other analogous entities. Moreover, from this perspective, what distinguishes each notion or ethnic group is its culture, which provides the "content" of group identity and individuality" (1988:15). Therefore, a nation is understood to be identifiable by the characteristics that individuals that compose the nation possess.

This is precisely what Atwood attempts to do in *Survival* where she is preoccupied with defining and categorizing Canadian literature so that those reading it will be distinguishable by its boundedness, something Handler argues against. He writes, "The fundamental notion that I wish to convey is that of seeing culture as a thing: a natural object or entity made up of objects and entities...we believe that we can know where and when things begin and end, and what "belongs" to them as part or property—that is, that we can know the objective facts that distinguish things from one another" (Handler 1988:14). Cultures and nations, however, are not bounded or natural

object that exist with inherent characteristics—cultures and nations bleed and meanings flow.

Farm tourism and the role of agriculture in the national consciousness can be seen as an example of both cultural objectification and possessive individualism, as defined by Handler. Cultural objectification, according to Handler, is the idea that culture has become a 'thing' and that it is possible to stand back and examine our ideas and our symbols. A staged Quebecois folk dance is an example that Handler offers explaining that "on all such occasions—at fairs, festivals, feasts, and dances—culture and tradition became objects to be scrutinized, identified, revitalized, and consumed" (1988:12). He continues:

> With this focus the folkdance *spectacle* becomes a crucial example, for it is a piece of "native" nationalist anthropology, a self-conscious representation or objectification of authentic national culture...Dancing folk, for example, can be "recorded," that is, redefined as a thing (a dance) which is part of the cultural content unique to a bounded social entity; then, as in the Winter Carnival, the thing (and the people) can be re-presented, in the frame of a theatrical stage, as authentic pieces of national culture. This is cultural objectification as I will use and explicate the concept. [1988:13,16]

Furthermore, Handler uses the concept of possessive individualism to suggest that in order for a nation to exist, a culture must exist. He regards authenticity as a function of possessive individualism which helps to explain the search for 'authentic' experiences and cultures, making "individual existence dependent upon the possession of private property" (Handler 1986:4). Therefore, in the "ideology of possessive

individualism, the existence of a national collectivity depends upon the possession of an authentic culture" (Handler 1986:4). The belief then is that if we possess the objects then we appropriate their authenticity for our purposes of creating and sustaining a national culture. A nation which is able to create and possess objects that reflect its national consciousness, then, is strong. Canadians, weak in the field of cultural nationalism, look toward the farm, which provides a physical manifestation of white settler heritage, rural values and the pioneer spirit for their consumption.[4] Handler expounds on this notion, so I will quote him extensively in this regard:

> The collective individual of nationalist ideology is defined by its possessions, or, phrased somewhat differently, its existence is taken to be demonstrated by the existence of cultural property. The ability to create original or authentic cultural products testifies to the health of the nation, and national health is equated with freedom...To achieve the totality of a complete and self-contained existence, appropriation is necessary. The collective individual can realize itself through constant production, through a continual objectification of what is imagined to be its authentic culture. *But objectification inevitably unbounds the bounded entity*, deconstructs the desired totality. This is because the processes of cultural

[4] It is important to note here that agri-tourism is prevalent across much of the United States as well. Americans have a strong sense of national identity and yet the farm is also being transformed into a tourist spectacle. While both are, in part, a response to the fragmenting nature of capitalist modernity, I would speculate that there would be significant differences between the reasons behind farm tourism and the representations of the farm in the Canadian versus American context. The relationship to the land is different for Americans and Canadians, as Atwood and McGregor, for example, have pointed out in their respective works. For Canadians, the land has tended to invoke fear and the survival ethic, while in the American context, the land is seen as something that needs to be conquered. In fact, McGregor has written separate books on the Canadian response to the land, as well as the American response. A new comparative study for the two is currently being published. Further study is warranted in this regard. A comparative study between American and Canadian reasons for and responses to agri-tourism would be extremely useful, but is beyond the scope of this paper.

> objectification are as much a part of national culture as the cultural "stuff" that is objectified. At the staged performance of folk dancing, the stacks of loudspeakers and paying spectators are as much a part of the culture of the situation as the dances themselves...But if the processes of displaying, framing, interpreting culture are themselves part of culture, they cannot be bounded and controlled during the same moment in which they bound and control whatever it is that they constitute as a cultural object. [1988:192,194-5]

Therefore, some of the unease that one feels as a result of visiting a farm as a tourist or taking part in the cultural objectification of the farm through corn mazes, u-pick farms, haunted barns and fields can be attributed to the belief that the mechanics of displaying the farm in such a way detracts from its authenticity. This is the irony of display.

How does this process operate with regard to farm tourism in Canada? Why is totality the goal? Why do the fragments never add up and what effect does this have on farm visitors and Canadian attempts to uncover the national spirit? These questions are important to identifying the process of fragmentation and totalization that Handler discusses in some depth. He describes the process of fragmentation that occurs through spectaclization and cultural objectification. The farm as a tourist site operates through offering what is imagined to be a real Canadian culture, comprised of small-town values, rural roots, and honest, hardworking people. "Aimed to rekindle the warmth of traditional social ties," the tourist farm attempts to firmly establish the Canadian national spirit within clear and structured boundaries (Handler 1988:12). This is problematic because these sorts of attempts at uncovering the Canadian national spirit result in fragmentation, not totality. Handler explains that people seek totality because

culture is thought of in holistic terms, despite the fact that its boundaries are ambiguous at best.

According to Handler, the collective individual is defined by her possession or the existence of cultural property that attests to the health and strength of her culture. The individual is made whole through the possession of private property; however, in modern capitalism, the accumulation of property is never complete. Handler argues that, according to Lears, the secularization of Protestantism has created the modern condition of consuming endlessly as a way to seek totality. The quest for "self-realization" leads to depression and nihilism, which in turn results in people attempting to amass more possessions because the emptiness does not go away (Handler:1988:192). For example, Tocqueville argues that "citizens of democratic societies became absorbed by the pursuit of physical gratifications" because the possession of private property is the only way they imagine it is possible to distinguish themselves from the rest of the collective (1954:137).

Debord argues that the spectacular society is made so through capitalism, the commodification of everything and the colonization of everyday life. In essence, capitalism invades and restructures life, resulting in the fragmentation of national psyche. The capitalist mode of production, for example, fragments everything. Capitalism's nature results in the sense of fragmentation, loss and the desire for wholeness, while culture and the national spirit are still regarded as bounded and homogenous entities exerting themselves against others. Therefore, totality is the goal because of the fragmentary nature of capitalism and because there continues to be, according to nationalist logic, totality. The farm, then, is an attempt to uncover

wholeness which is believed to be possible through the establishment of a strong national spirit. The attachment to the farm as a source of totality relates back to Handler's theory of labour value which posits the farm as land that has been shaped and molded into culture and nation through the blood, sweat and tears of "real" Canadians. The celebration of Canada, as Mackey uncovers, is seen to be most authentic in small town rural Canada where connections to the land run deep. The fragments do not result in wholeness because culture cannot be made whole through fragmentation. As Handler demonstrates in his analysis of Quebecois culture and nationalism, the desire for wholeness invariably leads to appropriation, as is seen in the farm as a tourist site; yet, "the appropriation of culture through administrative routines leads to standardized fragments, not totality" (Handler 1988:195).

Furthermore, culture is always presumed to be bounded and holistic. The nation is accepted to be a sovereign state, secure in its borders and national identity, positioning itself against others. As Handler explains, "In the logic of nationalism, a nation cannot contain within itself another nation, or any total culture other than its own" (1988:126). This desire to be able "to secure a unique identity" (1988:195); however, this leads to what Handler refers to as bureaucratic fragmentation because in order to achieve this totality—in order to define once and for all what it means to be, say, Canadian—appropriation is necessary. Culture—that which is deemed to be culture—can be administered only by fragmenting it into sellable and consumable pieces, which creates tension between the desire for wholeness and the inevitable fragmentation. Thus, this appropriation of culture through standardized routines leads to fragmentation

and the feeling that totality is never achieved, despite visits to farm tours, national museums or rural fairs.

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Moreover, cultural and national appropriation through acts of consumption is never complete; instead, the desire to *feel* Canadian may be resolved temporarily, but it is fleeting that does not settle as much as unsettle us. This is part of the logic of possessive individualism—it is "incurable [as] nationalists are haunted by a vision of totality" (Handler 1988:194). The desire for wholeness invariably leads to appropriation, as is seen in the farm as a tourist site; yet, "the appropriation of culture through administrative routines leads to standardized fragments, not totality" (Handler, *Nationalism* 195). As Handler and Linnekin conclude, "In sum, traditions thought to be preserved are created out of the conceptual needs of the present. Tradition is not handed down from the past, as a thing or collection of things; it is symbolically

reinvented in an ongoing present" (Handler & Linnekin 280). Farm tourism is relevant for a predominantly urban population whose connections to the past and tradition and the land, is slipping away. The notion that everyone has "roots on the farm" is what fuels this mythology of the farm as traditional and therefore worth recouping.

How does this process operate with regard to farm tourism in Canada? Why is totality the goal? Why do the fragments never add up and what effect does this have on farm visitors and Canadian attempts to uncover the national spirit? These questions are important to identifying the process of fragmentation and totalization that both Handler and Lears discuss in some depth. Handler describes the process of fragmentation that occurs through spectaclization and cultural objectification. The farm as a tourist site operates through offering what is imagined to be a real Canadian culture, comprised of small-town values, rural roots, and honest, hardworking people. "Aimed to rekindle the warmth of traditional social ties," the tourist farm attempts to firmly establish the Canadian national spirit within clear and structured boundaries (Handler 1988:12). This is problematic because these sorts of attempts at uncovering the Canadian national spirit result in fragmentation, not totality. Handler explains that people seek totality because culture is thought of in holistic terms, despite the fact that its boundaries are ambiguous at best and that the past that is sought, the past thought to be lost, never existed in the first place.

According to Handler, the collective individual is defined by her possession or the existence of cultural property that attests to the health and strength of her culture. The individual is made whole through the possession of private property; however, in modern capitalism, the accumulation of property is never complete. Handler uses Lears'

argument on the secularization of Protestantism to explain how the modern condition of consuming endlessly as a way to seek totality. The quest for "self-realization" leads to depression and nihilism, which in turn results in people attempting to amass more possessions because the emptiness does not go away (Handler 1988:192).

The process of fragmentation and the vision of totality are identified by Lears. He writes:

> Feelings of unreality stemmed from urbanization and technological development; from the rise of an increasingly interdependent market economy; and from the secularization of liberal Protestantism among its educated and affluent devotees. [Lears 1983:6].

People are searching for totality or "self-realization," which they attempt to achieve through consumption. Striving to be complete through purchasing goods is indicative of the malaise of modernity; with each purchase, one feels fulfilled, but this fulfillment is only temporary. Therefore, every moment of totalizing or self-realization contains within it the seed of fragmentation. One is never made complete.

The anti-modernist philosophy that Lears discusses, supports the idea that totality can be located, but only through the recouping of tradition; what Lears refers to as "therapeutic ethos" (1983:6). Victorians "yearned to fling open the doors and experience "real life" in all its dimensions," and as a result sought therapeutic measures (Lears 1983:10). These experiences were united by the desire to feel, on the one hand, the "implicit nostalgia for the vigorous health allegedly enjoyed by farmers, children, and others "close to nature"" (Lears 1983:11). Moreover, Tocqueville argues that "citizens of democratic societies became absorbed by the pursuit of physical gratifications" because

the possession of private property is the only way they imagine it is possible to distinguish themselves from the rest of the collective (1954:137).

Furthermore, Handler argues that what makes a culture strong is being able to possess cultural artifacts that act as a testament to the health of a nation. This process operates in the farming community through tourists who, in an attempt to recapture tradition, are caught up in the processes of consumption, thereby fragmenting what is meant to be whole. The farms tourists visit are never complete in the sense that there will always be a continuous move to improving and authenticating the farm with implements thought to be historic and customary. Moreover, the farm as tourist site is designed to be a form of "therapy" to combat the fragmenting nature of modernity. However, by visiting a farm, one is implicated in the process of consumerism. Thus, this process of fragmentation for the farming community is a complex process. People pay money to get back to their "farming roots" and in doing so, this therapeutic process of self-realization does not *make sense* because one has to pay for it. However, without paying for it, the process would be equally unsettling. People are made to believe that consumption will make them complete again, and yet it never does. Paradoxically, tourists need signs that tell them what a "real" farm in their attempt to find totality; yet, these representations of farms end up fragmenting what is assumed to be whole, which is why farm tourism is a disconcerting process that can never result in totality.

Farming and the 'other'

Are the references to agrarian life simply nostalgic affection for an imagined past? Or is there something more significant to this prevalence of sentimentalized images? All these questions about traditions, the past and rural values relate back to

the unease Canadians have with their national identity. The sense of loss that accompanies this suggests that there has been a lack of success in the construction of nationalism in Canada. Furthermore, it indicates that there is something particularly troubling and fragmenting about modernity that forces people to harken back to a time believed to be stable and secure. What, then, motivates the nostalgia and the longing that people have for the past and what is so fragmenting about modernity that people would pay money to visit an old farm, pick their own fruit, or handle old farm implements? On one level, the fragmenting nature of modernity is caused by the disconnect people have with where their food comes from. There is something complete and wholesome about being self-sufficient. Marx's division of labour helps to explain the fragmentation that results from work being divided between groups of people so that many people are only a cog in the wheel; they never see the end product of their work. As Corbin explains:

> The white-collar portion of this population is also alienated from making things; most jobs consist of a fragment of a process, and the final product is beyond individual control or knowledge. At living history farms, the mission is showing how things worked, how crops were sown and harvested, how tools were made and used. It is real labor, direct, useful, and attuned to the rhythms of sun and season, in benevolent partnership with the land. This is a powerful source of appeal. [2003:8]

The more detached society as a whole becomes from what they see as their 'roots' on the family farm, the greater the nostalgic longing for this imagined past becomes. People become jaded and blame their discontent on urban sprawl or the city's grip on

their lives, positing rural and urban values at opposite ends of the continuum, so that "the more the city expands and absorbs us, the firmer the belief in a rural paradise becomes...And the result is a popular image of rural America which bears a decreasing resemblance to reality" (Jackson 1977:27).Perhaps Handler most succinctly describes the process whereby that which is sought becomes that which is sold to us. He writes:

> We can add that administrative uniformity contributes in its turn to the fragmentation of mass society, where everyone is a number, as a common complaint has it, but where people cannot envision themselves as part of a larger whole. And, in the administration of culture, uniformity leads away from the cultural totality that is so ardently sought, as the cultural domain (however defined) is parceled into manageable subfields, each to be developed, displayed, and sold. (1988:194)

In an endless cycle of longing, commodification and spectaclization, harkening back to one's roots on the proverbial Canadian farm becomes part of the solution to the fragmenting nature of modernity; however, this is *always already* a contemporary problem of repetition and a displacement of the real which results in a tradition and a past that can never really be located but is always felt and never seen.

Therefore, the farm as a cultural object that is created and consumed for the purpose of supporting a national identity in Canada is problematic. For example, Eva Mackey argues that the search for a national identity in Canada is tied closely to the mythology of Canada as a victim. She writes, "A constant theme in debates about Canadian identity, then and now, is the notion that Canada is marginal to and victimized by various forms of colonialism, most recently American imperialism. In this context, the

reasoning goes, Canadian identity needs to be protected and produced" (Mackey 2002:9). This Canadian identity, however, is a white settler identity that positions those who are not white as 'other' to the nation and a threat to its stability. The idea of a settler national identity that Canadians are harkening back to in spectacles like the farm have to do, then, both with the idea of changing wilderness into civilization and the institutionalization of difference. As Mackey argues, "It appropriates the identity of marginalization and victimization to create national innocence, locating the oppressors safely outside the body politic of the nation...[therefore] this book focuses on the construction of this unmarked, non-ethnic, and usually white, '*Canadian*-Canadian' identity" (2002:12,20). There is a need to protect the 'real' Canadian national identity in the face of multiculturalism which is seen to disband the unity of the country, as Mackey discovered in her field research. For example, in speaking to some people about the difference between American and Canadian nationalism, Mackey concludes, "The logic here is that America is strong because American culture is *first*; America and its culture are the *primary* loyalty of all citizens" (2002:144).

This results in the constant cultural production of 'Canadianness' as seen through such things as small town festivals celebrating the family, rural values, agrarianism, and other things that are understood to be non-controversial and non-political. The farm, for example, is seen as a non-political 'authentic' site that represents rural, white and therefore *Canadian* values. However, in positioning it in such a way, it becomes a site of political contestation. Mackey explains:

> Many white Canadians saw multiculturalism as disempowering them, and as a threat to the unity, national identity and progress of Canada. A sense of

> insecurity, uncertainty and crisis fed a backlash to the gains made by minorities, a backlash which was not framed as an overt defence of *whiteness*, but rather as a defence of national identity and unity. (2002:142)

Whiteness is positioned as normative; a place that is unmarked and unnamed, defining itself against 'otherness.' However, whiteness is a structural location of privilege, the 'correct' vantage point from which to view 'others,' and a set of cultural practices that are understood to be normative and therefore unnamed. "Whiteness sustains its dominance by refusing categorization as other than just 'normal' and 'human'...This characteristic of whiteness is also a characteristic of Canadianness, an identity always defined in relation to 'others'" (Mackey 2002:22).

Like Handler's definition of possessive individualism, Mackey argues that nationalism relies on people being able to control it. She writes:

> Nationalism often depends upon mythological narratives of a unified nation moving progressively through time—a continuum beginning with a glorious past leading to the present and then onward to an even better future... official and vernacular constructions of identity in Canada often take it for granted that a nation, to be strong, must have a bounded and definable national 'culture' and identity, a culture that is distinct and different from all other national cultures... A nation, as seen on a map as geographically bounded, should also have a bounded and identifiable culture and history. [Mackey 2002:11,23,41]

The mythology of a white settler heritage, of a white immigrant population constructing civilization out of wilderness, invariably excludes the 'other.' The question to reflect on becomes who is lost in this mythology? Corbin writes, "Desire for the product is

motivated by comforting intangibles that trade on the symbolic meanings of folk farming: honesty, simplicity and directness, hard work, living close to the soil and to nature, having warm social familial bonds...The subtext is family in harmony, and the unspoken causative factor is the rural setting" (2002:72). There is unease about modernity that centres on loss, a loss that is rendered palpable through spectacles such as the farm as a tourist site. The farm depicts the destabilizations that declare the loss of the past as something traditional and, therefore, something worth recouping. The demise of family solidarity, the loss of community, and the rise of the individual result in a search for that lost past.

People begin to feel that there is something inherently Canadian about the farm which results in the spectacle that is farm tourism. This, however, speaks to traditional conservative values about what is means to be Canadian (white, rural), and what a family is (heterosexual with children). Mackey discovers such sentiments during the Wallaceford Pumpkinfestival. She writes:

> The pumpkin theme of the festival was woven together to create an environment of 'old fashioned family fun'—a nostalgic sense of the long-lost ideal small town at Halloween in autumn... Most of the houses were decorated (some in an outrageous manner), reaffirming the sense that these were 'authentic' or 'genuine' celebrations, and not simply commercial and tourist-oriented: this was the authentic and non-alienated *gemeinschaft* of community. [Mackey 2002:132]

Designed to be a non-political celebration of Canada and rural values, by default the festival excluded any 'other,' be they gay, lesbian, feminist or Oka warrior (Mackey 2002:134). The mythology of the farm and the agrarian life, then, is fundamentally

conservative which suggests that the connection between farming and nationalism, Canadian in this case, is problematic. Mackey writes:

> For some people at small-town festivals, notions of local place and community became the framework to express ideas of national belonging which limited and defined 'Canadian' to mean white small-town Canadian or others who do not 'create problems'...[the] romanticization of small town life because of its face-to-face contact, could be interpreted as a defence against the increasing urbanization and alienation of postmodern global living...However, Ron's discourse is not simply positing the superiority of small-town life over city life. He is mobilizing a notion of locality in a discourse of national inclusion and exclusion...Toronto is implicitly set up as multicultural, and therefore, incapable of being 'really Canadian', whereas the small town is more Canadian. [2002:137-138]

What is imagined to be 'true' Canadian culture must continue to define itself against the 'other' and this implicitly sets up boundaries of exclusion. Therefore, the other is diminished, yet is constantly in the background threatening to disrupt the search for self-fulfillment through the mythologizing of the Canadian farm, resulting in a constant sense of trauma and nervousness for those intent on preserving images of the past. The result, then, is the constant reproduction of spectacle that does not settle the insecurity of Canadian nationalism, but leaves us with an uncanny feeling that something is not quite 'right.'

The uncanny and the spectral on the farm

The unease and nervousness that emerge as a result of the fragmentary nature of capitalist modernity reveals an anxiety out of what Marilyn Ivy has labeled a "discourse of the vanishing" (1995:1). The Canadian farm is vanishing as seen in the disappearance of the farm, pioneer life, rural values, and a past that is assumed to be traditional and, therefore, *real*. This results in recouping what is assumed to be lost traditions in spectacles of the farm: spectaclizing of lost traditions that are detached from the real, resulting in a specular and phantom real that can never be located. It can never be located because that which is underlying the national-cultural nation building process is based on a past that never existed but which is believed to have existed and been lost. The real that everyone thought is lost never existed in the first place. What goes for the real is the projection of a stable, homogenous, safe rural past that has been irreparably disrupted by capitalist modernity and is now lost. It is loss felt as a lack. What is lost is today felt as "unnatural," uncanny, a homesickness and a "dis-ease" with the way things are. It all appears as a strange feeling that things are not exactly as they should be, that the everyday is out of place for no apparent reason. There is some unseen disturbance, some ghostly presence. The farm as a tourist site produces an uncannyness and sense of unease it is always a phantom of the real, a phantom of what people are looking for. The phantom that can never be found is linked to Stewart's discussion of longing. The phantom past is assumed to have existed; the desire for it produces the uncanny because in the case of the farm, ghostly and bizarre manifestations of the farm emerge as projections of it. Ivy explains that the fragmenting processes of modernity bring about the need to suture those fragments of the past, a

suturing that occurs through the conscious production of national-cultural practices, such as the farm as a tourist site (Ivy 1995:20).

Questions about farm tourist practices have to do with what haunts the Canadian cultural consciousness. One of the key factors in Ivy's analysis of the ghosts generated by the splintering effect of modernity is "the inextricable linkage of culture with the idea of the nation...by using the idea of the imaginary, I am pointing to the element of phantasm that lies at the basis of national-cultural communities" (1995:3-4). The location of past traditions as something that need to be recovered results in essentialized images of what it means to be Canadian or to have attachments to an agrarian past. The word tradition is meant to convey events, practices, and ideas that have been passed down from generations past in order to rid us of the cultural anxiety that haunts Canadians in their search for a national identity. Nostalgia and longing function to create tradition; in this case, it is the creation of the "farm." National identities are created and shaped through the spectaclization of the farm and the constantly produced images of the past as seen in farm and rural ideology.

Stewart refers to nostalgia as a "social disease" evident in the "longing for its place of origin" (1993:xii,23). One is trying to reach a past that has never existed but in narrative form, resulting in the paradoxical nature of nostalgia and longing (Stewart 1993:23). Instead of locating the origin of the idea of the farm, one finds only framed representation in place of 'authentic' reality. Like Stewart, Ivy argues that the origin can never be located, causing a palpable anxiety in the Canadian consciousness. She writes:

> This anxiety indicates, conversely, a troubling lack of success at the very interior of self-fashioning, a recurring motif of critical import in thinking about the instabilities of what is often depicted as uncannily stable...As culture industries seek to reassure...that everything is in place and all is not lost, the concomitant understanding that arises (sometimes obscurely) that such reassurance would not be necessary if loss, indeed, were not at stake...for the loss of nostalgia—that is, the loss of the desire to long for what is lost because one has *found* the lost object—can be more unwelcome than the original loss itself. Despite its labors to recover the past and deny the losses of "tradition," modernist nostalgia must preserve, in many senses, the sense of absence that motivates its desires. (Ivy 1995:9-10)

Tradition and the past are commodified for the purpose of both feeding and sustaining the anxiety that produces the spectacles aimed to 'cure' the national consciousness of this unease. Handler and Linnekin attempt to problematize the commonsense meaning of tradition. They question whether tradition refers to a core of inherited culture traits whose continuity and boundedness are analogous to that of a natural object, or must tradition be understood as a wholly symbolic construction?" (Handler and Linnekin 1984:273). They conclude that tradition should be understood as something that we assign meaning, a process that is motivated by nationalist ideology. They apply a constructivist perspective to the commonsense understanding of tradition as something that is naturally inherited from the past. Rather, they argue that tradition involves "an ongoing interpretation of the past" and is not a bounded entity (Handler and Linnekin 1984:274). The consequence of seeing tradition as something essential that

exists independently of our interpretive modes is that it "posits a false dichotomy between tradition and modernity as fixed and mutually exclusive states" (Handler and Linnekin 1984:273). As Handler and Linnekin write:

> We have concluded that tradition cannot be defined in terms of boundedness, givenness, or essence. Rather, tradition refers to an interpretive process that embodies both continuity and discontinuity. As a scientific concept, tradition fails when those who use it are unable to detach it from the implications of Western common sense, which presumes that an unchanging core of ideas and customs is always handed down to us from the past...We suggest that there is no essential, bounded tradition; tradition is a model of the past and is inseparable from the interpretation of tradition in the present. [1984:273,276]

That which is thought to be traditional and natural is turned into spectacle with the opportunity, in the case of farm tourism, to participate in the spectacle. Tourists interact with live performances that recreate the past, pick their own fruit, and take pictures of old barns, an example of the intersection between spectacle and performance (Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998:78). Images of a simpler, more wholesome past are evoked for the benefit of the private sector that employs nostalgia to their own financial advantage, resulting in the confinement of culture (Dann 1998). Dann argues, "Just as almost everywhere and everything from the past may be conserved, so too can it be retained by making it a spectacle, a commodity or a service. Part of this process is museumization, the freezing of heritage and the selling of the frozen product" (1998:34). While Handler articulates, cultures and nations are not bounded entities, changeless and preserved in time, the desire to be able to locate an

identity, through tradition, continues to haunt the Canadian consciousness, with farm tourism, embodied in the abandoned and ruined barn, an example of that which preoccupies the search for identity in Canada.

Of Farm Barns and Phantasms

As Ivy writes, "Phantasm...is all that is available to gesture towards the displaced origins that the invocation of tradition would call up...it means rather that loss can never be known simply *as* loss, as originary loss..." (1995:22). Like Stewart, Ivy argues that the sense of loss in the national-cultural awareness will never be settled because the origin, believed to be found through the institutionalization of 'traditions,' can never be recovered.

The uncanny can be understood in a variety of ways. Nicholas Royle, in his book, *The Uncanny*, writes:

> The uncanny entails another thinking of beginning: the beginning is already haunted...The uncanny is ghostly...more specifically, it is a peculiar commingling of the familiar and unfamiliar...at some level the feeling of the uncanny may be bound up with the most extreme nostalgia or 'homesickness'...It is impossible to...conceive of the uncanny without a sense of ghostliness, a sense of strangeness given to dissolving all assurances about the identity of a self...its critical elaboration is necessarily bound up with analyzing, questioning and even transforming what is called 'everyday life.' [2003:1-2,16, 23]

The sense of the uncanny that accompanies the idea of the farm as a tourist site, the reason it is troubling, is because it refers back to an origin that can never be reached.

Instead, the farm is "a discourse of the vanishing," evident in the site of an abandoned and ruined barn, a cultural icon signifying loss.

Numerous articles and musings written about barns mourn their loss as something vital to our agrarian heritage. Sheila Ashcroft writes, "There is something reassuringly familiar about the sight of an old barn, prominent in its isolation yet often connected to other outbuildings by pathways linking animals, machinery and people" (2003). The notion that barns are layered with histories and stories results in a sense of loss for this disappearing landmark. Jim Heynen writes, "Few farmers outlive their barns. That's one reason we feel strange when we look at an old barn. It's not really like looking at a tombstone, which can summon our sadness for somebody who is gone; it's more like looking at a dusty encyclopedia on a library shelf, sitting there with that bold patience—as if waiting for something, maybe for the chance to tell its stories" (2003). Furthermore, Arthur & Witney argue, "It is possible that millions now living in North America have never seen a barn, let alone been in one..." (1972:11). The sense of loss is palpable and something closely associated with the national-cultural consciousness of Canada, haunted by the spectre of the vanishing barn, the vanishing family farm, the vanishing of community and rural values. Representing our crossroads to the past, generally believed to mean tradition, the barn is an example of land being turned into culture, since, "in Western Canada, the history of barns is also the history of settlement. Barn design is a statement of cultural heritage" (Ashcroft 2003).

Yet another author writes:

> Barns are visible reminders of our agrarian heritage. At the personal level, the structures on a farmstead often hold a special meaning for family members

> whose ancestors built and used them. Barns, and other farm buildings, can be tangible links to a family's past. Barns also may be important in reinforcing a rural community's cultural identity and local sense of place. Perhaps one of their most important contributions is in providing a tangible connection with a past lifestyle, one to which popular culture has given a patina of nostalgia and embodied with nobility and virtue. Preservation of old barns and other traditional structures and landscape features provides a community with a sense of continuity...Barns and rural landscapes should be preserved for what we can learn from them. As the essays in this book demonstrate, barns can communicate information about past cultures, technologies, values, and ways of life. [Dandekar and MacDonald 1995:264]

These essentializing ideas of what the image of the barn connotes results in the barn being employed as a trope in the making of the farm tourist spectacle. One of the ways in which the barn is utilized as a trope in the spectaclization of the farm is through the positioning of the barn as something creepy, haunted and uncanny. This can be seen in the proliferation of farm tours (a simple search through www.google.ca will produce thousands of hits) that exhibit the barn as haunted (particularly at Halloween). In other cases, the barn is described as a site where death is rampant, from ghosts haunting barns to farmers committing suicide in them.

The barn as an example of the uncanny is related to the unease Canadians experience as a result of the overall lack of national identity. The fascination with death is well-documented through Canadian literature, from Margaret Laurence's *Stone Angel* to Roch Carrier's *La Guerre, Yes Sir!* In *The Wacousta Syndrome*, Gaile McGregor

outlines this theme. She writes, "Nature and death, death and nature. The fact is, this is an association deeply ingrained in the Canadian consciousness" (McGregor 1985:113). The obsession with death can be traced in the spectacle of the barn on the farm as the site of an abandoned farm in the middle of a field represents loss and the end of something. In some cases, it is as though those previously occupying the barn simply vanished, leaving everything behind unchanged—like a ghost barn. This creates an aura of 'eeriness' or 'creepiness' or the uncanny that is appropriated for farm tourism.

For example, one barn story titled "The Seven Barns," relates the story of a man gone crazy who murders each of his children, seven in total, in each of his barns. Apparently, "all the barns were torn down except the last one. They say if you go to that barn at night you can see the shadow of the farmer hanging and swinging in the wind" (Castle of Spirits 2001). Yet another barn narrative is told by a woman recounting the experience of growing up with a haunted barn. She writes, "The barn was always creepy...Our dogs would not stay in the barn, or even go near it...One night someone broke into the hutch and killed both our rabbits, and my pigeon...All the dead animals had broken necks...Recently I was visiting my Mom, and the barn is still creepy! It has fallen back into disrepair and is filthy and dark. It looks abandoned and lonely like it did when we first moved in. It also still feels "off" (Dianne 2002). My own grandmother claims to have experienced the uncanny when, having to milk the cows because her husband was sick, was alone in the barn when she saw a coffin at the other end, clearly remembering the gain of the wood on the coffin. She took this as a sign that her father would soon die—and he did (email to author, January 23, 2004).

Where such stories cease to exist, they are created. Ivy explains that "the vanishing can only be traced through the poetics of phantasm," something that is often ghostly (1995:20-21). These sorts of uncanny interactions with the barn are important because the idea of ghosts and haunting are central to the unease in the Canadian psyche. Renée Bergland, in his book *The National Uncanny*, argues, "The entire dynamic of ghosts and haunting, as we understand it today, is a dynamic of unsuccessful repression. Ghosts are the things that we try to bury, but that refuse to stay buried" (2000:5). In the case of farm tourism, the barn and everything associated with it, from wholesome values to haunted ghostliness, is appropriated and internalized, a symptom of nationalism. Agri-tourism farms at Halloween are a perfect example of the uncanny being made into spectacle. From haunted corn mazes to haunted farms such as the Magic Hill Farm north of Toronto, the barn is used to signify the uncanny, resulting in the troubling and anxiety rendering spectacle that is farm tourism.

The barn acts as a liminal space. It spatializes the specular and phantasmatic; it is the space between the house and the land, a massive space where work happens, where animals are born and die and where sometimes it seems like, though long abandoned, that people could once again reappear and continue their work. The barn is a place often mythologized as being associated with death and ghostly hauntings and because of this, the presence of the barn on the farm troubles the act of completing the picture of the farm as a national portrait. The barn brings up ghostly, haunting moments that make one reflect on the peculiarity of producing a representation of the "perfect" farm. [5]

[5] The barn as a site of the uncanny and as an unsettling feature on the Canadian farm presents another area of future research. The barn is a strange place and potentially presents one of the next big areas of

Conclusion

Throughout this paper, I have argued that the Canadian farm as tourist site is indicative of a larger desire for a stable national identity, one that harkens back to a white settler heritage, necessarily positioning itself against an 'other.' This 'other' can be defined as anything marked as non-white, urban and modern in the sense that it is seen as opposing tradition. In order for nationalist discourse to be seen as successful, it must define the nation as a bounded entity that is defining itself against that which is seen to be a threat to its stability. Without an 'other,' there is no nation.

Mitchell argues that a nation, in order to exert itself as modern and independent, must have a past, and in order to do so, there is a need to "produce a place" (2001:212). He uses Homi Bhabha's distinction between the nation as pedagogy and the nation as performance in order to highlight the role of the 'other' in the processes of nation-making (2001:214). What Mitchell calls "local performances of nation-making," is vital to the understanding of farm tourism in Canada as a form of nationalism (2001:234). Mitchell writes:

> In the performative making of the nation...otherness plays a constitutive role...The nation is made out of projects in which the identity of community as a modern nation can be realized only be distinguishing what belongs to the nation from what does not, and by performing this distinction in particular encounters...What such an account generally overlooks is the more mundane and uncertain process of producing the nation. I have in mind the variety of

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study in rural Canadian studies. How do barn mythologies and narratives operate? What exactly is the relationship between the phantasm and the barn? These are questions that disturb this research paper because further research needs to be done in order to determine the role of the barn in the Canadian psyche.

> efforts, projects, encounters and struggles in which the nation and its modern identity are staged and performed...What is different about making or performing the nation is that it always involves the question of otherness. [2001:215]

Mitchell's observations are important for farm tourism because they emphasize the mundane in the process of nation-making, thereby functioning to de-exoticize tourism studies.

The farm as tourist site is, therefore, an important form through which Canadian nationalism and longing are manufactured. While a visit to an agri-tourism farm is motivated by a desire to experience an 'authentic' rural or farm culture, it also offers a commentary on a cultural condition of longing and national feelings of insecurity. Through a literature review of works on authenticity and a discussion of work on the tourist gaze, I have intended to show that farm tourism, while it can be partially explained with reference to theories of authenticity, speaks to larger themes about culture, longing and the nation. While the farm is generally seen as being a wholesome setting, representative of ideal virtues and "nostalgic idealization of pastoral settings, [with] nature as nurturing, maternal and pure," this is but a representation of the farm that venerates only a selective part of the past and invents tradition and national-cultural history (Corbin 2002:68).

I have demonstrated how the study of farm and rural tourism is relevant to larger discourses of nationalism, culture and longing, thereby making the banal and the quotidian something worthy of study, particularly in tourism research. Whether or not farm tourism should be seen as a positive or negative development is irrelevant for my purposes; rather, the farm as tourist spectacle raises interesting questions about what

motivates the nostalgia and why people feel that modernity is so fragmenting that they desire the past, albeit an imagined one.

The unending quest for self-realization, as Handler sees it, will never be complete (1988:192). Instead, the "nationalistic insecurity...is incurable...Nationalists are haunted by a vision of totality...The totality nationalists seek is that of an irreducible, homogeneous unit, securely in control of its borders, self-contained, autonomous, and complete, asserting itself against a world of similar entities" (Handler 1988:194). The assertion that a bounded and unique identity will come as a result of the institutionalization and constant production of an imagined authentic culture is impossible. An uncanny phantom of the past haunts the national psyche, yet it is always felt and never seen, which is why the farm as tourist spectacle is disturbing.

Farm tourism is a rich area that requires further study in order for the implications of the farm being turned into tourist spectacle to be more wholly understood. Because tourism is an "industry of mass consumption," and because the tourism industry "sells not individual objects of signification but entire worlds of experience and meaning," the transformation of the family farm is important to both tourism studies and the nationalist discourse in Canada (Mitchell 2001:232).

Because I am constrained by the size and depth of this paper, there are several aspects of this paper that would benefit from further development and others that continue to trouble this thesis. First, another aspect of farming that is related to farm tourism is hobby farming. The significance of farming as a leisure activity is again related to the pursuit of rural values and a desire to get back to the land. Further study

of this, however, is required before its role in farming and nationalism in Canada can be fully determined.

Another topic of future research is the representation of the farm in the Canadian media landscape. Much literature exists on farming in Canada; however, a useful and enlightening area of study would be farm representations on television, from *Pioneer Quest* to *The Red Green Show*. As well, the barn as an example of the uncanny needs to be explored in more details. Thousands of barns across the Canadian prairies likely house narratives and mythologies that would assist in uncovering ghostly hauntings as are manifest in the site of an abandoned barn.

There are, lastly, two distinct areas that are troubling this thesis. One, what is the role of the farmer in the production of the farm as representation? Do farmers possess agency or are have they been "duped" into transforming their farms into tourist spectacles? The second area of study that has only been speculated on in this paper is the role of farm tourism in the American context. I have suggested that farm tourism in the United States and in Canada would evoke very different responses. Americans have a strong sense of national identity, yet farms across the mid-west are also becoming tourist sites. A comparative study between American and Canadian farm tourism would be extremely useful in distinguishing this difference that I venture is due to the dissimilarity between each nation's relationship to the land. The farm as tourist site is a new and rich area of study, and it contains many remarkable aspects that need to be dealt with in greater detail before the relationship between rurality , farming, nationalism and longing can be fully established.

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