The White Linen Shirt and Shift in Early Colonial Eastern Woodlands North America

by

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Abstract

This thesis investigated the white linen shirt and shift in Eastern Woodlands North America during the 17th and 18th centuries. The research question was: "Through a material culture analysis of an 18th century shirt and shift, what can we extrapolate about how these objects may have affected the power dynamics in relationships between settler and Indigenous communities in Eastern Woodlands North America during the early colonial period?" To find an answer, the shirt and shift were examined as objects that moved within and between Indigenous and settler communities. A material culture analysis was performed on an 18th century shirt and shift from the Anne Lambert Clothing and Textiles Collection. The letters of Marie de l'Incarnation and four oil portraits by John Verelst were also examined to contextualize the artifacts and examine portrayals and discussion around the objects. This research aimed to study two objects in depth and then expand the research to the objects in their social context in order to examine the power dynamics between Indigenous and settler communities at the time of study. The research demonstrates that the layered meanings of linen undergarments in European dress systems allowed a space for settler colonial rhetorics to be propagated.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Chiara Power. No part of this thesis has been previously published.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude for the many people who supported me throughout this thesis. I am deeply grateful for all the support and feedback I received from my supervisor, Dr. Anne Bissonnette. Without her encouragement, I would not have pursued this research path or seen it through to the end. I would also like to thank Dr. Lisa Binkley for her invaluable advice and expertise. Thank you to Dr. Vlada Blinova for her assistance in accessing the Anne Lambert Clothing and Textile Collection. I am grateful for my sister, Emilie, who provided many edits and suggestions. Thank you to all my professors who allowed me to explore different research paths and provided valuable feedback. Finally, thank you to all my friends and family for their support and patience when listening to me babble about linen for the last two years.

Table of Contents

Abstract …….ii

Preface……...iii

Acknowledgements……...….iv

List of Figures……..vii

Chapter 1: Introduction……1

A Focus on Shifts and Shirts in Two Geographic Locations……...1

Settler Colonialism and the North American Colonies……...7

Positionality Statement……..11

Overview of the Research on and Specificity of Shifts and Shirts……...14

Chapter 2: Literature Review……17

Overview of the Linen Shirt and Shift……..17

Types of Power: Hygiene……..20

Types of Power: Moral Superiority……...25

Types of Power: Economic Power……31

Types of Power: Political Power……...35

Conclusion……39

Chapter 3: Methodology……41

Artifact Selection: Strengths and Limitations……...41

Material Culture Methodology: Origin and Evolution……..44

Historical Textual Analysis……...51

Addressing the Specificity of Artwork in the Research Process……...54

Conclusion……57

Chapter 4: Findings…….59

White Linen Shirt……..59

Observation……..59

Deduction……61

Reflection……..63

Interpretation……..66

White Linen Shift……..67

Observation……..67

Deduction……68

Reflection……..70

Interpretation……..72

Hygiene, Moral Superiority, Economic Concerns and Shifts in Marie de l'Incarnation's Letters……73

Political Use of Shirts in Marie de l'Incarnation's Letters……...77

Dress in the Painting of St. Kateri Tekakwitha……..81

John Verelst Paintings……84

Observation……..84

Deduction……87

Reflection……..89

Interpretation……..92

Analysis of All Sources…….95

Chapter 5: Conclusion……...100

Bibliography……...105

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Shirt, ca. 1780……3

Figure 1.2 Shift, ca. 1764-1774……..….3

Figure 3.1 Linen Shirt on a Form……...43

Figure 3.2 Linen Shift on a Form……...44

Figure 4.1 Overall View of the Linen Shirt Lying Flat……..60

Figure 4.2 Overall Front View of Linen Shift Lying Flat……..68

Figure 4.3 Closeup of Linen Shift Triangular Side Panel at the Hem……...70

Figure 4.4 Saint Catherine Takakoüita……...82

Figure 4.5 Etowacum…….84

Figure 4.6 Onigoheriago……85

Figure 4.7 Sagayenkwaraton……..85

Figure 4.8 Tejonihokarawa……86

Figure 4.9 Cuff detail on Onigoheriago's shirt……..88

Chapter 1: Introduction

This research conducted a material culture analysis of an 18th century shirt and shift and asked what can we extrapolate about how these artifacts may have affected the power dynamics in relationships between settler and Indigenous communities in Eastern Woodlands North America during the early colonial period?[1] Three different types of sources, consisting of artifacts, images, and texts, were used to look at the cultural and social significance of these garments in the context of settler colonialism. White linen shifts and shirts were worn as undergarments in Europe before and during the period of study. They were worn by settler colonists in North America as well as traded, gifted, and at times imposed on Indigenous communities.[2] Through two 18th century artifacts, how European-style white linen shirts and shifts were employed between Indigenous and settler communities was examined in order to understand how they affected the power dynamics developing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in the early colonial period, in the case of this thesis, the 17th and 18th centuries.

A Focus on Shifts and Shirts in Two Geographic Locations

The shift and the shirt were undergarments that were worn across Europe throughout the 17th and 18th centuries.[3] They were both simply-constructed garments (in comparison to fitted attire that was worn over these garments) traditionally made of linen fabric, but could be

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[1] The Eastern Woodlands is an area defined by cultural groups of Indigenous peoples that extends down the east coast of North America and west to the Great Lakes across present-day United States and Canada. It encompasses the traditional land of two larger Indigenous linguistic groups, Iroquois and Algonquian, within which there are numerous First Nations. Charles Bishop, "Eastern Woodlands Indigenous Peoples in Canada," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (Historica Canada, 2011), https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/aboriginal-people-eastern-woodlands.

[2] Robert S. DuPlessis, *The Material Atlantic: Clothing, Commerce, and Colonization in the Atlantic World, 1650-1800* (Cambridge University Press, 2016): 95. Kathleen Brown, *Foul Bodies: Cleanliness in Early America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009): 26.

[3] Brown, *Foul Bodies,* 27.

differentiated in style of construction and gendered usage.[4] The shirt was a man's undergarment (Fig. 1.1). It was generally rectangular in construction and could reach approximately from midthigh to the knees. The shift was a woman's undergarment (Fig. 1.2). It was generally A-line and would typically fall to the mid-shin. The shift also changed names multiple times over centuries from smock, to shift, to chemise.[5] The design of the shirt and shift largely stayed the same while garments worn over them such as coats, vests, and gowns changed with fashion trends. Women's shift necklines reflected the changes in fashion the most as they rose and fell to accompany the design of necklines on bodices. The simpler and standard design of the shift and shirt fostered its longevity as well as on-going purpose as a garment.

[4] Susan North, *Sweet and Clean?: Bodies and Clothes in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 120-121.
[5] North, *Sweet and Clean?,* 121.

Figure 1.1 *Shirt*, ca. 1780, linen. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (2009.300.62). https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/159171.

Figure 1.2 *Shift*, ca. 1764-1774, linen. Washington D.C., National Museum of American History (28810). https://www.si.edu/object/chemise-shift:nmah_371681.

Shirts and shifts had an important practical purpose that contributed to their social importance. These garments served to protect people's often more expensive and delicate clothing from soilage such as sweat. Shirts and shifts were often made of undyed linen fabric creating a strong garment that could withstand frequent laundering.[6] They also served to protect the wearer from their own bodily toxins. Through the early modern period, medical experts believed that diseases and toxins left the body through bodily fluids.[7] The linen undergarments were supposed to absorb the body's sweat, which would then be laundered away. In this way, the shift and the shirt played an important role in ideas of bodily hygiene and cleanliness. Most shifts or shirts would have been concealed beneath other garments in public, but components such as cuffs and collars could protrude.[8] These visible elements of one's undergarments could then be judged as a public metric of a person's cleanliness. The shirt and the shift were the most private garment with a practical role in cleanliness but nonetheless had a social purpose too.

For this research, I focused on the use of white linen shifts and shirts in colonies established in northeast North America on the territory of the previously described Eastern Woodlands First Nations. The use of the shift and the shirt was common across many European nations, including France and England, which were colonizing forces present in the geographic focus of the research. This was one of the first areas of contact in North America between Indigenous and European cultures and where some of the first permanent North American colonies were established. In the 17th century, both France and England were engaged in imperial efforts and had established colonial settlements in this area. The present day geopolitical boundaries between what is now known as Canada and the United States are not applicable for the centuries I studied. While there were differences between French and English cultures, this

[6] North, *Sweet and Clean?,* 213.
[7] Kathleen Brown, *Foul Bodies: Cleanliness in Early America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009): 26-7.
[8] North, *Sweet and Clean?,* 138.

research did not focus on them and instead focused on the larger cultural divide between Indigenous nations and colonizing ones. As a result, the geographical focus of this research, while occupied by both French and English forces, was defined by the territory of the Eastern Woodlands First Nations.

Throughout this thesis, the term "Indigenous" is used to broadly refer to individuals who identified as being part of one of the Eastern Woodlands First Nations.[9] This term does not adequately convey the cultural diversity of the many nations that inhabited the region. There were (and continues to be) many different groups of peoples in this area including Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, Mi'kmaq, Abenaki, Odawa, and many more.[10] All have their own histories, cultural practices, and traditions. The use of the term "Indigenous" does not aim to reduce these cultures to a singular monolithic entity but it can obscure this cultural diversity. Despite its reductive abilities, the term "Indigenous" is used in my research to reflect the lack of specificity frequently found in historical sources and to replace more offensive, historical terms used.

Authors used in this research utilize different terms to refer to Indigenous peoples. Historical sources such as the letters of Marie de l'Incarnation occasionally mention specific nations such as Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) but more frequently use the term "savage" to refer to all Indigenous peoples.[11] The distinguishing of First Nations from each other was more frequently used to indicate political conflict than acknowledge cultural differences. Historian of early America Sophie White uses the term "Indian" while historian of gender and race in early

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[9] Indigenous is a broader term that encompasses all Eastern Woodlands First Nations but also Inuit and Metis nations. All First Nations people are Indigenous but not all Indigenous people are First Nations. Indigenous has a broader scope as a term, however for this paper, I am referring specifically to those nations in the Eastern Woodlands area.
[10] Bishop, "Eastern Woodlands Indigenous Peoples in Canada," *The Canadian Encyclopedia.*
[11] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, ed. Guy-Marie Oury (Sarthe: Abbaye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes, 1971).

America and the Atlantic World Kathleen Brown uses "Native American."[12] While these terms are commonly used by American scholars, in this research, the term Indigenous is used "in the spirit of acknowledging the diverse ways in which the First Peoples of this land now called Canada chose to identify themselves, not how colonial governments have identified them, and encompassing the diversity of identity captured in First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities."[13] Though this research only discusses the Eastern Woodlands region and not all Indigenous peoples, the term "Indigenous" is used to reflect the vagueness of historical sources while using language most appropriate to when and where I am writing.

Historically, North American Indigenous nations and European nations had more in common within their respective continents than between them due to a longer history of trade and contact.[14] European dress was characterized by covering the majority of the body but the face and hands with woven fabrics.[15] The First Nations of Eastern Woodlands North America had very different dress traditions. Clothing was primarily made from animal skins, included dress practices rarely practiced in Europe such as tattooing, and had different conventions around covering the body and styling hair.[16] The focus of this research was on the encounters between these different cultures of dress that came with Europeans crossing the Atlantic. Though this research used these broad categories of Indigenous persons and individuals of European descent, I try to address both of these cultural umbrellas with more specificity in my research as expanded on in Chapter 3.

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[12] Sophie White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians: Material Culture and Race in Colonial Louisiana* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013): 1. Brown, *Foul Bodies*, 2.
[13] University of Alberta, *Indigenous Strategic Plan* (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 2022), 15. https://www.ualberta.ca/media-library/indigenous-excellence/indigenous-strategic-plan/indigenous-strategic-plan.pdf.
[14] In this situation, I am referring to Europe as a continent, not European settlers.
[15] DuPlessis, *The Material Atlantic,* 30.
[16] DuPlessis, *The Material Atlantic,* 48.

Settler Colonialism and the North American Colonies

Settler colonialism is a phenomenon that can be seen in the establishment of colonies in North America by the French and British Empires. Historian Lorenzo Veracini describes how settler colonialism takes place when people migrate to a new space and establish settlements that forcibly eliminate indigenous cultures.[17] He indicates that settlers differ from migrants in that settlers create or reproduce an exterior culture rather than joining the one that already exists in a space. Moreover, settler colonialism differs from colonialism as the former aims to replace the indigenous culture entirely whereas the latter dominates them through existing power structures.[18] The British Empire practiced colonialism in India where existing political structures were used to dominate the local populations but settler colonialism in North America where new settlements were created based on British practices. These are important differences as settler colonialism is seen in "the systematic disavowal of any indigenous presence."[19] Veracini further explains that under settler colonialism "colonialism" is represented as "something done by someone else and 'colonisation' as an act that is exercised exclusively over the land" disguising its perpetuation.[20] He adds that such a perspective sustains "fantasies of 'pristine wilderness' and innocent 'pioneering endeavour.'"[21] Both the French and British colonies established in the Eastern Woodlands of North America were phenomena of settler colonialism. Both saw North America as unclaimed land and aimed to establish communities entirely European in character despite the presence of Indigenous communities, over which they sought to exert growing influence and/or control over time.

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[17] Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011): 3. Veracini uses the word "indigenous" not to reflect only on First Nations peoples but more broadly to refer to any people native of a land who could be subject to settler colonialism as a phenomenon.
[18] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism,* 5.
[19] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism,* 14.
[20] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism,* 14.
[21] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism,* 14.

The early French colonies of New France began in the 16th century, were mostly based around trade with local Indigenous nations, and so did not seek to impose settler colonialism through violence.[22] French colonists traded goods such as weapons, beads, and wool for furs. Historian Alan Taylor indicates that since their economy relied on trade with Indigenous nations, the French colonists established peaceful relationships with the Montagnez (also spelled Montagnais), Algonquin, and Wendat nations.[23] These alliances also led to clashes between the French colonists and the Haudenosaunee nations though in the 18th century.[24] Taylor also writes that peace would be established between the Indigneous nations and by extension the French colonists in 1701 after many conflicts. In the 18th century, despite this supposed peace, the French crown became more involved in their North American colony and enacted further attempts to expand it beyond a trade economy to a full settlement that encouraged replacement of Indigenous communities over cooperation[25]—and thus veered towards hardline colonialism. Settler colonialism was present in the French colonies from their establishment but it became more forceful as goals of settlement overtook trade.

Until the 18th century, French colonial policies promoted the *francisation* (i.e. "frenchification") of Indigenous people around their colonies.[26] The stated goal of *francisation* was to slowly assimilate Indigenous people—a clear act of domination—into French culture through religious conversion to Catholicism and marriage between communities.[27] Through

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[22] Alan Taylor, *Colonial America: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 36. New France encompassed all of France's North American colonies including Quebec, Louisiana, and Acadie. In the 18th century, a number of these colonies were conquered by British forces and integrated into British colonies. This project does not focus on these settler political changes nor those that came with the American Revolution. French and British cultures face the same generalization as Indigenous nations in the scope of this research as it is focused more on the cultural distance between settler and Indigenous communities than specifics within them.
[23] Taylor, *Colonial America,* 37.
[24] Taylor, *Colonial America,* 37.
[25] Saliha Belmessous, "Assimilation and Racialism in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century French Colonial Policy," *The American Historical Review* 110, no. 2 (April 1, 2005): 346.
[26] Belmessous, "Assimilation and Racialism," 334.
[27] Belmessous, "Assimilation and Racialism," 323.

marriage and the cultural education of Indigenous children, French colonists hoped the Indigenous people would see what the French saw as their superior culture and assimilate of their own accord, which would serve to eventually eliminate the presence of Indigenous cultures entirely.[28] The early form of French settler colonization through assimilation into French language, education, religion (Catholicism), and cultural practices, such as marriages between Indigenous peoples and settlers, could be deemed not as forceful as elimination of a people via firearms, though we must recognize that such assimilation efforts remain violent cultural acts.

Francisation was largely unsuccessful and began to be discouraged by French authorities in the 18th century as ideas of racial purity emerged.[29] As the Indigenous communities "did not feel inferior to the French; nor did they believe that their sociocultural practices were inferior to those of the French", they did not freely assimilate to French ways of life.[30] To explain this phenomenon, French authors in the early 18th century began to emphasize the nature of Indigenous peoples as fundamentally incompatible with French culture.[31] In turn, French colonial policies took a stronger stance promoting inherent French superiority and emphasizing separation from Indigenous communities. The more forceful approach that developed in the 18th century deteriorated the more peaceful relationships of early trade between Indigenous and settler populations.[32] The French settler colonialism system manifested itself more intensely in the 18th century as it became clear Indigenous communities and cultures would not disappear without enforcement, a situation that drew closer to the structure of the British Colonies in North America.

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[28] Belmessous, "Assimilation and Racialism," 330, 325.
[29] Belmessous, "Assimilation and Racialism," 344, 345.
[30] Belmessous, "Assimilation and Racialism," 337.
[31] Belmessous, "Assimilation and Racialism," 346.
[32] Belmessous, "Assimilation and Racialism," 346.

British Imperial efforts in 17th-century North America had a more forceful approach to colonizing Indigenous communities. British North American colonies were situated between the French colonies of Quebec (1534-1763) and Louisiana (1682-1762) and were established later than their Spanish and French counterparts. The first British settlements were established on the east coast in the present day state of Virginia, eventually developing into thirteen colonies. This area was thought to be ideal for fur trade and crop growing.[33] British settlers made numerous disastrous attempts leading to the deaths of many colonists prior to establishing a permanent colony.[34] They did not aim for the same cultural assimilation of the nearby Indigenous nations situated nearby as the French colonists had, instead aiming for economic subordination first.[35] While the Eastern Woodlands contained both British and French colonies, the establishment and character of the early settlements differed significantly.

The British colonies were primarily geared towards farming rather than trade, which led to a different mode of settler colonialism. Settlers ignored Indigenous agricultural methods and viewed the North American landscape as wilderness.[36] When it came to toiling the land, Taylor indicates that settlers were not open to Indigenous forms of agriculture: "[t]he English sense of superiority remained impervious to their own follies as colonists in a land long mastered by the [Indigenous nations]."[37] As a result, he advances that the British settlers were less predisposed to engage in peaceful relationships than the French were as the latter relied heavily on trade with First Nations. The settlers of New France would shift their focus from trade to agriculture in the 18th century and this would also be accompanied by a deterioration in relationships with Indigenous communities.[38] The British settlers engaged in a long conflict with the Algonquian

[33] Taylor, *Colonial America,* 51.
[34] Taylor, *Colonial America*, 52.
[35] Taylor, *Colonial America*, 54.
[36] Taylor, *Colonial America*, 54.
[37] Taylor, *Colonial America,* 54.
[38] Belmessous, "Assimilation and Racialism," 345.

people who were initially more powerful but were decimated by disease over the 17th century.[39] The colony continued to grow through an influx of immigrants from Britain as well as the importation of indentured servants and enslaved people.[40] Despite moments of truce, the relationship of British settlers with surrounding Indigenous nations remained largely antagonistic throughout the 17th century. The British version of early settler colonialism was different from colonial practices in New France. Instead of eliminating Indigenous communities through slow assimilation, British colonies focused on expanding agricultural settlements on forcefully seized Indigenous land and replacing Indigenous communities with their own.

Over the centuries that followed, both the French and British colonies would continue to spread across North America and settler populations would eventually outnumber Indigenous communities. They would ultimately become the United States of America and Canada, two countries whose government, economic, and cultural structures are based on European traditions and who continue to feel superior and exert power over Indigenous cultures. First Nations have become minorities that were persecuted for centuries and often removed from historical narratives to paint North America as an empty land. The history of settler colonialism is deeply embedded in and informs the shape of current customs throughout Canada, including how this research was conducted.

Positionality Statement

This research project required a broad approach to the histories and beliefs of both Indigenous groups and non-Indigenous peoples of European descent and a self-awareness of my biases. I am not Indigenous and recognize that this state of affairs has affected my perspectives,

[39] Taylor, *Colonial America*, 55.
[40] Taylor, *Colonial America*, 55.

and is likely to continue to do so. I am both a Canadian and an American citizen whose ancestors were settler colonists from Britain. My background means I approached this research without a deep understanding of Indigenous cultures and ways of thinking. Despite my best efforts, I am more likely to privilege European or settler narratives/ways of understanding because they are embedded in my culture and upbringing. Moreover, my research was conducted primarily in English-language primary and secondary sources with the exception of one French primary source. This privileged English authors, ideas, and narratives. I tried to be open-minded to ideas that contradict my pre-conceptions and actively sought points of view that challenged my assumptions. By incorporating different sources, I hoped to balance my point of view with that of others from different cultures and languages. Nevertheless, I am aware that my perspective inevitably influenced the analysis of my research. In the end, the narrative I have constructed aims to be well-supported but it is still tainted by my own perspective and is not to be understood as conclusive truth on the subject.

As a researcher, I must aim to examine, contextualize, and reflect on my upbringing and the knowledge I have gathered thus far. I have largely benefited from the power structure set forth by settler colonialism my entire life. When I was young, I was taught inaccurate versions of Canadian history that glossed over Indigenous knowledge as well as the damages to their communities and failed to seek Indigenous perspectives. Settler histories, laws, spaces, and ideas have been strongly centred in my upbringing and education. As a result, there has been a singular “correct” narrative and way of knowing that was emphasized throughout my formative years. In so doing, a richness to our collective history and nuanced perspectives were lost to me. I have learned more about different Indigenous communities as I have pursued my education but

this still was typically forged within a settler context and rarely from Indigenous people themselves. In this research, I aimed to continue to learn more and challenge my assumptions.

My undergraduate research background is in history and my current master degree program is in Material Culture Studies within a Human Ecological perspective. As a result, I valued having many sources, such as textual and visual documents as well as clothing artifacts, to support my interpretation of the past. The material culture perspective in my research can be seen in how the dress of people is fundamental to my research question. The research concentrated specifically on the white linen shift and shirt while also discussing their social and cultural environments as Human Ecology is, at its core, people-centred. Both my previous and current degrees informed my research approach as did my openness to new ways of knowing.

Traditional historical research methods have embraced the use of texts and images as sources. While these documents were part of my approach, I am also a maker of clothing and I learn through the experience of making and wearing processes. When encountering historical and contemporary garments, I often focus on their construction and reflect on the experience of making the garment. As I have worked in a historical site as a reenactor, I also like to consider the wearing of garments. This is a more practical and tightly-focused view than I was taught in traditional historical research, which encouraged connections to broader social, cultural, and economic trends. In the current research project, I tried to balance these perspectives while also maintaining an open mind to trying new ways of researching and encountering different value systems and ways of knowing. I could not change my background but I could question my sources and listen to those with different viewpoints to gain a more balanced perspective.

Overview of the Research on and Specificity of Shifts and Shirts

This project aimed to investigate a singular type of 17th and 18th-century garments—white linen shift and shirt undergarments—to understand how their physical and social connections to the body affected power in colonial encounters in Eastern Woodlands North America. These objects laid next to the skin. They were liminal garments between the body and other clothing styles, which were ever changing and more prominently displayed. Shifts and shirts' simpler design and construction stayed fairly constant for centuries; they were much more resilient to changes in fashion than "exterior" clothing (i.e. garments worn over shifts and shirts).[41] They did not vary widely according to fashion trends aside from small changes around the neckline and sleeve length that allowed them to remain relatively inconspicuous beneath exterior garments.[42] The garments were intimately tied with ideas of the body but also with ideas of virtue, status, and decency.[43] The significance of white linen shirts and the shifts were the focus of this research because they could represent important social practices and values despite their apparent simplicity and relative constancy in the face of fashion.

Linen undergarments differentiated from fashionable attire in both their constant presence in daily life and the expectation of consistent labour they generated. The simple shape and construction of linen undergarments spoke to their ubiquity while the labour of construction and maintenance demonstrated the social importance of presentable undergarments. The simplicity of the patterning of shirts and shifts allowed the garments to fit a broad range of bodies unlike more fitted exterior garments. Simpler in shape and made of sturdy linen, shifts and shirts were clothing items that a European housewife was expected to know how to make whereas items

[41] North, *Sweet and Clean?,* 121.
[42] North, *Sweet and Clean?,* 121.
[43] Styles, *Dress of the People,* 80. Brown, *Foul Bodies,* 27.

such as suits, stays, and gowns were more commonly purchased from professionals.[44] Despite the expectation that undergarments were simple enough to be made at home, historian John Styles indicates it was common in England for women to be hired to make linen undergarments instead.[45] He adds that, when cotton began to be a commonly used fibre within England, items such as gowns previously made of linen began to be made of cotton fabric while shifts and shirts remained made of linen for much longer.[46] Linen fabric likely was used because of its sturdiness. Shirts and shifts in direct contact with the body were washed more frequently and benefited from being made in a strong fabric. As a result of rough laundering practices, frequently washed garments wore out quicker and had to be replaced more often.[47] From their simpler and more accommodating shapes, to their production that could be made at home or hired out, to their prolonged use of linen that made them more resistant to frequent washing, shifts and shirts distinguish themselves from other garments, which expresses the different values embedded in their uses within a European mindset.

As Europeans settled in the Eastern Woodlands, white linen shirts and shifts were gifted, traded, or imposed on certain Indigenous communities and, in the process, gained a place of importance in colonial encounters. I believe their study warranted a targeted inquiry, separate from other textiles and garments that were traded in a North American colonial context. Their commercial nature may have been the same as other textiles or textile products, but the social and moral implications embedded in them were different. In this research, I studied linen shirts and shifts separately from other textile goods to understand the unique social implications of the

[44] North, *Sweet and Clean?,* 180.
[45] Styles, *Dress of the People,* 157.
[46] Styles, *The Dress of the People,* 130*,* 347.
[47] Styles, *The Dress of the People,* 223.

use and movement of these garments between settler and Indigenous communities in the 17th- and 18th-century Eastern Woodlands North America.

The 17th and 18th centuries were a time of immense change in the French and English colonies of North America and for the Indigenous peoples of the Eastern Woodlands region. According to historians Saliha Belmessous and Alan Taylor, at the beginning of the 17th century, the settlers' communities were smaller and more vulnerable than the Indigenous nations around them so they often depended on their neighbours' support for survival.[48] However, Belmessous advances that by the end of the century the power balance was shifting. Diseases, for example, greatly affected Indigenous populations with mortality rates estimated to be as high as 95% while an influx of settlers arrived in the colonies displacing Indigenous communities.[49] In this time of change, colonial rhetorics and systems were established that would have far-reaching consequences into the 18th century—and one could argue into the present day. The 17th- and 18th-century white linen shirt and shift were not neutral objects in this settler colonial context. They were an important aspect of European dress practices with deep connections to European bodily cleanliness and social values. In becoming a point of contact between Indigenous and settler cultures, the shirt and shift also gained new significance for both cultures. This research aimed to dig into this significance specifically in relation to the power dynamics that developed between settler and Indigenous communities in Eastern Woodlands North America by conducting a material culture analysis of an 18th century shirt and shift.

[48] Belmessous, "Assimilation and Racialism," 336. Taylor, *Colonial America,* 54.
[49] "Native Americans and Colonization: the 16th and 17th centuries," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Britannica, 2023), https://www.britannica.com/topic/Native-American/Native-Americans-and-colonization-the-16th-and-17th-centuries.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter covers literature related to: specific types of Eurocentric undergarment worn next to the body, to the white linen shift and shirt, to the shift and shirt's uses in Europe and colonies in the Eastern Woodlands region of North America over the 17th and 18th centuries, and to their adoption by certain First Nations members in this location during this time. The use of these garments within and between these communities under the context of settler colonialism was investigated to help me answer my research question: "Through a material culture analysis of an 18th century shirt and shift, what can we extrapolate about how these artifacts may have affected the power dynamics in relationships between settler and Indigenous communities in Eastern Woodlands North America during the early colonial period?"

To address the objects and their context in-depth, this chapter examines four different types of power that shirts and shifts affected: hygienic, moral, economic, and political. Though separated here, all of these cultural aspects to the garments influenced each other. This review examines linen undergarments in both a European and Eastern Woodlands context in the 17th and 18th centuries to trace the cultural significance of these garments in different environments and establishes its importance within developing power dynamics between European-Indigenous colonial relationships in Eastern Woodlands North America.

Overview of the Linen Shirt and Shift

To better understand the objects under study and their significance, I discuss literature that examines the use and importance of the shirt and shift in Western Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries. This research project focused on France and England as they were the two major colonial powers in Eastern Woodlands North America at this time. While there were regional

variations in dress within and between those countries, there were also broad similarities in clothing culture that transcended national boundaries. Few scholars research only the shirt and shift in depth—let alone French and English shirts and shifts more specifically—but many touch on these types of objects during larger studies on clothing history.

The linen shirt and shift were standard undergarments used across Europe for centuries and formed an important practical role in dress practices. Though there are differences between French and English cultural practices, scholars of European dress describe very similar practices surrounding the shirt and shift. These works include those of social and cultural historian Daniel Roche who surveys French clothing of the ancien régime.[50] Material culture historian John Styles in his book *The Dress of People* also conducts an in-depth study of clothing practices in the 18th century but focuses on Britain and the lower classes. Lastly, dress historian and curator Susan North's book, *Sweet and Clean*, surveys English medical literature and domestic manuals from the early modern period (1500-1700). Given the similarities between the French and British use of the linen shirt and shift described in these works, these authors are considered together to research French and British practices.

The linen fabric of the shirt and shift was an integral part of the function of the garment. Roche describes how the shirt, made of linen, was to act as a second skin that absorbed the oil and sweat of the body to protect more expensive outer garments.[51] Spun from the *Linum usitatissimum* plant, flax fibres that get processed into linen fabrics have generated some of the oldest textiles used by humans, likely because of their strength and ability to quickly absorb and release moisture.[52] As a result, linen textiles were used for undergarments even before the ancien

[50] Ancien régime was the political and social system in France prior to the French Revolution of 1789. "Ancien Régime," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Britannica, 2023), https://www.britannica.com/event/ancien-regime.
[51] Daniel Roche, *The culture of clothing: dress and fashion in the 'ancien régime'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 156, 373.
[52] Robert Curley, "Linen," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Britannica, 2023), https://www.britannica.com/technology/linen.

régime as such garments were made to be washed more vigorously and more frequently than other garments. Styles also addresses how shifts and shirts, which touched the body directly, were often heavily soiled and vigorously washed and were subject to wearing down faster than most other garments and so replaced with greater frequency.[53] When cotton began to be used commonly throughout England, shifts and shirts continued to be made of stronger linen fabric when other clothing items began to be made of cotton.[54] The linen material of shirts and shirts was deeply entwined with the practical role it played in European dress practices.

Shirts and shifts had their own pattern of consumption and use. Wealthier people's clothing could be made from more expensive and finer linen fabrics, such as cambric or Holland, whereas those of the working class were more often made of coarser and browner linens such as canvas or osnaburg.[55] Styles indicates that, because of their simplicity of shape, shirts and shifts could be made at home by women in the family.[56] The skills needed to cut and sew the garments seem to be fairly common amongst most plebeian women but this work was nevertheless also frequently hired out even by households with capable seamstresses.[57] Changing and laundering body linens frequently was a laborious process involving multiple steps. North describes in detail the arduous, hot, and often multi-day process of washing, boiling, and bleaching body linens that may not be familiar to today's reader.[58] The design, material, and laundering of the shirt and shift were key to the garments as they were integral elements within the cultural practices of bodily cleanliness.

Colonists arriving in North America from Europe brought with them their cultural values and ensuing sartorial expectations. As historian Robert DuPlessis describes, Europeans arriving

[53] Styles, *The Dress of the People,* 82.
[54] Styles, *The Dress of the People,* 78.
[55] Styles, *The Dress of the People,* 32, 263.
[56] Styles, *Dress of the People,* 156.
[57] Styles, *The Dress of the People,* 157.
[58] North, *Sweet and Clean?,* 110.

in North America assumed the near total covering of the body with linen fabric "both comported with and promoted the moral, religious, and social imperatives that fulfilled the appropriate demands of civilization in its most complete, desirable, and correct iteration."[59] Brown argues that the use of linen shirts that spread through the British Empire's colonial efforts was a form of cultural imperialism that aimed to replace other cultural practices with British ones.[60] This expectation of bodies being covered in linen as requisite of civility informed the lens through which Europeans observed Indigenous cultures in the Eastern Woodlands.

The linen shirt and shift were simple garments in construction with an important practical purpose within European dress behaviours. This practical purpose affected the social and cultural impacts of the garments within Europe but also the garments as a point of contact between Indigenous and settler communities in North America. In turn, the linen shirt and shift sat at the intersection of different types of power that affected the relationship between Indigenous and settler communities in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Types of Power: Hygiene

The shirt and shift played an important role in settler body care practices that in turn affected power dynamics. Practices related to hygiene can be linked to superiority as those that do well at maintaining cleanliness are considered better than others. The role of shirt and shift meant the garments were players in power dynamics surrounding hygiene.

North and Styles both posit that the shirt and shift were key in the consideration of personal cleanliness in Britain as their use was considered the most important precaution taken

[59] DuPlessis, *The Material Atlantic: Clothing,* 24.
[60] Brown, *Foul Bodies,* 116. Brown uses medical and etiquette books, newspapers, religious writings, and fiction to examine settler ideas of the body and cleanliness in the British colonies that would become the United States. It should be noted that, as other colonial forces also made use of these (and other) linen undergarments, this phenomenon extended beyond British expansion.

to remove sweat-related impurities from the body.[61] Using primary sources, North describes how different authors' hygiene advice could often be conflicting but that there was a general shift away from bathing recommendations towards a focus on changing body linens throughout the 16th century.[62] Her research indicates that, in 17th- and 18th-century Europe, sweat was generally considered to be dirty and disease-carrying.[63] To remove sweat from the body and maintain good health the shirt or shift would be changed frequently.[64] North's primary sources describe how these steps were considered important hygienic habits necessary for preventing diseases such as scabies, smallpox, and typhoid of which there were frequent outbreaks in crowded spaces such as ships and prisons at the time.[65] The shirt and shift had an important role within body care practices that distinguishes it from other items of clothing.

Historian Mairi Cowan's paper "Education, *Francisation*, and Shifting Colonial Priorities at the Ursuline Convent in Seventeenth-Century Québec" looks at early assimilation forces affecting dress practices of Indigenous girls in a specific colonial project, a Québec Ursuline convent school. The school's purpose was to convert Indigenous girls to Christianity and assimilate them into French culture and society.[66] Cowan explains that the nuns who ran the convent incorporated elements of Indigenous cultures such as languages and food into daily life within their school but refused to compromise on the wearing of linen undergarments.[67] She hypothesizes that the nuns considered body care practices to be one of the most important parts of civilization and hoped to literally transform their students into French girls through the transformation of their attire. Its primacy may have been linked to its deep root in European

[61] Styles, *The Dress of the People,* 70, 78-81.
[62] North, *Sweet and Clean?,* 110.
[63] North, *Sweet and Clean?,* x, 110.
[64] North, *Sweet and Clean?,* 194.
[65] North, *Sweet and Clean?,* 53, 110.
[66] Mairi Cowan, "Education, *Francisation*, and Shifting Colonial Priorities at the Ursuline Convent in Seventeenth-Century Québec," *Canadian Historical Review* 99, no. 1 (March 2018): 8.
[67] Cowan, "Education, Francisation, and Shifting Colonial Priorities," 14.

beliefs around health taking precedence over cultural matters. The shift being an exception to the cultural hybridization that happened within the convent suggests that it was an exceptionally important practice when employed in the early assimilation process of Indigenous girls.

Settlers' understanding of linen undergarments as both a moral and hygienic necessity was not shared with Indigenous nations. DuPlessis states that flax plants are not native to Eastern Woodlands North America so people who inhabited the land did not create linen garments, preferring garments made of skins.[68] Brown goes further to describe how Indigenous people of the Eastern Woodlands had very different ideas of how the body should be cleansed and presented and, like the settlers, had a negative response to different cultural body care practices.[69] She asserts that Indigenous peoples tended to dislike wearing European-style clothing for "reasons of comfort, time, dependence, and labor."[70] Indigenous informers in those sources also considered the use of linen in body care to be an unhygienic practice that conserved body fluids and attracted lice.[71] The lack of shifts and shirts was frequently featured in descriptions of European settlers' impressions of Indigenous peoples and how settlers described these cultures as either childlike, savage, or sexual.[72] Brown's research indicates that the relationships between settler and Indigenous cultures were affected by the body care cultural divide resulting in mutual condemnation of the others' practices.

The 2006 work of medical anthropologists James B. Waldram, Ann Herring, and T. Kue Young addresses the subject of Indigenous Health in Canada and includes a historical

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[68] DuPlessis, *The Material Atlantic,* 94.
[69] Brown, *Foul Bodies,* 56, 70. The primary sources she uses include the journal of Jesuit missionary Paul Le Jeune (1591-1664) and the one by English Puritan separatist and governor of Plymouth Colony William Bradford (1590-1657). These are written by European colonists who claim to record the opinions of Indigenous people they knew or describe how Indigenous communities reacted to the colonists' way of life. The information they convey is important to read but must be critically analyzed.
[70] Brown, *Foul Bodies,* 74.
[71] Brown, *Foul Bodies,* 75.
[72] Brown, *Foul Bodies,* 98.

perspective. The authors aim to investigate traditional Indigenous approaches to health as well as examine causes of health problems and flaws in settler medical systems when addressing health problems in Indigenous communities.[73] While aimed at a present-day medical audience, this book was useful in gaining insights on traditional approaches to the body in Indigenous cultures. Nevertheless, the research conducted was very likely done from an outsider's perspective as it does not appear that any of the authors are Indigenous or that they sought out feedback from Indigenous experts. The sources they used are from "European and Euro-Canadian traders, missionaries, physicians, and government personnel, as well as scholars such as anthropologists," many of whom "retained an obvious bias in their writing" and often dismiss Indigenous health practices as superstition.[74] Despite the bias of their sources, the authors cover some important aspects of Indigenous understandings of health in comparison to European traditions.

Waldram, Herring, and Young emphasize the intersection of community and spirituality in Indigenous health practices. According to the authors' research, many Indigenous nations consider the body and its health within a larger system of spiritual beliefs.[75] While not all physical ailments have a spiritual cause, some do and these require spiritual as well as physical treatments.[76] The authors describe that what many of their primary sources dismiss as performances or trickery form part of an approach to heal a person and could involve an entire community. The authors inform its non-Indigenous audience that "Aboriginal medical systems, like all such systems throughout the world, are built upon coherent, rational understandings of the universe and people's place within it. 'Rationality' must be understood to be a

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[73] James B. Waldram, Ann Herring, and T. Kue Young. *Aboriginal Health in Canada: Historical, Cultural, and Epidemiological Perspectives* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006): 126.
[74] Waldram, Herring, and Young. *Aboriginal Health in Canada,*126-127.
[75] Waldram, Herring, and Young, *Aboriginal Health in Canada,* 129.
[76] Waldram, Herring, and Young, *Aboriginal Health in Canada,* 131.

culture-specific notion; one culture's rational thought is not necessarily the same as another's."[77] This reflection on an Indigenous holistic perception of health provides a stark contrast from historical viewpoints ingrained in a settler colonialism mindset, which portray Europeans as bringing rationality and civilized behaviour to Indigenous communities.

Waldram, Herring, and Young's work also facilitates cultural comparisons. It mentions similarities where the physical considerations of "healthiness" were tied into religious concerns and social expressions of community. It became apparent to me that both cultures have intersections of health and spirituality but their dress and hygienic practices looked very different. While not providing specifics into Indigenous conceptions of the body and its care, this book highlights the differences in how the body can be healed across two different cultures as well as the lasting prejudices historical judgments have caused.

While it is difficult to establish the exact historical and current beliefs in Indigenous communities around how the body should be cared for from the work of Waldram, Herring, and Young, it makes clear a gulf between European and Indigenous beliefs then and now. The failure to understand each other's ideas of health has had long-lasting consequences, as demonstrated by the continued lack of traditional Indigenous medicine integrated in present day medical community in North America.[78] Cultural Historian Myra Rutherdale's examination of the effects of settler body care practices being imposed on Inuit communities in 1880-1940 demonstrates how assumed universal superiority of settler body care practices (by settlers) was used to justify the eradication of cultural practices.[79] Historically, Brown concurred that there appeared to have been little understanding of common ground, as the dislike of the other's practices seen as dirty

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[77] Waldram, Herring, and Young, *Aboriginal Health in Canada,* 129.
[78] Waldram, Herring, and Young, *Aboriginal Health in Canada,* 152.
[79] Myra Rutherdale, "'She Was a Ragged Little Thing': Missionaries, Embodiment, and Refashioning Aboriginal Womanhood in Northern Canada," in *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada's Colonial Past* eds. Myra Rutherdale and Katie Pickles (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005), 229.

and unhygienic appeared to be mutual.[80] While there are distinct ideological similarities between Indigenous and settler health practices, it appears that these differences were impactful in the development of relationships between communities.

This gulf in cultural expectation around the shirt and shift would affect the new power dynamics developing between settler and Indigenous encounters, as both cultures took a negative stance on the other's practices. The literature presented here largely focuses on the settler point-of-view that deeply affected settler colonial narratives. Underexplored is the Indigenous condemnation of European standards of cleanliness as having agency in affecting these relationships. Perhaps due to the damage settler body care practices have had under settler colonialism, the level of understanding of common ground between cultural practices is also missing. While my research attempts to bring Indigenous agency to the foreground, these last two facets are outside the bounds of this project. Nonetheless, practices related to hygiene were extremely important and could quickly become attached to a hierarchy of good and bad, thus conferring power to these customs. This means that the shift and shirt played a role in hygiene-related power dynamic negotiations between Indigenous and settler communities in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Types of Power: Moral Superiority

Wearing linen undergarments was crucial to European cleansing practices and was thus a basic standard of propriety and social standards of behaviour, which in turn played into social hierarchies. The linen shift and shirt's place with ideas of morality gave it a social power associated with shame and the idea of being "good."

[80] Brown, *Foul Bodies,* 75.

Clean linen, given its tie with body hygiene, was a base expectation for people of "good character" from any social class in England. North describes how diseases could be dangerous but were also "associated with poverty and sufferers were suspected of immorality."[81] Using a criminal accusation based on a suspiciously dirty shirt and a personal account of washing an old shirt in a secluded pond to avoid it being seen, Styles demonstrates that unclean or old linen would bring shame and indicate low moral character.[82] He indicates that white linen was indicative of good hygiene and "turned cleanliness into a public sartorial spectacle, possessed of far more semiotic power than if cleaning the body had simply been a matter of cleaning the skin."[83] Styles' research leads the reader to understand that failure to properly demonstrate clean linen shifts and shirts was communicative of moral failure and could result in negative consequences for the wearer.

Body linens were not limited to shifts and shirts but also included items such as caps and detachable linen cuffs. Some of these items, such as women's caps, were prerequisites to decency, whereas others such as the cravat can be described as accessories as they are understood today.[84] Alternative linen garments that signaled cleanliness are important to address as they circumvented hygienic goals. North suggests there were surrogates to shirts and shifts as indicated by the presence of removable sleeves and the larger quantities of small but more visible linen articles, such as cuffs and caps in inventories of English household linens.[85] By changing cuffs and caps, the appearance of clean linen could be achieved without changing of the shift or shirt. This points to the supremacy of appearance over health concerns. In this way,

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[81] North, *Sweet and Clean?,* 93.
[82] Styles, *The Dress of the People,* 78, 80.
[83] Styles, *The Dress of the People,* 79. Bleaching was an important part of the manufacturing and laundering process. Prior to the invention of chemical bleaching, a variety of processes were used to varying effectiveness. Exact processes used to keep linen white are debated between authors. See Styles p. 80 and North p. 247. What is agreed upon is that whiteness was an expensive quality both to acquire and to maintain.
[84] North, *Sweet and Clean?,* 156.
[85] North, *Sweet and Clean?,* 138.

the public performance of good hygiene was addressed while also diminishing the financial and labor burden of body linen.[86] While shifts and shirts did have a practical purpose in maintaining body cleanliness, the role they played in signaling cleanliness publicly led them to also be a symbol of moral quality. Since deviance from the proper performance of linen undergarments could affect a person's social standing, the moral dimension of shifts and shirts affected social power dynamics in a way that would travel across the Atlantic with colonists.

As a second skin, European linen undergarments went beyond simple items of clothing and could enter into the realm of corporeality and spirituality. Dress historian and curator Anne Bissonnette and co-author Sarah Nash advance that, to an 18th-century audience, a woman in a shift could be deemed to be naked "because her chemise would have been 'skin by proxy.'"[87] Brown also reiterates how the linen shirt and shift were deeply entwined with the intimacy of the body and so had an important role in both physical and spiritual purity.[88] Shirts and shifts covered parts of the body that were considered inappropriate to be exposed and white linen fabric was an important symbol in Christian ceremonies that focused on the body.[89] Brown describes how linen was often the most desired fabric to wrap bodies for burial and women being spiritually cleansed after childbirth (churching) traditionally wore white linen veils. If most people today see a person clad in a white linen dress or shirt, they may miss the entanglement of body, spirit, and clothing that took place in 17th- and 18th-century Europe.

If people cared for their bodies using linen, the care for the linen had its own dimensions and impact on the furthering of imperial ideals. Laundering and its connected activities, such as blueing and starching, were demanding tasks. The wearing of clean white shirts with starched

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[86] North, *Sweet and Clean?,* 251.
[87] Anne Bissonnette and Sarah Nash, "The re-birth of Venus: Neoclassical fashion and the *Aphrodite Kallipygos*," *Dress* 41, no. 1 (2015): 7.
[88] Brown, *Foul Bodies*, 30.
[89] Brown, *Foul Bodies,* 29.

ruffles, which could be elaborately pleated, publicly demonstrated gentility and yet Brown reports that the laundress' reputation was often unsavourily associated with sexual impurity.[90] The contact linen undergarments had with the body contaminated these objects and this contamination could extend to the person who washed them.[91] Despite such animosity, historian Beverly Lemire describes how "[l]aundry maids sustained material *and* imperial ideals."[92] Lemire chronicles the importance of white linen and how it affected all ranks of imperial society. "The juxtaposition of white garments, cleanliness and the 'whiteness of bodies and souls' invariably recalls the people of colour both within and without the kingdom and empire."[93] In the context of colonial efforts, the laundry maid continued to be put down but her work helped visually define economic classes and the "imperial whiteness" she enabled had power and purpose.[94] Within the realm of settler colonialism, the white linen shirt and shift became a multifaceted symbol of civility, supposed European superiority, and imperial might.

The arrival of French and British people in Eastern Woodlands North America was intended as a form of settler colonialism. Settlements established by these European nations aimed to assimilate Indigenous peoples into the conqueror's own culture or aimed to replace First Nation peoples of this territory with Europeans by force. Whether through assimilation or replacement, European (supposed) superiority justified certain narratives and actions. Through policies and practices, new governing forces aimed to uplift Indigenous populations to "civility."[95] This was accompanied with the idea that Europeans used land more effectively.[96]

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[90] Brown, *Foul Bodies,* 31.
[91] Brown, *Foul Bodies,* 32.
[92] Beverly Lemire, "Textiles, Fashion, and Race," in *The Routledge International Handbook of New Critical Race and Whiteness Studies*, eds. Rikke Andreassen, Catrin Lundström, Suvi Keskinen, Shirley Anne Tate (London: Routledge, 2023), 124.
[93] Lemire, "Textiles, Fashion, and Race," 122.
[94] Lemire, "Textile, Fashion, and Race," 124.
[95] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism,* 19.
[96] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism,* 19.

Veracini describes how contradictory impressions of indigenous peoples can take hold under settler colonialism. He notes how under "the representational regimes of settler colonial imaginative traditions, indigenous people are also ambiguously located: they can be represented as 'virtuous' and dignified, or 'debased' and savage."[97] Settlers present indigenous cultures as naturally assimilating, disappearing, or deserving elimination in narratives that may conflict but always serve settler colonialists' goals.[98] When these settler narratives are constructed, cultural markers such as clothing can serve as impactful symbols. The linen shift and shirt with their association with morality could play into a dichotomy of "good" and "bad" within settler values that could be extrapolated into settlement justification narratives in the Eastern Woodlands North America.

Settler expectations of moral correctness around the body were used to justify their ideas of their own superiority. Brown indicates that British colonists were "[p]redisposed to believe that clothing was a prerequisite of civility and nudity a sign of both innocence and savagery."[99] This assumption influenced impressions of Indigenous nations they encountered in North America. European records from the 17th and 18th centuries often condemn Indigenous people for their lack of body linen as immoral and "beastly" but conversely authors also write about the care they took with bathing and anointing their skin with fat.[100] Brown also chronicles how the lack of a shift covering the female body—as expected in European morality standards—led to the moral condemnation but also the sexualized portrayal of Indigenous women. White describes how the religious conversion of Illinois women to Christianity emphasized certain dress behaviours.[101] She describes how religious images used by missionaries presented European

[97] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism,* 24.
[98] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism,* 25.
[99] Brown, *Foul Bodies,* 44.
[100] Brown, *Foul Bodies,* 56.
[101] White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians,* 83.

dress practices to Indigenous women and even those who maintained Illinois customs of dressing regularly would cover more of their bodies in church spaces to reflect French expectations of modesty.[102] Rutherdale describes how, centuries later, missionaries among Indigenous communities often still focused on "the visibility of the body over the invisibility of the spirit" when demonstrating their successful conversions to other settlers.[103] The alternating portrayals of innocently beautiful and savagely unclean reflects the settler colonial narratives discussed by Veracini. The settler narratives around Indigenous cleanliness could be conflicting, but highlight how moral expectations around the presentation of the body including the shift and shirt could be used to enforce a cultural hierarchy in settler-Indigenous relationships.

The authors explored in this section make clear that, during the early modern period in Europe, linen undergarments served a practical purpose but that, in the stratified societies of England and France, the shift and shirt were also intensely loaded with social meaning while being part of expected everyday behaviours. In this context, the authors indicate that deviance from the expectation (i.e. not wearing a shirt or shift) could generate emotional reactions as it was believed that a person's moral character could be read through their linen. As a result, what did it mean if an individual did not wear body linens at all?[104] While wearing dingy or no linen undergarments was a widely understood symbol of low morality in Europe, when colonists moved across the Atlantic, they encountered people who did not wear body linens and were not immersed in centuries of cultural understanding regarding the significance of linen undergarments. The moral dimensions of the linen shirt and shift gave the garments power within settler communities that could and would be weaponized against Indigenous communities. This moral power of the garments, whether mutually understood or not, in turn

[102] White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians,* 53.
[103] Rutherdale, "'She Was a Ragged Little Thing'," 243.
[104] Styles, *The Dress of the People*, 78.

affected the dynamics that formed between Indigenous and settler communities in the Eastern Woodlands in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Types of Power: Economic Power

The economic requirements to acquire and maintain linen shirts and shifts also played into the power of the garments held. The shirt and shift acted in European and settler communities as a visual symbol of wealth. In the Eastern Woodlands, the garments were traded and became part of Indigenous-settler trade relationships.

Within French and British dress customs, the linen shirt and shift could be social indicators of wealth. The quality and colour of the linen could be indicators of class. Whiteness—or lack thereof—could reflect the state of cleanliness of the cloth and its age, as sweat could make linen yellower over time.[105] In Britain for most of the period under study, Styles describes how whiteness could reflect the wealth of the owner as the maintenance of white fabrics through frequent and intense laundering represented real costs.[106] Wealthier people could afford a greater number of undergarments and, in so doing, could change more frequently to always be wearing clean undergarments.[107] Shirts and shifts carried with them inherent costs that made them a symbol of wealth but tied optimal performance of cleanliness and morality to economic status.

Roche describes a similar phenomenon in France. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the amount of linen garments owned by people began to increase across all socioeconomic classes.[108] The author proposes that this was caused by lower classes absorbing upper-class

[105] Styles, *The Dress of the People,* 79.
[106] Styles, *The Dress of the People,* 80.
[107] North, *Sweet and Clean?,* 174.
[108] Roche, *The culture of clothing,* 162.

ideals of cleanliness equating good manners.[109] He hypothesizes as well that an increase in the access to water in France allowed garments to be washed with greater ease and frequency, permitting a higher rate of linen undergarments changes. Roche advances that by the 17th and 18th centuries, many more people in France owned and had the ability to wash linen undergarments and, as a consequence, upper-class dress and cleansing rituals became expected forms of behaviour for all classes.[110] Styles similarly describes British people of all income levels owning shifts or shirts, as they were a culturally important aspect of appearing decent.[111] Through this, we can understand how the possession and use of linen shirts and shifts became a signal of wealth but also part of expected, ubiquitous dress practices tied to cleanliness that would travel with settlers across the Atlantic.

The economic power of the shift and shirt in North American colonies was as both a desired good being imported as well as an item to trade with Indigenous communities. The cost of importing linen shifts and shirts represented both local market demands and conditions as well as global trends.[112] Brown describes how the sale of European textiles in North American colonial contexts intersects economic benefit and colonial goals of assimilation.[113] She posits that the linen shirt contributed to settlers' assimilation efforts as they paid for linen to "whiten, clean, and refine" not only their own bodies, but also those of Indigenous peoples they encountered.[114] Attempting to put First Nations people into Eurocentric clothing habits through the use of linen shirts and shifts was entangled with ideas of wealth equating status as well as representing the cost of colonialism.

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[109] Roche, *The culture of clothing,* 162.
[110] Roche, *The culture of clothing,* 163.
[111] John Styles, *The Dress of the People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 79.
[112] DuPlessis, *The Material Atlantic,* 59, 68.
[113] Brown, *Foul Bodies,* 106.
[114] Brown, *Foul Bodies,* 57.

Appealing to Indigenous consumers was an important aspect of trade for settler communities. DuPlessis explains how contemporary European writers observe a distinction between European and Indigenous taste in clothing including size, colour, and accessories as well as differences in how clothing is worn and gendered.[115] The author analyzes a list of goods available at Fort Pitt (present-day Pennsylvania) in 1761 that was divided into goods intended for Indigenous buyers and those for buyers of European descent.[116] The list suggests that Indigenous people were offered a greater quality of wool, brighter calicoes (colourful printed cotton fabrics), more ribbons, and no garments that were pre-made. Brown describes how Indigenous consumers preferred calico shirts and how providing poor quality garments could strain relationships.[117] These instances explored by the authors demonstrate that while fabric was frequently imported from Europe, the economic power entwined with the shirt did not necessarily belong only to settlers.

Engagement with the settler textile market contributed to North American colonies' relationships with Indigenous consumers but did not equate to Indigenous assimilation. White explains how European fabric arrival predates the arrival of Europeans themselves in the Illinois region as objects made their way through Indigenous trade routes before Europeans established colonies farther into the continent.[118] Since some objects moved across cultures to be integrated into existing customs and replace other objects, European trade goods did not necessarily equate assimilation to European ways of life.[119] Using primary sources such as official and religious documents as well as archival records, White explains how wool blankets were worn across the

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[115] DuPlessis, *The Material Atlantic,* 117.
[116] DuPlessis, *The Material Atlantic,* 117-118.
[117] Brown, *Foul Bodies,* 107.
[118] Sophie White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians: Material Culture and Race in Colonial Louisiana* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013): 59.
[119] White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians,* 74.

shoulders instead of buffalo robes by Indigenous community members, whereas French colonists in turn used buffalo robes as blankets on their beds instead of as clothing.[120] DuPlessis notes that from 1718 to 1762, the number and variety of colours and styles of shirts available in South Carolina, a region within the Eastern Woodlands, increased significantly suggesting growing consumption of European fabrics and clothing within local Cherokee communities.[121] However, despite growing consumption, the shirts were frequently worn differently by Indigenous men than settler men. He informs us that, while shirts were often worn by Indigenous traders when trading with Europeans, they were placed over traditional garments rather than worn next to the skin.[122] Increases in trade and uses of goods like textiles did not equate assimilation as Europeans hoped, as balanced economic power would indicate mutually beneficial trade between equals, rather than domination through settler colonialism.

Shirts and shifts raise a question about their place as trade items within Indigenous consumption. The primary qualities of shirts and shifts, such as being made of linen, frequently white, undecorated, covered by other clothing, were often described as unattractive qualities to Indigenous consumers. This research raises questions about the accuracy behind depictions of Indigenous people wearing white linen shirts and shifts, which perhaps do not reflect Indigenous taste, but rather symbolic use of the garments. DuPlessis states that Indigenous incorporation of European-type garments and fabrics were "fashions rather than misunderstood attempts to copy random aspects of European modes."[123] However, in this research, I explored this further as there may be other potential explanations. The voluntary consumption of garments that appears to counter Indigenous taste may extend beyond random fashion and may have to do with the

[120] White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians,* 74.
[121] DuPlessis, *The Material Atlantic,* 98.
[122] DuPlessis, *The Material Atlantic,* 115.
[123] DuPlessis, *The Material Atlantic,* 124.

intentional development of economic relationships and political savvy. The linen shirt and shift contributed to settler-Indigenous relationships in the 17th and 18th centuries through their trade indicating an economic facet to their consumption that affected power dynamics in both directions.

Types of Power: Political Power

Political power played an important role in power dynamics between Indigenous and settler communities. What conveyed status and how political power was wielded differed between Indigenous and settler cultures. Nonetheless, they both employed tactics to negotiate beneficial relationships between their communities. Political power could be deeply affected by symbols including the linen shirt and shift.

As can be seen from this chapter, within European cultures, status was deeply linked with both morality and wealth, which, in turn, played into the performative qualities of the shirt and shift. North describes how wealth and status could be displayed "by acquiring a greater number of garments of the same type, by purchasing clothing made of more expensive materials, by acquiring garments in more fashionable styles, or by buying a wider variety of accessories."[124] The quality of a person's linen undergarments could in effect be read as a sign of their social position, making the shift and shirt powerful political tools.

In many Indigenous and European cultures, the giving of gifts was an important piece of diplomacy and building relationships between communities. The Wendat of present day Quebec used material culture to form political alliances with settlers for centuries. In the 17th century, "the Wendat traditions of diplomacy and the presentation of valuable gifts to mark events, such as the quilled belt [given to Samuel Champlain], were a means to form ties with military allies

[124] North, *Sweet and Clean?,* 150.

and trade partners."[125] DuPlessis describes how settlers did the same. Clothing was traded with Indigenous communities but also given to forge friendships and to identify them as allies.[126] The author lists the items most commonly gifted to Indigenous leaders as lengths of fabric such as wool, breechclouts, match coats (i.e. a blanket worn draped), but also ready-made shirts and shifts. Both Indigenous and settler communities used clothing items as gifts of value to forge alliances between their communities.

Though both Indigenous and European cultures had established customs of gift giving, there were differences in how the practices were understood. Historian George Colpitts describes how, in the first years of contract, Indigenous and European understandings of trading material goods were an area of misunderstanding that could lead to violence.[127] Indigenous customs of gift giving often focused on building relationships that transferred future obligations such as a military alliance to the recipient whereas European settlers tended to see gifts as freely accepted and the trade of items as a purely economic proposition.[128] Eventually, European traders became integrated into Indigenous trade networks as they adapted their supply of goods and became integrated into the kin-relationships that underpinned trade.[129] Material goods played a key role in negotiating Indigenous-settler relationships as settlers became more integrated into Indigenous communities.

White's research into the French Illinois colony (1673-1769) examines how French and Indigenous Illinois material culture moved through cultural boundaries and could signify changes in identity. The Illinois Nation had a tradition of women acting as creators of alliances

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[125] Annette De Stecher, "Souvenir art, collectable craft, cultural heritage: the Wendat (Huron) of Wendake, Quebec" in *Craft, community and the material culture of place and politics, 19th-20th century,* eds. Janice Helland, Beverly Lemire, and Alena Buis (New York: Routledge, 2014), 43.
[126] DuPlessis, *The Material Atlantic*, 92.
[127] George Colpitts, *North America's Indian Trade in European Commerce and Imagination, 1580-1850* (Brill, 2014): 23.
[128] Colpitts, *North America's Indian Trade*, 45.
[129] Colpitts, *North America's Indian Trade*, 51.

through marriage and, in the process, understanding and adopting practices from their new nation's culture.[130] She describes how Indigenous women who married European men were key to community relationship building and often adopted the material trappings of her husband's culture. This process was understandable to both cultures, which each had their own traditions that placed value on clothing as a means of establishing new identities.[131] She notes that in Illinois culture there was a system of adopting captives from other nations into their community.[132] Those who were adopted were expected to wear the dress of their new nation. For the Illinois, new identities were extremely significant to political relationships and dress was an important vehicle for announcing these political moves understood by both communities.

White describes how settlers saw the adoption of material culture as part of assimilation. In 1627, the charter granted to the Company of New France formalized the goal of making Indigenous peoples French through religious conversion, cultural assimilation, and marriage of Indigenous women to Frenchmen.[133] White indicates that the use of European style garments could also be seen as proof of successful "Frenchification."[134] Through this, we can see how material culture, in this case dress, was understood and used by both French and Illinois nations to signal lasting changes (e.g. for captives and wives) or locational expectations (e.g. dress in and out of a church) and communicate specific messages related to cultural beliefs, such as modesty.

Later in the 18th century, White indicates that France passed more laws to impede the inheritance of Indigenous wives if they returned to the communities of their birth, either to discourage this "de-Frenchifying" with the threat of poverty or in an attempt to keep material

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[130] White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians,* 91.
[131] White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians,* 108.
[132] White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians,* 103.
[133] White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians,* 38, 117.
[134] White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians,* 38.

wealth from exiting the French colony.[135] While the material culture of French society included textiles such as linens, which were freely traded and shared, this policy, coupled with the discouragement of French women marrying Indigenous men, makes clear the intention of the French colony not to share their cultural traditions but to assimilate their Indigenous neighbours. By the late 18th century, White's research allows us to see that though the movement of material culture across cultures was mutual, French law aimed to assimilate more than ally with First Nations people by establishing a one-sided power dynamic.

The linen shirt was one of the items frequently gifted to Indigenous peoples as part of political negotiations of community relationships. DuPlessis hypothesizes that the shirt was widely adopted as there were many depictions of Indigenous leaders wearing shirts despite the use differing greatly between Indigenous and settler wearers.[136] DuPlessis argues that Indigenous use of European fabrics and clothing styles in combination with Indigenous items was a choice based on style.[137] Brown, however, posits that Indigenous communities around New England would wear European-style clothing as a matter of diplomacy when meeting or trading with individuals of European descent but that Indigenous people did not appear to be inclined to adopt the items permanently.[138] She asserts that Indigenous peoples tended to dislike wearing European-style clothing for "reasons of comfort, time, dependence, and labor."[139] This research expanded on this idea by examining how Indigenous and settler communities, though in different ways, carefully employed the shirt and shift symbolically to cultivate a political relationship between them during the 17th and 18th centuries.

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[135] White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians,* 132.
[136] DuPlessis, *The Material Atlantic,* 108.
[137] DuPlessis, *The Material Atlantic,* 101-3.
[138] Brown, *Foul Bodies*, 74-75.
[139] Brown, *Foul Bodies,* 74. Brown uses settler William Wood's 1634 work, *New England Prospect: A true, lively, and experimentall [sic.] description of that part of* America*, commonly called New England; discovering the state of that Countrie [sic.], both as it stands to our new-come* English *planters; and to the old Native inhabitants.*

Conclusion

As the materials assessed in this chapter demonstrate, the white linen shift and shirt carried important hygienic, moral, economic, and status related expectations in European societies and with settlers of European descent, that in turn affected their relationships with Indigenous communities. When European colonies were established in Eastern Woodlands North America, settlers brought with them their dress practices, as well as their expectation of a European-style performance of cleanliness through linen undergarments. The works of the authors covered in this literature review demonstrate that dress, as a material good, played an important role in the encounters between European and Indigenous people in North America.

The shirt and shift physically traveled between Indigenous and settler communities. The wearing of the shift was required in the 17th-century Ursuline convent school in Québec, unlike other Indigenous cultural traditions that were tolerated.[140] Indigenous communities had very different ideas on how the body should be cared for and had no cultural equivalent to the shift and shirt yet, as DuPlessis notes, the shirt was gifted as often as the wool blanket to Indigenous leaders.[141] Despite being an important aspect of material culture in settler-Indigenous relationship development, the shirt has not received the same attention as wool blankets. As White indicated, the dress of a person was an important signal of identity as well as personal taste for both Indigenous and settler cultures.[142] However, cultural understanding of how dress should operate and what specific sartorial symbols meant differed greatly across the communities. The shirt and shift were adopted by Indigenous people in trading environments and religious spaces suggesting that the garments appealed to them in certain ways and that they

[140] Cowan, "Education, Francisation, and Shifting Colonial Priorities," 8.
[141] DuPlessis, *The Material Atlantic,* 115.
[142] White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians,* 108.

understood the importance of garments in specific contexts. However, the shirt and shift not being worn next to the skin suggests the perceived hygienic necessity of linen was not adopted across Indigenous cultures of the Eastern Woodlands while settlers of European descent saw it as an important part of their attire where hygiene and morality were combined. As the physical objects of shifts and shirts crossed cultural boundaries between Indigenous and European nations, the transfer of the cultural significance of the garments was often incomplete.

While many textiles and materials were traded between settler and Indigenous communities throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, the shirt and shift stand apart. The loaded cultural significance embedded in the use of linen undergarments meant they carried power differently from other garments. The existing literature gives less consideration to the actions and opinions of Indigenous communities, often portraying them as passive receptors to the social and cultural dynamics that surrounded the shirt and shift. Though settler cultures were pushed on Indigenous communities through settler colonialism, that does not mean that their interactions with this material culture were not at times intentional and impactful. My research looked at how both Indigenous and settler communities employed and were affected by the linen shirt and shift in the negotiation of power dynamics between their communities in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Chapter 3: Methodology

A material culture methodology was used for this research project. To answer my research question, "Through a material culture analysis of an 18th century shirt and shift, what can we extrapolate about how these objects affected the power dynamics in relationships between settler and Indigenous communities in Eastern Woodlands North America during the early colonial period?," I first needed to grasp the specificity of a linen shift and shirt from this period. These objects are at the centre of the research and were used as primary sources. Additional sources and research methods were used in the last phase of the study to contextualize these garments. The primary sources consist of objects, images, and texts. Each contributed a different type of knowledge with different strengths and limitations. Together they were used to help create a more Human Ecological (i.e. more interdisciplinary and holistic) study of specific types of objects, the white linen shift and shirt, in their environment, 17th and 18th century Eastern Woodlands North America, to understand how these objects affected the relationships between European settler and Indigenous communities.

Artifact Selection: Strengths and Limitations

To understand the specificity of the objects at the core of my research, I turned to the University of Alberta's Anne Lambert Clothing and Textile Collection (ALCTC) for artifacts that I observed in-depth. This collection holds numerous types of linen undergarments but most, including those used, have limited or no provenance (i.e. the record of ownership and history attached to the object). I thus relied on assessed dates of origin for the pieces I selected. As the shape of shifts and shirts evolved rather slowly during most of the 17th and 18th century, the assessment of these objects may be broad. Nonetheless, these primary sources are used to

examine the appearance, construction, and wear of the garments, particularly the differences between the more visible parts of the garments, such as the collar and cuffs in the case of the man's shirt, as the other parts of this garment were typically covered by clothing when worn in a Eurocentric way.

The first object selected was a man's shirt of fine white linen (Fig. 3.1). It has a high collar, is closed at the neck with two button, and has what is likely white cotton muslin ruffles over the chest that are typical of 18th-century shirts—a date assigned to the object by the costume and textile dealer Titi Halle Cora Ginsburg LLC from whom the ALCTC bought the piece in 2023.[143] Inscribed in ink on the lower right of the piece are the words "Richard Goodman / No. 15." In addition to this sign of ownership, the dealer's description also states who sold the object and indicates that the piece is likely American. While this 18th-century white linen shirt entered the collection with some provenance, the goal of this research was not to pursue the genealogical origins of the piece. Instead, the first of two pieces chosen were used as a generic type of 18th-century white linen shirt to familiarize myself with the look, feel, cut, and construction of a man's shirt of this period.

[143] Titi Halle Cora Ginsburg LLC, June 20, 2023.

Figure 3.1 *Linen Shirt on a Form,* ca. 18th century, linen with cotton ruffle, Anne Lambert Clothing and Textiles Collection (2024.1.1). Photograph from Titi Halle Cora Ginsburg LLC.

The second object selected was a woman's shift of fine white linen (Fig. 3.2). It has a wide oval neckline edged with a small ruffle and elbow-length sleeves. The sleeves are finished with a ruffle and an embroidered band. It was assigned the date of 1790-1799 by Titi Halle Cora Ginsburg LLC making it one of the earliest shifts in the ALCTC.[144] The shift has very limited provenance information. Like the shirt, this garment was used as a generic example to broadly examine the construction and physical qualities of a woman's undergarment through the use of a material culture methodology.

[144] *Chemise*, linen, Anne Lambert Clothing and Textile Collection, University of Alberta, accessed November 7, 2023, https://search.museums.ualberta.ca/13-211006.

Figure 3.2 *Linen Shift on a Form*, ca. 1790-1799, linen. Anne Lambert Clothing and Textile Collection (2014.1.7). Photograph by Chiara Power.

Material Culture Methodology: Origin and Evolution

A material culture methodology was employed in a manner first developed in 1982 in the interdisciplinary field of art history by American Art Historian Jules Prown and adapted by different authors since.[145] He created a methodology for working with a variety of objects as primary sources that delved deeper into the material aspects of objects in comparison with traditional art historical methodologies.[146] As described by the author, material objects have long been studied to understand people because they are both "the embodiment of mental structures,

[145] Jules David Prown, "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method," *Winterthur Portfolio* 17, no.1 (April 1982): passim.
[146] Prown, "Mind in Matter," 1-2.

or patterns of belief" and "a manifestation of behaviour, of human act."[147] Prown aimed to create a methodology that thoroughly and objectively explored things as evidence of these cultural structures and behaviours. He believed that research with objects was less prone to cultural bias as the researcher could engage the senses before the mind.[148] However, I believe that this approach can still discount the cultural influence of sensory engagement. Sensory descriptors, such as soft, heavy, or small epithets, are subjective to personal experience. Prown's methodology calls for thorough observation and use of reason before forming hypotheses about an object, but there is a limit to the objectivity a researcher can achieve.

The Prownian methodology for studying material culture involves three stages: description, deduction, and speculation.[149] Description is the careful observation of the object, including its size, details, decorations, and materials with whatever equipment is appropriate to create a detailed catalogue of the physical and visual aspects of the object. In the deduction stage, the observer engages with the object intellectually, sensorily, and emotionally by beginning to ask questions of the object.[150] Speculation begins next and calls on the researcher to start to develop theories around the object and incorporate outside research to contextualize their observations and deductions. In the speculation stage, methods from other disciplines "can be brought into play according to the nature of the questions raised and the skills and inclinations of the scholar."[151] Very different types of objects can be studied through Prown's methodology and his approach may require different tools, questions, and exterior sources. Prown's methodology sets specific stages of inquiry when observing an object but does not delve deeply into specific methods for each step.

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[147] Prown, "Mind in Matter," 6.
[148] Prown, "Mind in Matter," 6.
[149] Prown, "Mind in Matter," 7-8.
[150] Prown, "Mind in Matter," 9.
[151] Prown, "Mind in Matter," 10.

Art and dress historian Ingrid Mida and dress historian and museum curator Alexandra Kim adapted Prown's methodology to cater to the specificity of dress objects. Their work describes the steps taken in the analysis in greater depth. Their 2015 book, *The Dress Detective*, is less theoretical than Prown's original paper and instead lays out concrete steps/methods and specific clothing-related questions to ask. The three stages of research are again present but Mida and Kim's have slightly modified them to phases and describe them as observation, reflection, and interpretation.[152] In the observation phase, the authors' "slow approach to seeing" is recommended. Using this approach, a researcher is advised to be prepared, careful, and observant of details using different methods in order to be thorough.[153]

As part of their methodology, Mida and Kim advocate for several methods of inquiry. Written observations on material and aesthetic components aim to document such issues as fiber uses, weave structures, colours, textile patterns, trims, closures, labels, as well as the object's measurements, alterations, and its physical condition. To further dwell into a garment's structure, the authors suggest sketching the object as an effective method that can allow a researcher to generate more detailed observations and to gather sufficient data for deeper considerations later.[154] Photography and handling of artifacts are also addressed but the limitations of these methods are described.[155] Overall, the book provides a description of their methods and two checklists but also recommends that a researcher keep in mind their research goals to determine the direction of their questions.

While the first and last stages of Prown and Mida and Kim are rather similar conceptually, their second phase is different. In Mida and Kim's reflection phase, the researcher must both

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[152] Ingrid Mida and Alexandra Kim, *The Dress Detective: A Practical Guide to Object Based Research in Fashion* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 27.
[153] Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective,* 35.
[154] Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective,* 36.
[155] Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective,* 37.

reflect on and move away from observations of the object. The authors posit that Prown's corresponding stage where deductions are made through imaginative engagement with the object is difficult to understand.[156] Their reflection phase requires that the researcher think about how their observations were generated as well as engage with materials that contextualize the object, culturally and historically.[157] The investigator must examine their own responses to the garment to check for biases in order to "acknowledge those assumptions and work to overcome those distortions."[158] This is a phase that I find important in my own research as I aim to be more transparent about my own perspective, which is anchored in a settler colonial standpoint. The authors advocate for an earlier grasp of the broader historical, social, and cultural context of the artifacts, which should be brought forward in the second phase through consultation of other sources in comparison to Prown's later use of these resources in phase three. Through Mida and Kim's methodology, the point of view of the researcher and the varying contexts of the garment should be presented and known to the researcher and their reader by phase two.

Lastly, in Mida and Kim's interpretation phase, the researcher uses the information they gathered to create a narrative or argument that interacts with fashion theories.[159] Using the information gathered in the previous two phases, the researcher builds an interpretation of the garment and addresses the limitation of their interpretation. The authors' book is much more prescriptive in their methods, especially for using dress artifacts in research and the contextualization of artifacts through secondary sources and comparison to other artifacts. For the current research project, the work of Mida and Kim was adapted to suit the research question asked and the objects used. Their three phases were primarily used but with an inclusion of

[156] Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective,* 63.
[157] Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective,* 63.
[158] Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective,* 63.
[159] Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective,* 76.

Prown's deduction through reason prior to contextualization being included in the reflection phase.

When applying object analysis within a historical research perspective, a focus on context is paramount. Beverly Lemire, Laura Peers, and Anne Whitelaw's 2021 book *Object Lives and Global Histories in Northern North America* demonstrates the application of object analysis in historical research.[160] They too discuss a slow seeing approach and sketching as a method for learning about objects. They also emphasize the textural interaction with objects as an important facet in the observation phase. The object's life beyond the moment of creation is also important as, throughout the years, this object likely circulated in different spaces and may have had various uses.[161] This can be the case for white linen shirts and shifts, which could have different lives as they moved between Indigenous and non-Indigenous spaces beyond what was intended when the garments were first created and used. Addressing these changing contexts was important in understanding how the shirt and shift operated in distinct ways in different cultures and environments.

Lemire, Peers, and Whitelaw discuss one specific modern-day environment, museums, and address museum practices and their impact on research. They explain how museum records may provide some information about an object's life but also can be deficient, especially when dealing with objects of marginalized peoples.[162] In my research, catalogue records that have identified owners and/or makers of objects have not recorded if these individuals were Indigenous. Additionally, an object's meaning(s), if from an Indigenous environment, may be misconstrued by cataloguers in general. As Lemire, Peers, and Whitelaw address in their book, it

[160] Beverly Lemire, Laura Peers, and Anne Whitelaw, *Object Lives and Global Histories in Northern North America: Material Culture in Motion c. 1780-1980 (*Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021): 34.
[161] Lemire, Peers, and Whitelaw, *Object Lives and Global Histories,* 41.
[162] Lemire, Peers, and Whitelaw, *Object Lives and Global Histories,* 43.

was important for me to critically question museum records and to look at different sources that can present an alternate narrative.[163]

The authors' book also challenges Prown's assertion that material culture study is less prone to cultural bias as it engages the senses more than the mind. Still using Prown as a reference, Mida and Kim also recommend the researcher reflect on their emotional reactions to identify and correct biases. However, Lemire, Peers, and Whitelaw assert that even observations of objects are not inherently objective and interpretations are dependent on the cultural context of both the observer and the creator.[164] A singular person will always have one perspective as the experience, background, and knowledge of the observer influences their observations. Lemire, Peers, and Whitelaw recommend the use of a team to further discuss ideas, challenge assumptions, and balance perspectives.[165] For this project, I had a team of individuals that included my supervisor and other committee members to challenge my observations and I also kept in mind my own background and the artifacts' context(s) during the research process and when presenting my conclusions.

Prown's methodology and the modification of Prown's work by Mida and Kim informed the four phase methodology I used for analyzing the shift and shirt, beginning with the observation phase. The methods I used included the close examination of the shirt and shift using written observations on their material and aesthetic components, measuring, sketching, photography, and direct handling. This also included placing the garments on three-dimensional surrogate bodies to get an idea of the silhouettes. The observations collected from the garments were then used in the reflection phase.

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[163] Prown, "Mind in Matter," 4.
[164] Lemire, Peers, and Whitelaw, *Object Lives and Global Histories,* 40.
[165] Lemire, Peers, and Whitelaw, *Object Lives and Global Histories,* 44.

The reflection phase incorporated my own knowledge in textiles and sensory reactions to the garments to expand on my observations in a Prownian deduction. Notes on the construction and wear of the object were interpreted within my own knowledge of garment construction and experience working with and wearing reproduction historical textiles and garments. My academic and professional journey allowed me to extrapolate on reasons for construction choices and imagine sensory interactions with the garment when worn. Through the reflection phase, I slowly built on my observations to ask additional questions that the object sometimes provided answers to. The limitations of the objects to answer these research questions informed my use of further external sources in this research but also demonstrated the ability or inability of a mute object to convey associated ideas if decontextualized—a phenomenon that has a part in the research findings.

These deductions were then brought together with context provided by outside sources in the reflection phase. Provenance records were consulted with the understanding that they may be incomplete or inaccurate. I expanded on building my understanding of the objects' context to address wearing of shirts and shifts beyond the individual garments I selected. Secondary literature, historical images, and other artifacts were consulted to place the shift and shirt within a clothing system and greater cultural understanding. This research allowed me to identify how the garments functioned when not isolated in a museum context and what parts of the objects may have been hidden beneath other garments. This contextual research also examined the shift in the 17th century to compare it to the 18th century one that was observed. The contextual information gathered in the reflection phase allowed for the data gathered in the observations phase to be understood as being part of a larger clothing system. After the reflection phase, the interpretation phase was undertaken and drew from the research findings from other scholars.

The interpretation phase is where the object, its context, and the researcher's observations are placed within larger research narratives. The work of Lemire, Peers, and Whitelaw informed my process of creating a narrative about the objects within a cultural and historical landscape. I attempted to remain thorough in my explanations while remaining aware of how my personal temporal and cultural context influenced the conclusions I drew. The narrative that I drew through object research has a distinct point of view based on the information I used to contextualize it. Objects, like all sources, contain specific information that can influence the narrative. To gain a more balanced perspective, I needed to look at a greater variety of sources to seek different points of view. While the white linen shirt and shift remained the subject of my research, I approached my work through multiple sources and methods to diversify the information available to me and the narratives I created.

Historical Textual Analysis

Textual primary sources were examined to address the European conception and use of the shift and shirt in the Eastern Woodlands of North America. Textual documents are traditional historical research sources and, like all sources, they have both strengths and limitations. In traditional historical research, Indigenous narratives are more likely to be obscured and subject to misrepresentation. Indigenous historian Jean M. O'Brien describes how the kinds of primary sources traditionally considered reliable by historians have sidelined Indigenous historical narratives.[166] While textual sources can be used to research Indigenous histories, O'Brien asserts that it requires "imaginative approaches to identifying and using source material."[167] In this project, textual sources are used to understand how European settlers perceived white linen

[166] Jean M. O'Brien, "Historical sources and methods in Indigenous Studies," in *Sources and Methods in Indigenous Studies*, eds. Chris Anderson and Jean M. O'Brien (New York: Routledge, 2017), 17-18.
[167] O'Brien, "Historical sources and methods," 18.

undergarments and how they employed them in their lives but also to consider a potential Indigenous reaction to the objects as well.

Textual sources are limited in their ability to depict the experience and culture of Indigenous nations in the 17th century. The vast majority of surviving texts used by authors such as Brown, White, and DuPlessis had authors either stated or assumed to be of European descent. There are surviving textual sources that refer to people of Indigenous descent such as the voyageur contract researched by White.[168] However, this text is deeply integrated into settler customs surrounding written contracts in European-based legal systems and given that White states most voyageurs were illiterate, likely recorded by a person other than the voyageur. Therefore, even if texts have some Indigenous input, they are very likely to have been created and preserved within a settler system, which privileges certain narratives. While texts can be used to research Indigenous histories, it is important to understand that they were created within European systems that can obscure or misrepresent Indigenous cultures and people. For this project, I used a variety of primary and secondary sources in an attempt to address the gaps or misrepresentations present in the non-Indigenous textual sources used to consider an Indigenous perspective within a biased narrative.

Textual sources are not the ultimate types of sources and are thus used in conjunction with objects and images to place the shift and shirt within a larger cross-cultural context. Texts provide additional information but should not be taken at face value any more than an image should be assumed to be an accurate portrayal of the past because, as cultural historian Karen Harvey notes, "people in the past constructed power, identity and social practice out of objects and words."[169] As a result, texts have biases of their own. Most importantly, the literate people

[168] White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians,* 179.
[169] Karen Harvey, "Introduction" in *History and Material Culture: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, ed. Karen Harvey (New York: Routledge, 2017), 7.

who wrote may have had specific intentions as well as cultural biases. They were likely of a certain class able to afford an education. The language they used could also be problematic to current researchers who may not speak the language or understand how the language has evolved. Context is also key to understanding a singular textual source as part of larger cultural, social, and economic forces affecting the time when the written words were recorded. As Harvey notes, research through historical documents uses evidence from the sources but also interprets the evidence.[170] The act of interpreting involves judgement on the part of the researcher. As a result, what the documents aim to say can be interpreted in different ways. As with objects and images and despite a desire for objectivity, the perspective and context of the researcher can influence the narrative that is built from the evidence in the sources consulted. Textual sources are valuable evidence for researching shifts and shirts, but they were treated with equal critical analysis and contextualization as the other sources used.

For this project, the letters of Marie de l'Incarnation (1599-1672), a French nun and the founder of the Ursuline religious order in Canada, were used.[171] Her 17th-century letters help us to understand the importance of the shift within her convent school for Indigenous girls in the city of Québec – and, by extension, in settler colonial settings in New France. To make use of this primary source, I turned to early modern historian Mairi Cowan's paper "Education, *Francisation*, and Shifting Colonial Priorities at the Ursuline Convent in Seventeenth Century Québec." For this research, a compilation of the letters in their original French published in 1972 by historian Guy-Marie Oury was used.[172] My analysis of the primary sources (the letters) required me to translate them from 17th-century French which presented certain limitations. I

[170] Harvey, "Introduction," 8, 13.
[171] Joseph Gagné, "Marie de l'Incarnation," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (Historica Canada, 2006), https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/marie-de-lincarnation.
[172] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, ed. Guy-Marie Oury (Sarthe: Abbaye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes, 1971), 97.

have learnt the French language as a second language but this is not my mother tongue. Even if it was, the language has evolved since the 17th century and the writer used some regionalisms in her work. Connotations of known words may have changed over time and the use of archaic or ambiguous phrases means my translation may differ from others. It may also be affected by which letters survived and were compiled as well as by the annotations by the editor in 1972. Nonetheless, these sources shed light on life inside the convent as well as contain an observation of French colonial efforts in Québec in the 17th century.[173] This source allowed for an in-depth study of how the shift and shirt were used and discussed, especially compared to other cultural practices within the convent and within Indigenous-European community relationships. The research done with these documents addressed the colonial aspect of linen undergarments in a religious community overtly focused on the assimilation of those of Indigenous descent.

Addressing the Specificity of Artwork in the Research Process

Another important type of primary source I used were 17th and 18th-century images by artists of European descent depicting Indigenous people wearing white shifts and shirts. These sources are used to contextualize my chosen objects and constitute another research method. They were investigated as a source in their own right and critically examined in terms of their strengths and limitations. Contemporary images of shifts and shirts, while considered primary sources, are not necessarily about depicting "real" life. Their production may include a layer of interpretation as artists might not have the skills to represent the garments accurately and different agendas can lead to an unrealistic depiction of what is being worn. Images are created and curated with a purpose that goes beyond their representational value. The output might then depend on who the patron is. Why it was created changes the outcome. Who the intended viewer

[173] Cowan, "Education, Francisation, and Shifting Colonial Priorities," 8.

was also impacts the work. All of these situations affect how the objects in the image are represented as well as how they are perceived. While these factors may lead to an unrealistic representation of the white linen shift and shirt, images can nonetheless allow insights into the symbolic and cultural importance of the garments through an examination of how these objects are employed by artists.

Beyond their representational value, images like drawings, paintings, and etchings, are material culture artifacts in their own right. Lemire, Peers, and Whitelaw argue that artworks should be studied as objects.[174] Rather than assessing an image purely for its historical accuracy in representation, the influence of the context surrounding its creation can be used to understand the historical moment when the image was created. As a result, I tried to understand the images I used within the lives of their creators. While I did not go in-depth in my analysis of the artists' personal histories, my goal was to see artists as contributors to the narrative surrounding white linen shirts and shifts. Importantly, I also observed how artists have become instruments in the conversion and colonization of Indigenous peoples of North America. For this reason, a material culture methodology was employed to study works of art I selected. This required a similar approach to the one used to research surviving dress artifacts. Beyond the people, objects, and landscapes depicted in the artwork, the material aspects and context of the images were considered as important aspects of the research.

Mida's 2020 book, *Reading Fashion in Art*, lays out a methodology for analyzing art such as painting, drawing, and photographs to understand garments.[175] She describes the same three phases of study she and Kim presented earlier: observation, reflection, and interpretation. While similar to the Prownian-based material culture methodology already described in the *Dress*

[174] Lemire, Peers, and Whitelaw, *Object Lives and Global Histories,* 39.
[175] Ingrid Mida, *Reading Fashion in Art (*London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020), 55.

Detective, there are new perspectives that are added in the 2020 book that are of use to my research as it draws upon paintings and drawings of shirts and shifts.

Mida's methodology advocates for the three-phase study of fashion in art through an interdisciplinary lens and by considering artworks as objects.[176] In the observation phase, the focus is the slow, careful collection of information from the work without analysis yet. The information gathered includes who the artist is, the composition of the work, observing the dressed figures in the work, and identifying stylistic elements.[177] Her reflection phase is where the researcher uses the information from the work and builds on it with research from other scholars, additional works by the artist, and textual contemporary sources.[178] This process builds context for the work being studied as the researcher critically considers the qualities of the art, the details of the dress depicted, the researcher's personal reactions, the background of the artist, and the historical and cultural context of the image's creation to help understand why the artist depicted dress the way they did.[179] In the interpretation phase, the researcher builds a narrative using the evidence they gathered. This final phase is where the research of the artwork is used to create an argument. This methodology is similar to the material culture methodology used for garments but with added consideration for researching both the artwork and the thing it depicts as objects of study.

There are four images examined in greater depth for this project. The images are a series of oil paintings by Dutch portraitist John Verelst (1648-1734) representing four Indigenous men who visited London in 1710.[180] The images depict Indigenous men wearing garments that resemble a European-style white shirt. The research undertaken with these images was similar to

[176] Mida, *Reading Fashion in Art,* 17.
[177] Mida, *Reading Fashion in Art,* 74.
[178] Mida, *Reading Fashion in Art,* 90.
[179] Mida, *Reading Fashion in Art,* 91.
[180] Kevin R. Muller, "From Palace to Longhouse : Portraits of the Four Indian Kings in a Transatlantic Context," *American Art* 22, no. 3 (September 1, 2008): 27.

the study of objects but it had more of a focus on how the garments are worn, how they are depicted, and why they may have been depicted in a specific way. This helped contextualize the surviving garments studied but also addressed the idea of the shirt and its use as a symbol. This research analyzed how artists of European descent used shifts and shirts when painting Indigenous subjects and explored how these depictions reflected the cultural significance of the garments.

Conclusion

My methodological approach for this research project combined a number of sources and methods that are part of a material culture methodology. This project aimed to place the shift and shirt within the context of the Eastern Woodlands North America to understand the role the garments played. There are three sources presented in this chapter: objects, images, and texts. Each has strengths and limitations and required their own methods to help answer my research question. The observation of two physical garments (i.e. a shift and shirt) helped address their materiality, construction, and use. Close examination of images provided a more comprehensive understanding of the usage of these types of garments by Indigenous people as well as the portrayal and use of linen undergarments as a cultural symbol in four depictions of Indigenous peoples by one artist of European descent, John Verelst. Careful, reflective reading of historical texts helped me address the depiction of Indigenous peoples in relation to the shift and ideas of hygiene as well as the intended usage of white linen undergarments in a colonial institution. Each of the sources brought different strengths to my research but also required different methods to be employed.

While many of these sources used in my research are settler or European in origin and often discount Indigenous agency, this research aimed to be more mindful on this front. Though

the accuracy of the sources to represent Indigenous communities were not taken at face value, I used them to research Indigenous communities as actively engaging with the shift and shirt and negotiating power dynamics between settler communities and their own. By centering the object in the research, I hoped to de-privilege settler narratives and, by incorporating different methods under the material culture methodology, to balance the weak spots of the different sources used to create a more holistic narrative. When brought together, this material culture analysis of an 18th-century shift and shirt were extrapolated into how these artifacts may have affected the power dynamics in relationships between settler and Indigenous communities in Eastern Woodlands North America.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

This chapter examines the research conducted through the use of four sources: a white linen shirt, a white linen shift, the letters of Marie de l'Incarnation, and the John Verelst paintings. A brief discussion of a 17th-century oil painting that was excluded from the research is also included. All the sources are discussed separately and then common threads are analyzed at the end.

White Linen Shirt

Observation

The ALCTC white linen shirt (2024.1.1) was observed, sketched, photographed, measured, and handled laying flat (Figure 4.1). Most of its main pattern pieces are rectangular. The rectangular body of the shirt has an opening at centre front (27 cm long) and openings at both side seams (27 cm long). It features an L-shaped self-fabric reinforcement at the shoulder and sleeve seams on both sides. These pieces extend from front to back and are turned over and sewn when necessary to cover any raw fabric edges. While the linen of the shirt could be considered fine as two layers of cloth are thin enough to see the grid of the table cover in Figure 4.1, its front opening has a gathered rectangular ruffle on either side that is made of a finer, more translucent material that is likely cotton. The shirt is gathered along the neckline and sewn to the collar, which is secured with two bone buttons. The collar is rectangular in cut except at centre front where the top corners have been removed creating an angled opening. The rectangular full-length sleeve extends perpendicular to the body and is gathered at the head and at the cuff, which has a buttonhole on both extremities. There are several gussets: a triangular one on each shoulder seam/collar intersection (single point to the shoulder seam), a square folded along the

bias to create each underarm gusset, and a triangular one at each opening at the side seam (single point opposite the hem). The patterning approach is geometric overall.

Figure 4.1 *Overall View of the Linen Shirt Laying Flat,* ca. 18th century, linen and cotton ruffle. Anne Lambert Clothing and Textile Collection (2024.1.1). Photograph taken and unskewed by ©Anne Bissonnette.

The construction of this shirt is very fine and its condition is relatively good. The side seams are placed on the selvage and the bottom hem has a seam over a 2 mm double roll. The seams of the shirt are mostly 2 mm wide and no raw edges are exposed. The ruffles' inside edge is on the selvage and the outside edge has a seam over a 5 mm double roll hem. The enclosed seam allowances inside the collar, cuffs, and neck gusset are secured with a line of very fine stitching approximately 1 cm from the seam line. There is also a line of stitching 1.5 cm from the edge of the cuff. All the stitching in the shirt is very fine with stitches being generally 1 mm long and apart. The shirt shows few signs of wear. There is yellowing on the front left chest. The

collar has fraying around the back of the buttons. The cuffs have fraying around the fold at the edge. The front ruffles show the most damage with small holes and unevenness in the weave of the fabric. “Richard Goodman N^{o} 15” is written in dark ink by the front right side opening. The construction details of this shirt make it a sturdy garment and its overall condition enables handling and display.

Deduction

There are very subtle markers of quality in the shirt. There are many areas in the construction of the shirt that would have added to the time to make the shirt as well as to material costs but would improve the look and integrity of the garment over use. The second layer of linen around the shoulders would have added to its cost but also to its durability as it was placed in an area that would be put under tension with the movement of the arm. The added detail of a line of stitching across the shoulders would not be required to keep the second layer attached as it was secured on all edges. It may have instead been intended to keep the layers flat. The stitching lines that go through enclosed seam allowances in the collar and gussets would keep them lying flat through wear and washing. It would also strengthen those seams. These lines of stitching are nearly invisible from far away. They are not meant to get attention but rather are structural elements to maintain the smooth look of the cuffs, collar, and gussets over time and use. It is a subtle marker of quality where time spent in making would lead to increased longevity of the garment and less effort required to maintain a good look. These markers of quality in the shirt would only be revealed through use or careful examination.

The cut and construction of the shirt allows the viewer to make further deductions. The rectangles and triangles cut along the grain of the fabric suggest efficient use of fine linen fabric.

This style of construction makes patterning simple and reduces fabric waste but also increases the structural integrity of the garment. The selvage to selvage width of the linen fabric is fully used for the body of the shirt. This is very cost-effective. It can reduce bulk and stitching. It also further increases the structural integrity of the cloth in comparison with cut and sewn edges. The size of the shirt is therefore determined by the width of the fabric rather than the size of the wearer's torso. The fit of linen shirts could thus be quite different in comparison to the fashionable fitted garments of the elite and would not allow us to assess the girth of the wearer. The shirt is meant to be sturdy: there are no raw edges exposed and it is reinforced where the most wearing stress occurs: shoulders, armholes, and side openings. The front ruffles would not have the same stress, which may be why the fabric is finer there. While the cut of the shirt relies on simple shapes, there are clear practical reasons that inform this design and the fine stitching produced by a skilled maker.

The structure, features, and proportions of the garment can lead to further inferences. The cuffs have two buttonholes so we assume the wearer wore a separate object for closure. The presence of decorative ruffles made of a finer fabric may indicate affluence. The base of the collar may be covered by something so that the indent on the upper collar does not expose the plain bone buttons once it is turned over. The indent at the collar does not add to the structural integrity of the garment and so was likely made for comfort or aesthetic reasons. The inscription “Richard Goodman Nº 15” leads us to think the owner was a man who owned a minimum of fifteen articles of clothing. The name seems Anglo-Saxon and may suggest a geopolitical relationship to Britain. The presence of the name suggests the wearer sent his laundry out rather than being washed at home requiring identification of his items. The change to a finer fabric for the ruffles, the presence of an Anglo-Saxon’s man name, and the possibility that he possessed at

least fifteen articles of dress that may have been sent out to be laundered indicate a gendered and relatively affluent owner in contact with or of English extraction.

Reflection

A man would not wear this fine shirt by itself publicly. In France, around 1700, fashionable men primarily wore coat (justaucorps), waistcoat (also called vest), and knee breeches.[181] While these three basic components remained in use, the justaucorps was eventually replaced by different styles of coats and, by the onset of the French Revolution in 1789, fashionable trousers styles began to supersede the aristocratic breeches. English patterns of clothing were very similar.[182] While these basic clothing items were common across classes, wealthier men were distinguished by longer, more opulent coats whereas working men would wear shorter coats and trousers more suitable for their work.[183] Wearing only a shirt and lower body garment without a waistcoat or coat was only associated with those who were doing heavy labour.[184] The use of the three basic components by fashionable men means that the only parts of our fine shirt that would be seen by other people would be parts of the collar, front ruffles, and cuffs.

Collars of men's shirts were typically paired with some kind of neck covering. A tight, white cloth or "neck stock" was associated with fashionable men whereas working class men's handkerchiefs worn around the neck could be in different colours.[185] Based on a survey of 54 men's 18th-century portraits in the Colonial Williamsburg's (CW) collection, the period experienced a widespread fashion for white neck stocks worn over the shirt collar covering the

[181] Roche, *The culture of clothing,* 129, 135.
[182] Styles, *The Dress of the People,* 9.
[183] Linda Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal*, (Williamsburg: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2002), 126.
[184] Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal,* 132. Styles, *The Dress of the People,* 30.
[185] Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal*, 60, 122.

neck fully (45 examples). By the 1770s, a few portraits depict a shirt collar turned over the top section of a neck stock (white for civilians (6 examples) and black for the military (3 examples)).[186] In a survey of 71 early 19th-century (1800-1850) CW portraits, earlier 18th century styles are seen with the collar either folded over or completely hidden by the neck stock (31 examples) but the survey results also feature another style with the shirt collar standing up and reaching close to the ears with the collar's neck portion covered with a neck stock (40 examples). The tall collar of our shirt might thus be completely hidden under a neck stock or partially visible, either folded over a neck stock as early as the 1770s and into the early 19th century, or standing up with the neck portion covered with a neck stock in the early 19th century.

It is unclear from the CW portrait research if the collar height changed over time as the height of the neck stock covering the entire neck appears standard. The amount of collar folded over and standing up in portraits appear to be roughly the same. Men who covered their collar entirely with the neck stock may have had shorter collars or simply folded the collar beneath the neck stock instead of over. Images of lower class men working or relaxing show their shirts worn with only breeches or covered by a waistcoat without a coat and, at times, unbuttoned at the neck.[187] The height of the shirt collar, how it sat, and how much was seen depended on the period, one's socio-economic standing, and what the wearer hoped to convey with their dress.

The shirt would have required something to close the cuffs. The collar has bone buttons so the use of buttons for closure was clearly an option. Two small buttons joined with a link of metal could create cufflinks that would be transferred between garments. Archeologist Diana

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[186] *Portrait of Captain Patrick Campbell (ca. 1745-1782)*, oil on canvas, 1775-1776, 2018-261, Colonial Williamsburg Collection, Williamsburg, Virginia. https://emuseum.history.org/objects/105131/portrait-of-captain-patrick-campbell-ca-17451782?ctx=66fd3e8320cb8bcfd9b12e8a74ed9a930b59a387&idx=105. John Durand, *Portrait of Daniel Barraud (1725-after 1784),* oil on canvas, 1774, 2016-111, Colonial Williamsburg Collection, Williamsburg, Virginia. *https://emuseum.history.org/objects/100930/portrait-of-daniel-barraud-1725after-1784?ctx=062bb1f5ed6017900d2b64b75e540922c2c943c4&idx=14*.

[187] Styles, *The Dress of the People,* 7, 9, 30, 221.

DiPaolo Loren's work indicates that many cufflinks have been found in archaeological digs around colonial settlements of New England.[188] She adds that they are frequently made of metals such as pewter, brass, and silver and, during the 18th century, they were primarily imported from Europe. While not necessarily prohibitively expensive, visible cufflinks were an opportunity for the wearer to show off wealth and aesthetic taste.

Shirts with ruffles are seen in CW portraits. Shirts are shown with both cuff and neck ruffles, only neck ruffles, or no ruffles at all. Those on the cuffs appear throughout the 18th century (30 examples of 45) but disappear in the 19th century (0 examples of 43).[189] The small holes at the neck ruffles on our shirt are indicative of the use of a shirt pin/buckle and thus of the actual use of this object. The fine white linen and the finer fabric ruffles would have signaled wealth and would likely have necessitated more careful laundering.[190] Still, as the laundering process remained harsh, the survival of this piece with its fine textiles could suggest infrequent use, which may be explained by the number of shirts Richard Goodman possessed. The lack of cuff ruffles is not significant in indicating the wearer's status whereas the use of cufflinks, a shirt pin/buckle, and infrequent use suggests the wearer had a fairly extensive wardrobe including expensive accessories and therefore was at least fairly wealthy.

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[188] Diana DiPaolo Loren, *Archaeology of Clothing and Bodily Adornment in Colonial America,* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 52-53.

[189] John Durand, Portrait of Daniel Barraud (1725-after 1784), oil on canvas, 1774, 2016-111, Colonial Williamsburg Collection, Williamsburg, Virginia. https://emuseum.history.org/objects/100930/portrait-of-daniel-barraud-1725after-1784?ctx=062bb1f5ed6017900d2b64b75e540922c2c943c4&idx=14. Cephas Thompson, *Portrait of William Tazewell Nivision (1789-1821),* oil on canvas, ca. 1811-1812, 2003-78, Colonial Williamsburg Collection, Williamsburg, Virginia. https://emuseum.history.org/objects/69637/portrait-of-william-tazewell-nivison-17891821?ctx=c4dc8e8b92b6d66bd41f6499a94c8938fb5dada9&idx=122

[190] Styles, *The Dress of the People,* 80.
North, *Sweet and Clean?,* 174.

Interpretation

There is a performative element to the shirt that contrasts with its more practical elements. The fashionable collar styles of the 18th and early 19th century suggest that the plain bone buttons on the collar would be covered by a neck stock. Unlike cuff buttons, which would occasionally emerge from under the coat's sleeves, those at the collar would not be seen and thus did not require further expenses. Hidden collar buttons ceded to practicality while cufflinks, which could add a decorative touch that may be more or less extravagant depending on the owner's wealth, prioritized performance. There are other elements that strengthen the practical aspects of the garment, such as the added linen reinforcement over the shoulders and the placement of small gussets on the side seam openings. This contrasts with the performative nature of other features, such as the ruffles of a much finer material. The finer weave presents several impractical qualities in contrast with the focus on durability built into other aspects of the shirt. Very little of the shirt would be displayed in public except the ruffles, top half of the collar, and the cuffs. These public areas of the shirt show different priorities in their construction as they emphasize appearance over durability making clear that social performance was built into the shirt. The construction of the linen shirt shows tension between a garment that needed to withstand destructive washing practices to maintain hygiene standards but also publicly demonstrate economic status.

Some elements of an expensive linen shirt were not easy to assess in public but others were, such as the whiteness of the linen or the fine ruffles decorating the neck and sleeves. This analysis suggests that the fabric of ruffles of shirts, for example, may not necessarily reflect the garment beneath. Moreover, the quality in an expensive garment shows in many other hidden details, such as the length of the stitches and careful construction of the seams. This means a

higher quality garment may not be immediately identifiable from a distance or by those unfamiliar with hand-sewn clothing. This represents an economic power within the shirt that is not entirely based on performance but also requires insider knowledge.

White Linen Shift

Observation

The ALCTC white linen shift (2014.1.7) was observed laying flat (Figure 4.2). This A-line longer garment has an oval-shaped, deep neckline in front, and a more shallow one in back. Full, three-quarter sleeves are gathered at the shoulder and cuffs, which have an embroidered band with a ruffle sewn at the end. Sleeves have square underarm gussets folded diagonally and double buttonholes at each cuff. The armholes, shoulder areas, and neckline are underlined. The neck ruffle, sleeves, and sleeve ruffles are made from finer fabric that is more delicate and transparent than the rest of the shift, which is made of an assemblage of several pieces of fabric in front and back. The shift has a flared outline created by an angled side seam on the left and a triangular panel on the right. In the back, two pieces are joined horizontally about 5 cm up from the hem. With the exception of the embroidery at the cuffs, the stitches are very small, about 1-2 mm in length and 2-4 mm apart. The seams themselves vary from 3 mm to 6 mm in width. There are no raw edges of fabric as all seams are enclosed with stitching on either side of the fabric. There is a bar tack where the end of the underarm gusset meets the side seam. The chemise has some damage: a small split near the back neck and the neck ruffle is frayed (yet backed with a mesh fabric) and has detached around the centre back on one side. There is also some fraying of the fabric under the left arm where the sleeve joins the body of the

shift. Despite fragilized areas and some pronounced yellowing of the linen at the seat in back, this shift is well preserved and functional.

Figure 4.2 *Overall Front View of the Linen Shift Laying Flat,* ca. 1790-1799, linen, Anne Lambert Clothing and Textile Collection (2014.1.7). Photograph taken and unskewed by ©Anne Bissonnette.

Deduction

Some parts of the shift are similar to the previously-observed shirt but others are not. Like the white linen shirt, this white linen shift is made of rectangles and triangular pattern pieces, has underlined sections reinforcing areas of high stress, such as the bar tack at the underarm gusset-side panel intersections, and has double buttonholes at the cuffs, which suggests the use of an external item for closure, such as cufflinks. The shift also has a finer ruffle but it is

along the deep neckline, perhaps indicating that the style of outer clothing worn over the shift would mimic the shift's neckline. Unlike the shirt, the shift is longer and A-line in silhouette: it could reach the knees and the wider hem circumference would allow for a greater stride but less fabric bulk around the narrower torso. The sleeves are as full as the shirt but they are shorter: considering the dropped shoulder seam, they likely extend around the wearer's elbow (Figure 3.2). If they reach below the elbow, their fullness would provide ease of movement. If they end before the elbow, the sleeve's fullness may not be needed to create ease and may be done in this way because it was customary or considered attractive. In any case, the shift's sleeves are in finer fabric. This may indicate that the garment worn over the shift had either narrow fitted sleeves that would require finer fabric to reduce bulk or that the shift's sleeves were visible when a person was fully dressed. The similarities extend to the use of white linen, geometric pattern pieces, square underarm gussets, areas of reinforcement and finer fabric uses, and double buttonholes at the cuffs, while differences include an oval neckline, a longer A-line silhouette, and shorter sleeves of a finer fabric.

The shift demonstrates a prioritization of fabric economy. It is made of multiple pieces of fabric with a seam bisecting the body horizontally at the front at hip level. This seam could be irritating to the skin if pressed against the body and it weakens the integrity of the fabric compared to uncut fabric. This suggests that saving expense in fabric by piecing together smaller sections was more important than strength and potentially comfort. The horizontal seam would therefore not be included for design purposes but rather to save materials by piecing together smaller pieces of fabric rather than using a singular large piece. The linen of the shift also shows inconsistency in the quality (Figure 4.3). The fabric has brown fibres inconsistently spun on the triangular side panels. This may indicate use of different batches of fabric. The construction of

the shift shows a prioritizing of economics over strength and aesthetics in the body of the garment.

Figure 4.3 *Closeup of Linen Shift Triangular Side Panel at the Hem,* ca. 1790-1799, linen, Anne Lambert Clothing and Textile Collection (2014.1.7). Photograph taken by ©Anne Bissonnette.

Reflection

The shift would be largely covered with other clothing. In France around 1700, Roche describes how, for women of all classes, this typically meant petticoat(s) (i.e. under and over skirts), stays (foundational attire also called *corps de robe*), a mantua (i.e. gown), and an apron.[191] Roche advances that stays were primarily associated with the rich but could be owned by women of any class. They were made of stiff fabric like whalebone or leather and would compress the shift against the body at the torso.[192] As for all garments worn by both genders,

[191] Roche, *The culture of clothing,* 120.
[192] Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal*, 121-122.

class was distinguished largely by quality and quantity, rather than what garments were owned.[193] English clothing consumption shows similar clothing consumption patterns.[194]

Over the 18th century, many layers of clothing were worn over the shift. Over the stays the "mantua" was most popular and came in various styles. They generally had sleeves that reached below the elbow and were open in front like a coat and affixed to a triangular "stomacher" secured to stays.[195] This generated a broad square neckline. As corroborated by our artifact, North advances that the shift would be made in a shape similar to the mantua and stomacher combination so it was only slightly visible around the edges of that ensemble.[196] When the wearer could afford it, the shift's neck ruffle could be made of costlier fabric. On those occasions when a mantua was not worn, when, for example, a petticoat and either stays or "jumps" were being worn, the shift's sleeves would show. 18th century images show country women dressed in shift, petticoat, and stays in casual environments such as working within the home or in the context of a country fair.[197] While the shift was typically almost entirely covered with other clothing like mantuas, later "round gowns," and informal attire such as "short gowns," a few instances occur where the entire sleeve as well as the neckline had the potential to be seen and judged by others.

While mantua styles changed, rare surviving shifts show continuity in shift construction from the 17th into the 18th century. A 1690 fashion doll's shift shows a similar construction to ours with its wide oval neckline trimmed in lace, underarm gussets, three-quarter sleeves, and

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[193] Roche, *The culture of clothing,* 129, 135.
[194] Styles, *The Dress of the People,* 15.
[195] Francesco Trevisani, *Portrait of Maria Clementina Sobieska*, 18th century, oil on copper, Christie's, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Trevisani_-_Portrait_of_Maria_Clementina_Sobieska.jpg.
[196] North, *Sweet and Clean?, 120.*
[197] Styles, *The Dress of the People,* 47, 70, 203, 247.
Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Broken Eggs*, 1756, oil on canvas, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/436579.

triangular side panels that creates an A-line silhouette.[198] Even if the doll's proportion does not necessitate the addition of triangular side panels, the makers added them nonetheless and thus remained faithful to custom. Side panels are also seen in another doll's shift from 1690-1730 that remains similar to ours with its unadorned oval neckline and three-quarter sleeves (albeit not as full) but with a small centre-front opening that closes with a tie.[199] From this evidence, we can surmise that women's shifts did not change significantly from the 17th to the 18th century.[200]

Interpretation

One question that lingers is whether the shift's finer fabric at the sleeves conveys a part of the garment that would show publicly, like our shift's neckline ruffle and our shirt's centre-front ruffle? In our shift and shirt, most of the garments are built for durability, as seen in reinforcements around the armholes and shoulders that strengthen high-stress areas. The finer fabric used in both bely this prioritization. If visible ruffles reflect what Style describes as cleanliness turned into "a public sartorial spectacle,"[201] practical and economic concerns were also present. With our shift, the economy shown in pricing together smaller pieces of linen is glaringly inconsistent with the use of a considerable quantity of finer fabric for the fuller sleeves that would have been more expensive than a coarser linen. There must be good reasons why this was done. Were the finer fabric sleeves part of the public performance of this shift?

Based on the physical attributes of our shirt and shift, especially the piecing of the shift, I postulate that the shift was probably a less expensive garment compared to the shirt. The quality

[198] *Doll's Shift*, linen, 1690-1700, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O82496/dolls-shift-unknown/.
[199] *Doll's Shift*, linen, 1690-1730, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O82638/dolls-shift-unknown/.
[200] Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal,* 222.
[201] Styles, *The Dress of the People,* 79.

of the shift's linen is also less consistent. However, the shift uses more expensive fabric at the sleeves. This could mean that the wearer wore it with only stays and petticoats and thus without a mantua. In general, women of lesser means were those attired as such in public and their economic status would hinder an investment in finer fabrics. Nonetheless, could a working-class woman still invest in sartorial performance in a smaller, lesser way via visible finer shift sleeves? Alternatively, would an upper-class woman invest in a sartorial performance that, in the case of visible shift sleeves under only stays or when wearing jumps, may be limited in scope? On the other hand changes in mantua styles may also be at play: it could mean that the fullness of the sleeve was needed to flex the elbow but that the sleeve of the garment worn over the shift was so tightly fitted that the shift's finer fabric was a necessity to reduce bulk—a functional rather than a performance element. As most women wore garments like mantuas in public, a new fit of the mantua's sleeve should be factored in. If so, the finer fabric could suggest a 1790s date as, during this decade, "[n]ew were the long tight sleeves, cut on a curve to fit closely around the elbow."[202] Even if the shift belonged to a woman with less means, she may have nonetheless emulated fashionable styles of the period. In summary, the evidence (i.e. the thinner sleeve fabric) suggests different scenarios (e.g. shirt sleeve exposed or worn over a tightly fitted gown sleeve) but both suggest an owner who values saving on fabric costs as well as the aesthetically pleasing or fashionable presentation of her clothing.

Hygiene, Moral Superiority, Economic Concerns and Shifts in Marie de l'Incarnation's Letters

Marie de l'Incarnation wrote numerous letters back to France while running her convent school in Québec, some of which help us address the uses of shifts. Most of the letters were to

[202] Micheal Majer, "1790-1799," Fashion History Timeline, Fashion Institute of Technology, last updated January 31, 2022, https://fashionhistory.fitnyc.edu/1790-1799/

her son, members of the church, and potential donors. Throughout the study of these letters, trends emerged. Letters to members of the church primarily spoke of spiritual matters and not daily life. Letter to potential donors would speak of material needs of the school but would focus on the good the school was accomplishing over difficulties faced. Letters to her son appeared to be the most balanced and honest as Marie could admit difficulties the convent faced and describe daily life without fear of repercussions on her institution. For our study, mainly the letters to donors and her son were used because they most often touched on clothing and cleanliness.

The imposition of French ideas of morality and standards of body care, including the wearing of the shift, were integral to the mission of the Ursuline convent school. Following the death of one of her co-founders, Marie de St. Joseph, in 1652, Marie describes her life in a letter including the establishment of their convent.[203] She describes her co-founder as "desiring to have the task of cleaning the savage girls" and trying to stop the Indigenous women around the convent from walking outside "almost naked" as key goals in establishing the convent.[204] In 1651, the school caught fire and she describes how all the students and nuns were outside at night in only their shifts.[205] Getting Indigenous girls to wear a shift was therefore accomplished within the school, highlighting the importance of this practice within French standards of body care and what founders considered to be the correct way to live.

Importing linen fabric was a real cost for the convent but was one considered necessary. Marie de l'Incarnation declares in 1660 that the colonists "can live without France but are entirely dependent on them for clothing."[206] In letters to her son, she declares that if she ever abandoned her school and returned to France, it would be because of the difficulties of securing

[203] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 436.
[204] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 451, 459.
[205] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 409.
[206] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 631.

basic necessities.[207] She describes this lack as more concerning than the threat of attack from the Haudenosaunee. In one of these letters written in 1652, she even clarifies to her son that she is simply describing her life and not looking for money from him.[208] When the convent caught fire in 1651, she tells her son that she tried to save her clothing by throwing it out the window before fleeing the building despite not being able to save religious artifacts or her papers.[209] The status of the shift as a hygienic requirement but also an expensive import meant that hygienic and economic facets of the garment were deeply linked within the Ursuline convent. The imposition of French standards of body care—a colonial standard of basic cleanliness—on Indigenous girls was thus a significant endeavour. Marie de l'Incarnation's ability to acquire linen undergarments for her students and fellow nuns was therefore a necessity for the convent and a contribution to the French colonial project.

The shift is considered a basic necessity because of its links to French body care practices. In a 1640 letter to a "lady of quality," probably a wealthy supporter of the school, Marie de l'Incarnation describes the need for linen in the school.[210] She describes how all the linen the nuns brought with them has already been used to clean and cover the students. The language around cleanliness used in this letter clearly demonstrates the need of the school for donations but also justifies the existence of the school, both of which would be important for Marie to establish back in France to ensure her school's continued existence. She describes that when the girls are entered into the school:

> "they are naked like worms, and they must be washed from head to toe because of the grease their parents anointed on their bodies: and no matter how diligently we do it or

[207] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 484, 615.
[208] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 486.
[209] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 414, 425.
[210] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 97.

how often we change their linen and clothing, we cannot keep them without vermin for long."[211]

This letter places the blame for vermin infestations on Indigenous body care practices and by extension, the girls' parents. This justifies the girls being in the school because they are being kept in a more hygienic place than their parents could provide. It places French culture as superior to Indigenous cultures despite the fight against vermin being a common problem in Europe as well.[212] Hygiene played an important role in what she intended to teach the girls at her school but also served to stir the emotions of potential donors.

Marie de l'Incarnation seems to have contradictory beliefs around the Indigenous people she is trying to convert. The language is often conflicting as she alternates between describing the Indigenous members of the community as having pure, innocent souls and describing her mission as to teach shame to them.[213] She states that they are more honest, more devout, and less likely to commit crimes than Frenchmen.[214] As a result, she reasons that the French settler community should remain separate so Indigenous nations are not corrupted by them.[215] Nonetheless, she remains convinced that Indigenous people should be converted to Christianity and brought into French ways of life.[216] However, the longer Marie de l'Incarnation remains in Québec, the less she believes in her ability to succeed. In 1668, she describes to her son how Indigenous girls love freedom so much, they cannot be convinced to live a French way of life and, in forty years, only seven or eight girls permanently joined the French community.[217] The largely failed plan to get Indigenous girls to conform to French standards of body care and wear

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[211] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 97.
[212] North, *Sweet and Clean?,* 53, 110.
[213] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 459.
[214] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 104.
[215] Marie de l'Incarnation, Correspondance, 119.
[216] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 221, 483
[217] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 828.

linen shifts is taken by Marie de l'Incarnation as signs of their ignorance and "wildness" but can be interpreted as proof of the girls' different cultural values remaining strong even after years of being taught French cultural standards.

Political Use of Shirts in Marie de l'Incarnation's Letters

The letters of Marie de l'Incarnation describe an instance of shirts being used in a political negotiation between French and Haudenosaunee ambassadors. In September of 1645, she wrote a letter to her son describing the peace that had recently been negotiated between the French and their Indigenous allies, and the Haudenosaunee.[218] At Québec, a Haudenosaunee ambassador and the Governor of New France, Charles de Montmagny, publicly exchanged gifts after negotiating the treaty and both releasing captives from the other nation. This peace included the Algonquin, Montagnez, and Attikamek nations but not the Wendat who remained in conflict with the Haudenosaunee.[219] The peace was short-lived as conflict between the French and Haudenosaunee began again two years later but the gift giving is of importance to this research.[220]

Marie describes the gifts the Haudenosaunee brought as "thirty thousand grains of porcelain that they had reduced into seventeen necklaces."[221] Each of these necklaces were presented with a speech about elements of the peace treaty, such as the fourth necklace was to lay to rest the memories of the deceased so no one avenges them, and the ninth was so that allies would always find a fire ready for them in Haudenosaunee longhouses.[222] It is most likely that these necklaces were actually wampum, not porcelain. Wampum had a deeper meaning as a

[218] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 250.
[219] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 254, 257.
[220] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 323.
[221] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 254.
[222] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 256.

symbol of the promises being made verbally.[223] The wampum would act as a mnemonic device to remember the treaty, but it also made the treaty sacred by materializing it in wampum. "For the Haudenosaunee, as well, the "treaty" is less the event at which the agreement was made, or the specific matter that was agreed upon, and more the relationship that flows from or is reaffirmed by the event."[224] The fact that wampum was gifted to the French settlers was a deeply significant part of establishing peace that would have been understood by the Indigenous nations present but may not have been grasped by the settlers themselves.

The day after receiving the wampum, Marie de l'Incarnation writes that the French Governor gave fourteen gifts in return, each imbued with their own meaning.[225] While she does not record exactly what these gifts are, the second most likely was or included linen shirts. The letter states that the gift was for the return of the Haudenosaunee prisoners and "to reclothe them for their return so they are not cold on the road and so they are not ashamed to return naked to their village."[226] A wool coat alone, while warm and highly valued, would not have satisfied French standards of modesty as coats in the 18th century tended to be open at the neck or open in front below the waist.[227] Without a shirt, French sensibilities would have still determined a man to be naked so the Governor's second gift likely included linen shirts in some form.

A linen shirt was not a culturally appropriate diplomatic gift for settlers to give on this occasion. Gift giving as a diplomatic gesture had a long history in Europe. France, Spain, and England frequently gifted luxury goods associated with their nation between them at the

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[223] Kayanesenh Paul Williams, *Kayanerenkó:wa: The Great Law of Peace,* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2018),112
[224] Williams, *Kayanerenkó:wa*, 113.
[225] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 258.
[226] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 258.
[227] Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal,* 77, 109.

formation of alliances.[228] Fabric and clothing items could be significant political gifts because they are so prominently displayed when worn and can thus be used to symbolize alliances or shifts in identity, such as during marriage ceremonies.[229] Significantly, these diplomatic gifts were expensive, fashionable, and representative of the country they came from. A shirt or shift in England could be offered as a prize in a country fair, not gifted to ambassadors of a foreign nation in forming an alliance.[230] The Haudenosaunee were treating with the French as they would another Indigenous nation when negotiating peace. To be gifted shirts would suggest the French viewed them like inferiors. The Haudenosaunee generally demonstrated considerable political prowess and understanding when dealing with the French ambassadors, however, the shirt having different implications from other clothing items hid insidious colonial ideology beneath its benign appearance.

Nudity and partial nudity were seen very differently by both parties. Marie de l'Incarnation had written to her son in 1644 that nudity in the summer was frequent among the Indigenous nations she observed and that warriors would go to battle practically naked.[231] This suggests that full or partial nudity was not a sign of shame amongst the Haudenosaunee. As such, prisoners returning home naked may not have been a source of shame for them. A gift of shirts included an implication of French morals being imposed on the Haudenosaunee in direct conflict with the principles of free passage and friendship being spoken at the event. This gift suggests that the relationship the French intended to have with the Haudenosaunee in the future was likely

[228] Chloé Rivière, "Displaying the Prince's Identity: Textile Accessories and Fineries in Seventeenth-Century Diplomatic Gift-Giving" *Legatio: The Journal for Renaissance and Early Modern Diplomatic Studies*, no. 4 (January 1, 2020): 50.
[229] Rivière, "Displaying the Prince's Identity," 53, 54.
[230] Styles, *The Dress of the People,* 247.
[231] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 220 .

not what the Haudenosaunee believed was being promised and may explain the deterioration of the peace following this event.

From Marie de l'Incarnation's letters, it is clear that Indigenous leaders deliberately engaged with French communities and institutions. In 1644, she describes how Elders and church leaders worked together to try to curb alcohol abuse in the community.[232] This demonstrates an interesting dynamic where, even within converted Indigenous communities, First Nation customs remained in force. During the second establishment of peace in 1654, a Haudenosaunee woman whom Marie de l'Incarnation describes as a "Captainess" asked to send girls to the convent school so that they may eventually join First Nation councils.[233] This woman was probably a clan mother charged with community initiatives, including choosing successors and assuring the availability of qualified leaders.[234] Sending children to the Ursuline school would fall under the latter, as attending it would teach the girls about French culture and introduce them to classmates from other Indigenous nations, helping them in the process to become effective diplomats and educated advisors. These examples demonstrate how some Indigenous leaders aimed to learn about the French in order to make good political alliances but did not intend to change their communities' political or cultural structures in the process. This suggests that, though the convent intended to largely change Indigenous culture, Indigenous communities saw the settlers' ways as something added to their own culture rather than a replacement. Both French and Indigenous nations engaged carefully with each other but believed they were building very different relationships.

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[232] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 221.
[233] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 546.
[234] Williams, *Kayanerenkó:wa,* 304, 307.

Dress in the Painting of St. Kateri Tekakwitha

A ca. 1696 oil painting of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha by Father Claude Chauchetière (1645-1709) depicts the Mohawk woman in what may look like a European linen undergarment but is likely a First Nations garment (Figure 4.4).[235] St. Kateri would have been familiar with French dress practices and quite possibly would have worn a shift. However, what is depicted here is different. The white garment ends well above the knees and features small motifs throughout not found in European linen undergarments. It also lacks a deep oval neckline, three-quarter sleeves, and triangular side panels to align it with A-line 17th-century shifts.[236] She wears a garment with long sleeves, one (or more) side slit, and a centre-front neck opening, features which are similar to a man's shirt. The white patterned shirt-like garment, which is similar in length to our man's shirt, defies European gendered styles and is worn over a dark below-the-knees skirt, leg wrappings, and moccasins.

[235] She converted to Catholicism and was later canonized as a saint. The portrait is currently held at the Saint Francis-Xavier Mission in Kanawake, Québec. "Welcome to the National Shrine of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha in Canada," Canada National Saint Kateri Shrine, accessed September 23, 2023, https://nationalsaintkaterishrine.ca/.
[236] *Doll's Shift*, linen, 1690-1700, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England., https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O82496/dolls-shift-unknown/.

Figure 4.4 Father Claude Chauchetière, *Saint Catherine Takakoüita*, circa. 1696, oil painting, Saint Francis-Xavier Mission, Kanawake, Quebec. Accessed via Wikimedia Commons.

It is inconclusive what exact garment is shown. It may be an adapted European man's shirt or it may be an Indigenous garment. In 1644, Marie de l'Incarnation described Indigenous women around Québec as wearing dresses that cover the arms and extend from the neck to mid-leg.[237] The garment in the St. Kateri painting fits this description and is worn with other

[237] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 220.

Indigenous attire. The markings on the garment make it clear this is not a plain, white linen garment but it is unclear what they represent. They may be patterns of a calico print, beads, or represent the dappling of fur on a skin garment. St. Kateri's place within Indigenous and settler communities means she (as well as the artist) would have most likely been knowledgeable of both cultures' dress traditions making it unclear what exactly is depicted in the painting.

The painting was created after the death of St. Kateri. As such, it is likely the artist did not paint an accurate representation of her clothing but rather tried to symbolically convey what he believed to be important about her as a religious figure. The white garment is not representative of European attire for women at the time, which is something the artist, a French priest who emigrated to Quebec, would know.[238] Her attire draws attention to her Indigenous identity, which was important in goals of conversion. St. Kateri's blue veil is reminiscent of depictions of the Virgin Mary, thus connecting a person who was to become the first Indigenous saint to a powerful feminine symbol in Catholicism.[239] The symbolic resemblance of her tunic to the white linen shift could represent the sitter's moral cleanliness and religious purity and may have influenced the choice of colour to further impart St. Kateri's admirable qualities to the viewer. While French cultural associations surrounding linen undergarments may have influenced the creation of the image, Chauchetière's painting contains too many uncertainties of what it depicts and understanding this situation leads this source to be of lesser value to the study of the use of linen undergarments by First Nations.

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[238] François-Marc Gagnon, "Claude Chauchetière," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (Historica Canada, 2013), https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/claude-chauchetiere.

[239] *The Virgin of Sorrows*, ca. 18th century, oil on canvas, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/232209

John Verelst Paintings

Description

Four full body portraits depict dark-haired men, each with one arm akimbo and the other holding an object (a war club, a bow, a gun, or a wampum belt) besides an animal and a hatchet (Figures 4.5-4.8). All are standing in a forest and are partly covered with a large swath of red fabric edged in gold-coloured tape. All are wearing (albeit some in different ways) a white shirt and a beaded (or possibly quilled) belt. Three don a shirt ending at or above the knees with moccasins, long hair, tattoos, and earrings, while the forth has short hair and wears a black coat, breeches, and hose over his shirt and black heeled shoes with silver buckles. While the man in the black ensemble has many more European features (short hair, coat, breeches, hose, buckled shoes, and a lack of tattoos), all girdled, white-shirted men with a red mantle present a view of their hairless chest and are presented in a dignified manner.

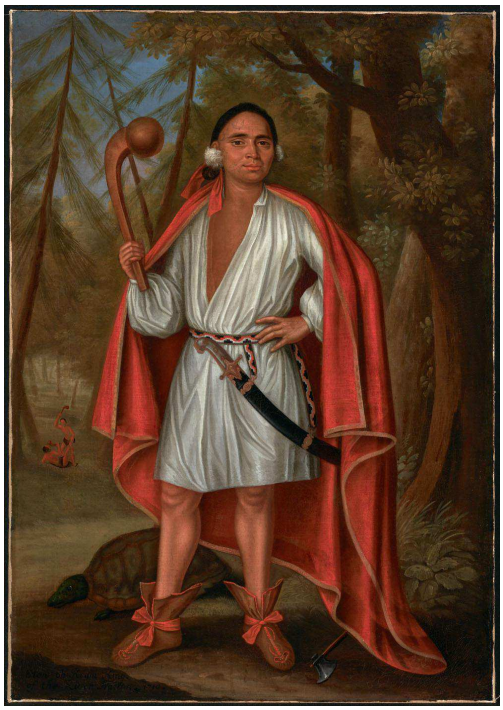

Figure 4.5 John Verelst, *Etowacum*, oil on canvas, Library Archives Canada (2894989)

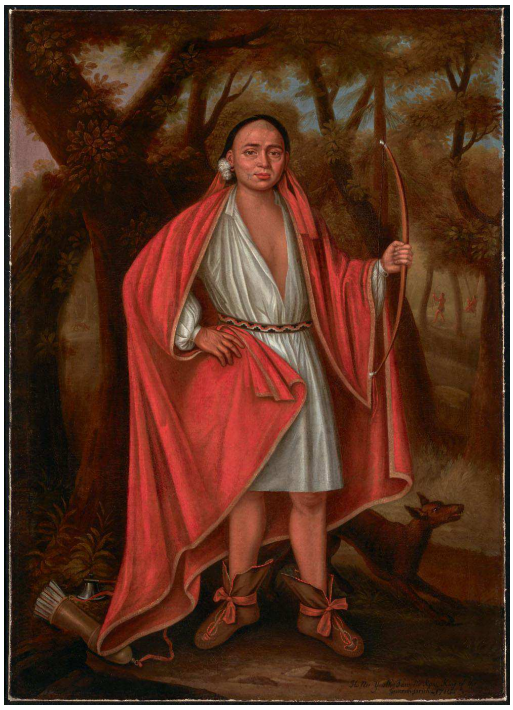

Figure 4.6 John Verelst, *Onigoheriago*, 1710, oil on canvas, Library Archives Canada (2894987)

Figure 4.7 John Verelst, *Sagayenkwaraton*, 1710, oil on canvas, Library Archives Canada (2836995)

Figure 4.8 John Verelst, *Tejonihokarawa*, 1710, oil on canvas, Library Archives Canada (2897444)

The shirts are white and appear to be simple in their construction. All have long sleeves ending in a cuff. All cuff bands are narrow and fastened (one with a visible gold-coloured cufflink) except for one individual where one buttonhole and the slit at the cuff are visible on the open cuff (Figure 4.7). Three have visible collars: one is a small turned-over collar (Figure 4.5) and two have narrow bands (Figures 4.6 and 4.8). The third portrait (Figure 4.7) depicts the shirt draped into the belt on one side and only worn over the wearer's right arm, which obstructs our view of the garment's neckline and construction. As well, with sleeves as voluminous as depicted, an unbuttoned cuff would not stay at the wrist but fall almost immediately to the elbow as the arm was raised. The lines of the folds on the bottom half of his shirt are unlikely and inconsistent with the other portraits. The sitters with a visible collar are shown with a vertical slit at the centre-front opening nearly to the waist.

Deduction

The shirts depicted in the portraits are similar to surviving examples. The shirts with visible sleeves are rather full and gathered at the cuffs and these roomy garments are about knee-length, like the ca. 1690-1700 "Lord Clapham" doll shirt (T.846A-1974) at the V&A Museum.[240] The visible collars of the shirts depicted appear quite short: the turned over collar (a style similar to our ALCTC shirt) would rise only half way up the neck while the two bands collars (a style similar to the ca. 1690-1700 doll's shirt (T.846-1974)) would only extend a quarter of the way. Shirts have no ruffles at the cuff, like our ALCTC shirt, or centre opening, like an 18th century shirt (2023-103) at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.[241] The one nod to expense in regards to the shirts appears on Onigoheriago's cufflinks (Figure 4.9). It seems likely that they are more expensive metal cufflinks, not cheaper bone buttons. It is difficult to see construction details such as side openings and underarm gussets in the images. Except for the half-dressed shirt that is unrealistic in its depiction, all other shirts, as well as the style of the black coat, breeches, and shoes, are plausible but the amount of chest uncovered and the red mantles may fall under artistic license.[242]

[240] "Doll's Shirt", 1690-1700, linen, T874A-1974, Victoria and Albert Museum, London https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O83242/dolls-shirt-unknown/.
[241] "Shirt," ca. 1750, linen, wood, silk, 2023-103, Colonial Williamsburg, Williamsburg, Virginia, https://emuseum.history.org/objects/112280/shirt?ctx=7f1052c3e1dd4f36f8ef141c2f026c6254a35e1e&idx=0.
[242] For 1709 portrait of a man in a long coat, knee breeches, hose and heeled shoes, see Matthijs Naiveu, "De stoffenwinkel," 1709 (dated), oil on canvas, RKD Research website, Netherlands Institute for Art History, https://rkd.nl/images/1430.

Figure 4.9 *Cuff detail on Onigoheriago's shirt* by John Verelst, 1710, oil on canvas, Library Archives Canada

The front opening of the realistically-depicted shirts leave a fair amount of the sitters' chests exposed and the size and shape of the red mantles may help the artist's agenda. While the V&A Museum's ca. 1690-1700 Lord Clapham doll shirt (T.846-1974) has a pretty deep front opening, most surviving shirts from the 18th century have a centre opening that is not as deep. Nonetheless, some portraits of French men in a state of undress represent them with an open shirt. This is the case for the ca. 1713 portrait of sculptor René Fremin by Nicolas de Largillière where a smaller portion of hairless skin is visible at the chest as a result of his shirt's deep opening.[243] The same artist captured Anne Louis Goislard de Montsabert, Comte de Richbourg-le-Toureil, in 1734 with an opened shirt exposing less chest, yet clad in a voluminous red drapery.[244] This shirt and drapery style may be part of a genre of the period for both European

[243] Nicolas Largilliere, "The sculptor René Fremin in his studio," oil on canvas, ca. 1713, 80.1, National Museums of Berlin, https://recherche.smb.museum/detail/862339.
[244] "Portrait of Anne Louis Goislard de Montsabert, Comte de Richbourg-le-Toureil," Cleveland Museum of Art, https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1970.31.

and Indigenous men.[245] Based on this evidence, it is possible that realistically-depicted shirts in the portraits of the four Indigenous leaders are accurate as garments but that the amount of chest exposure is exaggerated and that Indigenous and non-Indigenous men alike depicted in shirts and mantles are part of an artistic genre of the period.

Reflection

There are a great number of resources that have served to analyze these portraits in depth but, for the purposes of this thesis, the focus remains on the context of the portrait production and the garments worn. The portraits were originally painted by John Verelst in London, England, in 1710.[246] Kevin R. Muller, a historian of American art and visual culture, indicates that the three Haudenosaunee men of the Mohawk Nation and one Mahican (also spelled Mohican) man were visiting England on a diplomatic mission where the English were pursuing them as allies. Queen Anne commissioned their portraits and, shortly after, John Simon reproduced the paintings as mezzotint prints, which were circulated in North America, including amongst the Haudenosaunee.[247] While the portraits were known as "Four Indian Kings," Muller indicates that only one of the men, Tejonihokarawa, actually possessed any rank in their community.[248] Despite this, Muller describes how the men offered Queen Anne wampum and were treated as visiting royals by the British Crown. Verelst created the paintings in the style of state portraits to try and "convey both the Indian Kings' authority and their otherness without

[245] See for example "17th Century English School, Portrait of a Melancholic Gentleman," 1stDibs website, https://www.1stdibs.com/art/paintings/portrait-paintings/17th-century-english-school-portrait-melancholic-gentleman-17th-century-oil-painting/id-a_12236972/ and another depiction of one of the Indigenous leaders entitled "On Nee Yeath Tow No Riow," Trement Auctions website, https://www.tremontauctions.com/auction-lot/on-nee-yeath-tow-no-riow-original-1710-mezzotint-_0524128968.
[246] Kevin R. Muller, "From Palace to Longhouse: Portraits of the Four Indian Kings in a Transatlantic Context," *American Art* 22, no. 3 (September 1, 2008): 27.
[247] Muller, "From Palace to Longhouse," 28.
[248] Muller, "From Palace to Longhouse," 33-34.

allowing the one to undermine the other."[249] Muller explains that parts of the commissioned portraits were painted when subjects posed in Verelst's studio and other aspects were done in their absence based on a variety of sources and practices.

The clothing in the portrait should be viewed within the conventions of state portraits.[250] Muller indicates how, beside a nearly life-sized, full-length view, this would ordinarily require robes of state and symbols of royal power to convey status and authority. This can help us understand the presence of an object held in the hand, a hatchet at their feet, and an animal representing the individual's clan in each portrait.[251] Is the clothing depicted symbolic too or what the men wore at St. James Palace and/or to pose for their portraits? A pamphlet from 1710 describes the four men as wearing "black Wastcoats, Breeches, and Stockings, with yellow Slippers, and a loose scarlet mantle cast over them bound with a Gold Gallon."[252] Given its ubiquity, we can assume a shirt was included in this ensemble but was too commonplace to be described. Only the man with actual status, Tejonihokarawa, is depicted wearing all of this clothing except the yellow slippers (likely moccasins).[253] The other three wear only the mantle, a European-style shirt with a belt, and moccasins. It would have been considered indecent for these men to go about London, let alone at court, only in their shirts (without breeches) but this could be done in a portrait and would be consistent with British settler observations of the dress

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[249] Muller, "From Palace to Longhouse," 35.
[250] Muller, "From Palace to Longhouse," 31.
[251] Nelle Oosterom, "Kings of the New World," Canada's History, https://www.canadashistory.ca/explore/first-nations-inuit-metis/kings-of-the-new-world.
[252] *The Four Kings of Canada: Being a Succinct Account of the Four Indian Princes Lately Arrivd from North America : With a Particular Description of Their Country, Their Strange and Remarkable Religion, Feasts, Marriages, Burials, Remedies for Their Sick, Customs, Manners, Constitution, Habits, Sports, War, Peace, Policy, Hunting, Fishing, Utensils Belonging to the Savages, with Several Other Extraordinary Things Worthy Observation, as to the Natural or Curious Productions, Beauty, or Fertility of That Part of the World,* 1710 (1891; reis., London: J.E Garret & co), 7.
[253] Today "waistcoat" is used to describe a vest. However, in 1710, a waistcoat could be a shorter jacket with tighter sleeves and less fullness in the skirt. The garment worn by Tejonihokarawa could reasonably be described as a waistcoat at the time. Micheal Majer, "1700-1709," Fashion History Timeline, Fashion Institute of Technology, last updated October 10, 2020, https://fashionhistory.fitnyc.edu/1700-1709/.

behaviours of Indigenous warriors—a status conferred on those three men who each have a weapon in hand.[254] Lastly, mantles were commonly understood symbols of kingship in European portrait convention, which could explain their presence in all four portraits. With a lack of models to portray Indigenous statesmen, Verelst depicted them in some of the clothing items given to them upon arrival in London yet selected attire to act as symbols for each individual and to fit within existing conventions of European state portraits.[255]

In studies of portraiture from the time, ample amounts of linen ruffles emerging from necks and sleeves is the norm in formal paintings.[256] In the survey of 18th century portraits from Colonial Williamsburg, 41 of 54 examples prominently displayed centre front ruffles emerging from waistcoats and coats.[257] As previously noted, though more uncommon, there are depictions of open shirts in painted portraits.[258] These types of open shirt portraits may be favoured in depicting artists and/or those who aimed to convey more intimacy than in the formal, elaborate royal portraits. This could place the Verelst paintings in a minority genre. In addition to clothing and dress behaviours depicted on artists in informal settings, the style of shirt the "Four Kings" are wearing (i.e. with no lace or ruffles as well as it being worn open at the neck) does resemble the clothing worn by common people depicted in 18th-century British paintings.[259] Though the men are described as kings, the visual depictions are not those associated with royal portraits. The shirts in the Verelst portraits may indicate a discrepancy in how the four men were stylized

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[254] Muller, "From Palace to Longhouse," 37.
[255] For lack of models, see Muller, "From Palace to Longhouse," 35.
[256] Shawe-Taylor, *The Georgians,* 62, 54. Strong, *The British Portrait,* 113-115, 121.
[257] Hans Hysing, *Portrait of Sir Wilfrid Lawson*, oil on canvas, ca. 1722-1726, Colonial Williamsburg Collection (1966-210). https://emuseum.history.org/objects/20559/portrait-of-sir-wilfred-lawson-16961737?ctx=fb9305e3a76b0e22e817764a09baf4aeff636c05&idx=19 .
[258] Nicolas Largilliere, *Self-Portrait*, oil on canvas, 1711, Musee de l'Histoire de France, Chateau Versailles, France. https://www.superstock.com/asset/self-portrait-largilliere-nicolas-de-musee-de-histoire-de-france/4266-20010917.
[259] Styles, *The Dress of the People,* 7-8.

not as kings and important ambassadors but as individuals depicted in an informal manner or from a different station.

The portrait of Sagayenkwaraton (Fig. 4.7) shows his white shirt, the shortest of all three, as being easily draped from shoulder to waist, leaving most of his chest exposed so that both his draped garment and the extent to which his body is on display may fall within an artistic genre looking back to Classical styles. The drape of the shirt resembles a classical garment like the exomis, which fits within the Enlightenment's mindset.[260] Other classically-inspired garments with no bearing in real fashions are featured in British portraiture of the period, such as John Closterman's 1700 portraits of Maurice and Anthony Ashley Cooper whose attire embody the philosophical and academic pursuits associated with classical Rome in the 18th century.[261] Classically-inspired clothing and white linen shift styles were also used to convey "conceptual nudity" in a socially acceptable way.[262] Sagayenkwaraton's draped white shirt does not align with the reality of the actual garment nor is it worn correctly, but its depiction may fall in the Classicism of the period.

Interpretation

The four men were depicted in the portraits as having an air of nobility but are not portrayed as British nobility. The analysis of surviving white linen undergarments revealed that quality is often found in small details. As the quality of the garments in the Verelst portraits

[260] The Enlightenment was a 17th and 18th century European intellectual movement. "Enlightenment," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Britannica, 2024), https://www.britannica.com/event/Enlightenment-European-history. Desmond Shawe-Taylor, *The Georgians: Eighteenth Century Portraiture & Society,* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1990), 52-55.
[261] "Maurice Ashley-Cooper; Anthony Ashley-Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury," National Portrait Gallery, https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portraitExtended/mw07873/Maurice-Ashley-Cooper-Anthony-Ashley-Cooper-3rd-Earl-of-Shaftesbury. Shawe-Taylor, *The Georgians*, 75-76. Roy Strong, *The British Portrait 1660-1960* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 1991), 161.
[262] Bissonnette and Nash, "The Re-birth of Venus," 8.

cannot be properly assessed from the paintings (besides the bright white of the shirts), we can, nonetheless, expect a level of performativity there. Both the centre openings and the cuffs are unadorned on the men's shirts but these features can be found in upper class portraiture of the period, especially as French royalty continue to wear cravats instead of neck stock many years after the 1710 Verelst portraits.[263] What may be most performative in these portraits could include symbols such as the men's stance, their mantles, animal symbols, and wampum that convey the subjects as powerful representatives of their nations. Nonetheless, the lack of a suit on three sitters and the unadorned coat and breeches of the fourth conveys a level of simplicity. This distances them from the majority of state portraits and depictions of British nobility. The dress behaviours betray the stated titles of the full body paintings, placing First Nations monarchs as honorable but not equal to British nobility.

The shirts depicted in three of Verelst' paintings allowed the artist to give the impression of nudity. Based on the ca. 1690-1700 "Lord Clapham" doll shirt (T.846-1974) at the V&A Museum, the depth of the front opening and the length of the shirts could be accurate, but the choice to leave the shirt wide opened at the front slit for two individuals and to drape the shirt on a third, in addition to the lack of coats and breeches in three of the four kings enhance the impression that the subjects are in a state of undress.[264] Even though the three shirt-clad men were likely fully clothed when they sat for the portraits, the artist is implying nudity in the long tradition of linking white linen undergarments as skin by proxy. The portrait of Sagayenkwaraton particularly shows a lot of skin and enhances the view of his tattoos (Fig 4.7). The results served different purposes. White-linen undergarment-clad sitters fell in a popular genre at the time that

[263] "Madame de Ventadour with Louis XIV and his Heirs," ca. 1715-1720, oil on canvas, P122, The Wallace Collection, London, https://wallacelive.wallacecollection.org/eMP/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=collection&objectId=65056&viewType=detailView.

[264] "Doll's Shirt", 1690-1700, linen, T874A-1974, Victoria and Albert Museum, London https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O83242/dolls-shirt-unknown/.

suggested a Classical aesthetic. This dress behaviour joined with other features (e.g. objects held, hairstyles, tattoos, accessories) to identify them as "others" while remaining part of familiar artistic traditions. The portraits were also suitable to be displayed in a palace and/or mass distributed. Verelst could portray his subjects to be read as honorable and his portraits as artistic while also demonstrating the four men's Indigeneity through their visible tattoos and nudity.

The men's air of nobility in the portraits may also align with the period's myth of the "Noble Savage." This myth holds that there is something admirable and pure about a person supposedly untouched by the "corrupting influences of civilization."[265] In these portraits, the representational nudity of some of the men set in a forest and conceptually naked establishes their savagery while their stance and mantles convey an air of nobility. While perhaps complimentary on the surface, portraying Indigenous people as beautifully unevolved and one with nature also has ties to justifying colonization. This myth has been used to dehumanize Indigenous people by equating them to animals to be domesticated as well as create a hierarchy of those more or less noble.[266] Through the balance of nobility and savagery in the portraits, Verelst may be balancing his audiences' varied expectations but he also played into an established narrative around Indigenous people.

The hierarchy within the Noble Savage myth can be seen in the portrait of the suited Tejonihokarawa (Figure 4.8). Notably different from the other men, he holds wampum instead of a weapon, outranks the others (in reality and in the captions of the prints), and is noticeably depicted in the most European clothing wearing a coat, breeches, and hose. The moccasins all the men are described as wearing in the 1710 pamphlet are here replaced with heeled buckled

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[265] "Noble savage," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Britannica, 2024), https://www.britannica.com/art/noble-savage.
[266] Terry Jay Ellingson, *The Myth of the Noble Savage,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 219-220, 229, 230.

shoes.[267] Within the myth of Noble Savage, this inclusion of more clothing distances Tejonihokarawa from the savage and aligns him with the more civilized European man. Since he carries the item of peace, not war, and has the most status, this portrait creates visual links to European cultural dress practices as well as power and peacemaking devices. This plays into a settler colonial narrative discussed by Veracini where the potential for morality in an indigenous population goes hand-in-hand with their assimilation.[268] The depiction of Tejonihokarawa therefore creates a pro-colonial visual that equates greater assimilation to European culture with greater power.

Analysis of All Sources

A material culture analysis of a shirt and shift revealed the cultural priorities built into the garments themselves but also what could not be learned from the object alone. The tension between prioritizing hygiene, economics, and status could be seen in the garments. Areas of the shirt and shift that may have extended from beneath other clothing prioritized symbols of status and aesthetic beauty. Unseen parts of the garments mostly aim for strength to withstand laundering and make efficient use of fabric. The linen undergarments studied are multifaceted. A performative component rests in the shirt's ruffled front and may be embedded in the shift's delicate sleeves. A practical side may also be found in the shift's sleeves if they are there to fit a gown's tight sleeves. Additionally the full sleeve, simple construction, and strengths in the materials, assembly and stitching of both shirt and shift were likely equally valued. In effect, the performative and the materiality of the linen shirt and shift are sewn together to create attire that is more than simple undergarments.

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[267] Four Kings of Canada, 7.
[268] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 25.

Understanding the tension of priorities embedded within the shirt and shift requires a full understanding of European clothing and body care customs. The analysis of the shirt revealed that the expense of the shirt is not revealed only in its public performance. Insider knowledge of sewing and laundering practices as well as close examination are required to reveal the quality of the garment. While the deduction stage of the object analysis is described here in Chapter 4, the entirety of Chapter 2 is also necessary to contextualize this type of garment. To understand the performance of the linen undergarment, there needs to be an understanding of the relationship of linen and body care, how linen was laundered, the symbolism of white equaling cleanliness but also being a financial expense, the relationship between the poor and morality, and the relationship of linen undergarment to the rest of the clothing system. It is unlikely that the average European person thought about these layered meanings in their linen undergarments on a daily basis but rather that it was so ingrained in their culture, it became common sense. Without the European dress culture context, it is difficult to understand the impact of the shirt and shift in the early colonial period in the Eastern Woodlands.

The letters of Marie de l'Incarnation reveal the importance of the shift to the French Ursuline nuns of Québec. The shift played a key role in the Ursuline convent whose founder and staff hoped to convert Indigenous girls to Catholicism and French ways of life. Wearing the shift was required for the students because the nuns considered it a moral and hygienic necessity despite its significant financial burden on the convent. The shift was so important that it served as an emotional touchstone for gaining donations and justifying the purpose of the institution. However, despite years of effort, most of the Indigenous students did not continue to wear linen undergarments once they left school. Even when the Indigenous girls had been immersed in

settler culture and likely understood the importance of the shift in this context, they did not permanently subscribe to the belief in its hygienic and moral necessity.

The portrait of St. Kateri depicts a woman who had been immersed in both Indigenous and settler communities wearing what could be a modified European undergarment. The garment depicted has construction details that are akin to a man's shirt but are also similar to Marie de l'Incarnation's descriptions of garments worn by Indigenous women. This shirt-like garment was worn over other clothing items and had an overall pattern not found in European linen undergarments. This pattern could be printed, beaded, or even fur. Given the inconclusive nature of the visuals and the fact that the painting was created after St. Kateri's death, there were many questions remaining as to what the garment was or if it was real. As such, for this study, the findings from the St. Kateri portrait were inconclusive.

Marie de l'Incarnation's letters also reveal that the shirt played a political role between settler and Indigenous communities. Shirts were given to Indigenous leaders during negotiations of relationships between nations. The Indigenous leaders gifted wampum to the settlers. In these situations, the Indigenous communities treated the negotiations as they would with other Indigenous nations and gave something appropriately significant to the relationship being built. However, the gifts that settlers gave in return were not equally important within settler culture. While both groups were invested in creating peace between their nations, the use of shirts as a gift revealed a discrepancy between the relationship that each community believed they were building.

The analysis of the Verelst paintings reveals a tension between depicting the men as Indigenous, conveying their honorable status as visiting dignitaries, and inscribing the works within a Classical genre. The dress behaviours in the portraits reveal the true station of the four

individuals. Whether shirt-clad or in an unadorned coat and breeches, their attire was not that of visiting nobility despite the Four Kings caption. Nonetheless, if their dress behaviours, the objects in the portraits, and the settings convey Indigeneity, the artist imparted an air of nobility to the sitters. By using both white shirts as nudity by proxy and draped attire, the artist also connected his work to Classicism. Verelst was able to depict the men (and their tattoos) as his audience would expect but also remained within a current artistic tradition. However, when it comes to power dynamics, the different use of shirts in the Verelest paintings also tied into settler colonial narratives such as the myth of the Noble Savage. Furthermore, by painting Tejonihokarawa, the only Indigenous man of rank, in a coat and breeches and the others only in shirts, Verelst creates a visual hierarchy that aligns greater European cultural assimilation with greater authority. Based on the portraits' notoriety, as they were later etched for wide distribution, and the prints' circulation amongst First Nations, the paintings may be seen as subtly pushing settler colonial narratives of settler superiority.

Settler colonialism cannot be found in the shirt and shift as objects alone. What can be understood through a material culture analysis of these objects is the tension between the different facets of the garments as they pertain to body care, economics, and public performance. Taking these elements and placing them within an early colonial context through the examination of other sources reveals the more damaging contribution of the shirt and shift in settler-Indigenous community relationships. From questionable diplomatic gift exchanges of shirts, to Marie de l'Incarnation's insistence on shift-wearing to frenchify Indigenous girls, to Verelst's depictions of the Four Kings as Eurocentric propaganda, the sources consulted for this material culture analysis, allow us to understand that shirts and shifts allowed a space for settler

colonial narratives to develop and begin to impact the power dynamics between Indigenous and settler communities in the 17th and 18th centuries.

In 17th and 18th century Eastern Woodlands, the foundations of settler colonialism were being laid and what may be seen as humble objects like shirts and shifts played a part in this story. From settler intentions for the land and people on it, we know they wished to dominate and/or eliminate Indigenous peoples either by assimilation or force. The presumed superiority of European culture was embedded in their use of white linen shifts and shirts. The treatment of Indigenous nations as lesser than their European counterparts was implied through the gift of shirts and imposition of shifts, but this was not stated outright. There may have been a risk in alienating Indigenous nations or becoming their enemies by stating settler goals clearly. Nonetheless, the research demonstrates that, through diplomatic gifts of shirts and the Ursuline nuns' imposition of shifts, an inescapable settler colonial narrative of settler superiority was being created. Those not wearing linen were seen as "naked as worms"[269] (i.e. pejoratively viewed) and unhygienic. Those wearing linen but not conforming to all settler dress practices were deemed to be savage and subordinate. Only complete assimilation appeared to be satisfactory. Despite potential good intentions and imposing full body portraits, we know from our position, centuries later, that these settler colonial narratives around Eurocentricity and white supremacy had devastating and long lasting effects.

[269] Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, 97.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This research examined the significance of the shirt and shift in the development of power dynamics between settler and Indigenous communities in Eastern Woodlands North America in the 17th and 18th century by conducting a material culture analysis of two clothing artifacts. The research revealed that white linen shirts and shifts played a part in the power dynamics at play. The layered meanings of linen undergarments in European dress systems allowed a space for settler colonial rhetorics to be propagated.

In Chapter 2, the different types of power associated with 17th- and 18th-century Eurocentric uses of white linen shirts and shifts were parsed out through a literature review. These included the power of hygiene as linen was thought to remove sweat from the body to maintain good health and prevent certain diseases. Linen undergarments were thus central to Eurocentric body care practices, but a 17th-century case study pertaining to the imposition of such practices on Indigenous girls by Ursuline nuns in Québec also revealed their moral power. While health concerns were significant, the importance of linen shifts was also part of the institution's goal to convert their charges to Christianity and assimilate them into French culture, which were both deemed superior. While Indigenous people of the Eastern Woodlands cleansed their bodies, they did so in different ways and did not consider imported linen as hygienic as it conserved body fluids and was thought to attract lice. A cultural divide emerged where settlers perceived the lack of linen shifts and shirts to be uncivilized practices. In addition to being a core body care practice, the wearing of linen shirts and shifts was part of a basic standard of Eurocentric propriety and social standards: cleanliness was linked to high moral character. Clean white linen undergarments had health, moral, and semiotic powers: they had a performative part to play as they could visually convey European customs and moral rectitude. Such powers could

and would be weaponized against Indigenous communities and thus affect the dynamics that formed between Indigenous and settler communities.

The important cultural role of linen shirts and shifts meant they also had economic and political power. Whiteness in linen was associated with cleanliness but expensive to both acquire and maintain making it a status symbol. Linen fabric (among many other trade goods) was frequently imported from Europe and bought by Indigenous customers. This created a mutually beneficial economic system that was deeply impacted by Indigenous preferences. Besides being bought and traded, shirts were also gifted by settlers to Indigenous leaders. Gift giving was an important element of political alliance building in both European and settler cultures though with different nuances. Settlers tended to see gifts freely accepted and important primarily for economic value, Indigenous gifts marked the beginning of a relationship with expected future obligations. Both cultures also used and understood the use of dress as marking new identity–including permanent roles, such as marriage–creating a mutually understandable semiotic language of dress. While the white linen shirt and shift did not have qualities frequently admired by Indigenous consumers (e.g. being colourful or warm), its importance as a political gift and symbol meant these garments affected political and economic systems within and between both communities.

The practical use of linen and its relationship to laundering of undergarments were found to be key to European cultural practices of bodily cleanliness, which shaped their perception of Indigenous cultures in the Eastern Woodlands. This also made linen undergarments essential to European ideas of morality, ideas not shared with Indigenous cultures. The monetary value and symbolic importance of shirts and shirts also gave them economic and political power that influenced relationships between Indigenous and settler communities. As such, shirts and shifts

were influential, multifaceted objects that impacted the power dynamics developing between Indigenous and settler communities.

In Chapter 3, the material culture methodology used for this research was described. A material culture analysis was performed on a linen shirt and shift from the ALCTC. This analysis was adapted from the methodologies of Prown as well as Mida and Kim and was conducted in four stages: observation, deduction, reflection, and interpretation. The garments were closely examined as thoroughly and objectively as possible. Deductions were made based on reasoning and the observations. Then background research was conducted to place the objects in context. In the last stage, all the information gathered was interpreted in the context of the research question. For this research, the objects were the centre of the research but not studied in isolation.

Paintings, and texts were also used as sources to investigate the same objects: the linen shift and shirt. The letters of Marie de l'Iincarnation were read closely for her discussion of linen undergarments. This information was scrutinized to understand how these objects were used but also how they were discussed by a settler institution in the Eastern Woodlands. Four oil paintings by John Verelst representing Indigenous men were examined to understand how they depict shirts but also how the context in which the sources themselves were created affected what is being portrayed. These sources helped contextualize the objects as well as introduced their own information. While there are limitations to the perspectives presented as all sources were of settler or European creation, using multiple sources aimed to create a more holistic approach to the research.

In Chapter 4, through the material culture analysis of the shirt and shift, it was demonstrated that different aspects of power could be in tension with each other and prioritized differently across different areas of the garment. Research findings included how the parts of the

garment that would show in public were of a more delicate nature that did not accurately represent what was hidden beneath other clothing. As a result, these objects can be seen as being part of a performance of status that came at the expense of the ability to vigorously wash the garments though contemporary written sources claiming the hygienic laundering of shirts and shifts to be their most important quality. The strength to stand up to laundering could also be sacrificed to economize on fabric. Material culture analysis reveals that despite the practical nature of the garments, the idea of the shift and shirt could wield more power than the objects themselves.

While the white linen undergarments' performance was widely understood in Europe, in the Eastern Woodlands, this type of object had to speak for itself and did so poorly. Marie de l'Incarnation tried to assimilate the Indigenous girls into French cultural practices including the wearing of linen but was largely unsuccessful. The Québec governor gifted shirts to First Nations in diplomatic exchanges when given wampum. The use of shifts and shirts in these instances reveal a discrepancy in the relationship settlers and Indigenous nations believed was being built. Indigenous leaders engaged with settlers as an equal nation whereas settlers treated Indigenous nations as subordinate to be absorbed into French culture. While the shirt and shift appear in the trappings of respect or care, the evidence demonstrated there was also a rhetoric of settler supremacy being perpetuated.

The analysis of four 1710 full body portraits by Verlest allowed a closer look at the use and depictions of white European-style shirts on Indigenous men. Verlest painted the four Indigenous men while they visited London as ambassadors and he used symbols to depict the men as having an air of nobility but also to appear distinctly Indigenous. The use of simple, white linen shirts worn alone by three of the men allowed Verelst to depict his subjects as

symbolically nude but remain within artistic tradition. Verelst's paintings play into the myth of the Noble Savage by contrasting the men's regal stance with their lack of clothing. The inclusion of the one man of rank wearing a suit creates a visual hierarchy that equates European-style clothing with power. The findings demonstrate how shirts may have been used to support the Noble Savage construct and establish a hierarchy of clothing to depict Indigenous leadership.

Settler colonialism is naturally insidious, hiding its violence under denial of Indigenous oppression and instead creating fictions of natural assimilation or disappearance. Evidence from primary and secondary sources indicate that Indigenous nations did not agree to settler subjugation and engaged with them as equals. Settlers actively tried to build relationships with Indigenous communities but the use of shirts and shifts explored here reveal an undercurrent of disrespect within overtly respectful gestures. The gift of linen shirts and shifts perfectly demonstrate the trap of settler colonial narratives: refuse the gift and be hunted as a violent enemy, perform "clean linen" correctly and assimilate to settler body care standards, or accept the object but not the ideas and be cast into the role of uncivilized, unclean, and savage. Every option could be twisted into justification for the forced assimilation of Indigenous peoples in the name of "civilization." The convoluted liminal space the shirt and shift inhabited between skin and garment, performance and practicality, idea and reality, allowed settlers to wrap condescension in a respectful package and plant seeds of settler colonialism that would grow for centuries.

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