

'HOUSE OF NO SPIRIT': AN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY  
OF THE INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

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## Abstract

This dissertation investigates an often disregarded aspect of the history of the Indian Residential School (IRS) system in British Columbia (BC): namely, the designs, aims, and uses of its architecture. Central to the dissertation is the contention that the IRS should not be considered a “school” *per se*, as this label suggests not only kinship with a broad spectrum of institutions, but also intimates a place of salubrity and self-improvement. On the contrary, the study evinces the particular nature of the IRS: to disrupt the formation of genealogies between these structures and other modern institutions. This emphasis on distinctions—between the IRS and other modern buildings—is explored through a comparative architectural topology, meant to reveal the precise function of the IRS: to target certain colonized Indigenous subjects, to effect particular rationalities of colonial rule, and to produce distinct spaces within which to enforce new behavioural norms. Moreover, I argue that the IRS comprised places without place, non-places where Indigenous children, by design, were meant to no longer feel at home in their own societies, cultures, communities, and families.

In addition to rethinking IRS architecture in BC, the study also surveys several conflicting opinions on how—or if at all—to commemorate the institutional remnants of this complex and, often, painful history. Various repurposed, neglected, or demolished, the former IRS pose several problems, in terms of determining their historical value and their place among existing national, provincial, and regional sites of memory. I analyse the official processes by which material and intangible traces of the past become bearers of heritage value. Following this, I investigate in depth the cluster of issues that trouble attempts to recognize and preserve the “difficult heritage” of the IRS.

## Preface

The dissertation incorporates solely authored analyses that have been previously published in the following two sources:

Carr, Geoffrey. "Educating Memory: Educating the Remnants of the Indian Residential School." *Journal of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada* 34, no. 2 (2009): 87-101.

Carr, Geoffrey. "Atopoi of the Modern: Revisiting the Place of the Indian Residential School." *English Studies in Canada* 35, no. 1 (2009): 109-136.

Chapters 1 and 2 of the dissertation contain material from both articles listed above. Chapters 3 and 4 of the dissertation contain material from the article "Atopoi of the Modern: Revisiting the Place of the Indian Residential School."

This dissertation contains testimony gathered in interview. Accordingly the study was reviewed and approved by the UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board in the Office of Research Services at the University of British Columbia. The Certificate Number for approval of the study is H08-01925.

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## **Introduction: The Indian Residential School: Site Unseen**

This dissertation investigates an often disregarded aspect of the Indian Residential School (IRS) system in British Columbia: namely, the designs, aims, and uses of its architecture. In addition to rethinking IRS architecture in BC, the study also surveys several conflicting opinions on how—or if at all—to commemorate the institutional detritus of this complex and, often, painful history. My reasons for this enquiry, however, exceed the effort to fill this gap in scholarly knowledge. Rather, I hope to further complicate already ambiguous questions about the nature of these institutions, the misdeeds housed there, and the “legacy” of the past with which Indigenous peoples and Settlers are faced.<sup>1</sup> I join this wider process of historical interrogation not only to counter certain apologist claims about this difficult past but also to map tentative ethical positions for both Settlers towards their colonial inheritance and later immigrant groups who have joined Canadian society. This introduction will provide a brief preamble, definitions for key terms, methodological and theoretical approaches of each chapter, biographies of IRS survivors interviewed, and a review of relevant literature.

The day I began to conduct field research into the architectural history of the IRS—23 Feb. 2008—Squamish elder Lena Jacobs was laid to rest. At ninety two, she was the eldest member of the Squamish Nation, and her sustained efforts at reviving Skwxwú7mesh Snichim, the language of her people, were lauded in tributes in provincial newspapers and in the BC Legislature.<sup>2</sup> What makes this coincidence particularly compelling was the manner in which I learned of her passing. Knowing only from online sources that St Paul’s IRS had at

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<sup>1</sup> I use the term “Settlers” to indicate both descendants of Europeans who immigrated to Canada in earlier colonial eras, as well as more recent immigrants from around the globe. The terms Settlers and Whites are both capitalized reflecting current editorial standards. My use of the term Indigenous is explained in greater detail later this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> “Official Report of Debates of the Legislative Assembly - Feb. 26, 2008,” <http://www.leg.bc.ca/Hansard/38th4th/h80226p.htm#9981> (accessed 2/3/2011, 2011).

one time operated in North Vancouver, I drove to the site of St Paul's Roman Catholic Church to do some very preliminary field research. Unbeknownst to me, a funeral service for Ms. Jacobs was being held at the church, located on the Squamish reserve.

The carpenter Gothic church sits in a fairly inconspicuous location on the waterfront. Exiting from a major thoroughfare onto the reserve, I quickly found myself driving through a crowd of mourners streaming from the house of worship. Unable to turn around, I was advised by RCMP officers directing traffic to proceed through the reserve and exit by another street. They also asked, in the interests of propriety, that I leave the area immediately. I was compelled to slowly inch my way through the crowd of hundreds. Overwhelmed by a sense of intruding into a moment in which I did not belong, I made a faltering attempt to be respectful, avoiding the faces and gazes of people passing by. The intensity of this experience remains with me to this day, for it was the moment that I realized that the history I was studying was not distant, abstract, or removed, but powerfully present.

In the three years since, my research has been guided by continual consultation with Indigenous people from many walks of life: academics, artists, band administrators, counsellors, healers, political leaders, teachers. The advice given and introductions made by a good number of these people have facilitated access to sites, archives, and interviews—sources of knowledge that otherwise would have remained unknown to me. Not surprisingly, despite this ongoing support, the sense of intrusion described above has not disappeared, although such anxieties have not been exacerbated by those Indigenous people with whom I have consulted and interviewed. Quite the reverse.

My apprehension issues from a sense that the forms and processes of academic research are polluted by a long history of exploiting Indigenous people for individual

prestige and financial reward. Linda Tuhiwai Smith elaborates on the tradition of scholarly research in colonial settings:

Research is one of the ways in which the underlying code of imperialism and colonialism is both regulated and realized. It is regulated through the formal rules of individual scholarly disciplines and scientific paradigms, and the institutions that support them (including the state). It is realized in the myriad of representations and ideological constructions of the Other in scholarly and ‘popular’ works, and in the principles which help to select and recontextualize those constructions in such things as the media, official histories and school curricula.<sup>3</sup>

In this unflattering light, it is important, then, to ask who benefits from research. Who owns it? Who frames the questions? How is it to be disseminated? Whose interests does it serve?

In addition to these issues of research, there is a worry of producing a document that in no way connects the violence of the colonial past to the present. Plainly put, the image of Canada, as a defender of human rights across the globe, masks the sustained operation of a Settler state that, at bottom, rests on a presumption of the racial and cultural inferiority of Indigenous peoples. Thus, it is important here to underscore the ongoing impact of the Indian Residential Schools—and more generally colonialism—in Indigenous communities around the country. This reality could not be made clearer than in the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples at Ten Years: A Report Card*, published by the Assembly of First Nations in 2010. The Report confirms how systemic problems of (among others) poverty, unemployment, lack of education, chronic disease, substandard housing, unsafe drinking

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<sup>3</sup> Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 6-7.

water, and insufficient sanitation continue to trouble First Nations reserve communities across Canada. According to the study, First Nations communities considered as a demographic group ranked 76 out of 174 nations in the world (roughly equivalent to the living standard of Colombia) according to the United Nations development index of 200. The remainder of Canada, however, ranked among the top nations in the world at eight.<sup>4</sup> This disparity, playing out across racial and cultural lines, should cause anxiety for Settlers, and, if not, should beg the question why not? As historian and curator Richard Hill argues:

[T]hese histories are still playing out in our lives. Every time there is a Wounded Knee, and Ipperwash, or an Oka Crisis, every time an Aboriginal kid dies in the street, we are seeing the outcome of [these] histories. ... Of course these are white histories as much as they are Aboriginal and should matter to anyone living off the spoils of conquest in the Americas.<sup>5</sup>

A tacit assumption of this study, thus, is that non-Indigenous Canadians, myself included, need to know more about the history of the IRS to understand why we, as Settlers, think as we do.

One of the main implications of such study for Settlers is a heightened degree of self-reflexivity, an un-learning of the discursive force of colonialism, a “decolonization of the mind.” Though decolonizing the mind first appeared as an aim of Indigenous thinkers, it has now been taken up by some in Settler states.<sup>6</sup> Paulette Regan, Director of Research for the

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<sup>4</sup> “Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples at Ten Years: A Report Card,” Assembly of First Nations, [http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/aboriginals/pdf/afn\\_rcap.pdf](http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/aboriginals/pdf/afn_rcap.pdf) (accessed 2/1/2011, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Qtd. in Sarah de Leeuw, *Artful Places Creativity and Colonialism in British Columbia's Indian Residential Schools*. PhD Dissertation (Ottawa: Library and Archives Canada, 2008), 3.

<sup>6</sup> For some perspectives on decolonizing the Indigenous mind see: Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (London; Portsmouth, N.H: J. Currey; Heinemann, 1986), 114.; Gloria Bird, “Towards a Decolonization of the Mind and Text 1: Leslie Marmon Silko's “Ceremony”,” *Wicazo Sa Review* 9, no. 2 (Autumn, 1993), 1-8.; Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 208; for decolonizing the Settler mind, see: Paulette Regan, *Unsettling the Settler within Canada's*



Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), argues that the key to decolonizing Settler minds—what she calls “unsettling the Settler within”—lay in challenging the “peacemaker myth”, i.e. the benevolent image of Canada projected by patriotic narratives through most every facet of national life:

The fundamental question that each of us must answer for ourselves is whether we choose to remain perpetrators, bearing cheap “gifts” of false reconciliation, or strive to become authentic peacemakers who are willing to be unsettled in the decolonizing struggle for transformative social change and a just peace.<sup>7</sup>

Although I agree with Regan about the need to confront the popular, nationalistic image of Canada, I contend that her view of Settlers (as merely perpetrators) cannot fully explain Settler apathy, indifference, or racial hatred towards Indigenous peoples.

I complicate Regan’s perpetration model by working through aspects of Dominik LaCapra’s “tragic grid of participant-positions”—defined as the set of relations that binds together the perpetrator, collaborator, victim, bystander, and resister who experience a particularity painful past or “limit event.” La Capra defines the “limit event” as a historical episode so deeply wounding that its memory exists at the limits of human language and, thus, at the limit of comprehension and representation.<sup>8</sup> He also notes that historians studying the

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*Peacemaker Myth, Reconciliation, and Transformative Pathways to Decolonization*. PhD Dissertation (Ottawa: Library and Archives Canada, 2007).; Paulette Regan, *Unsettling the Settler within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010).; J. Iseke-Barnes, “Pedagogies for Decolonizing,” *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 31, no. 1 (2008), 123. For various views on the nature of settler society, see: Daiva K. Stasiulis and Nira Yuval-Davis, *Unsettling Settler Societies: Articulations of Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Class* (London; Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage, 1995), 335.

<sup>7</sup> Regan, 2007, 6.

<sup>8</sup> Dominick LaCapra, *History and Memory After Auschwitz* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998.); see also Saul Friedländer, *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the “Final Solution”* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Saul Friedländer, *Memory, History, and the Extermination of the Jews of Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 142.

limit event need to be careful to avoid identifying too strongly with one subject-position or another. Rather it is important to pay careful attention to the distinctions that characterize the subject positions of the tragic grid. For LaCapra, a major purpose of this methodology is to complicate the oversimplified sets of oppositions established on the tragic grid without flattening distinctions of suffering:

The historian must work out a subject-position in ... coming to terms with his or her implication in the tragic grid of participant-positions. The conventional stance for the historian is often closest to that of the innocent bystander or onlooker. But this safe position is particularly questionable in the case of ... limit events. The most tempting position is probably that of the resister with marked sympathy for the victim and antipathy for the perpetrator or collaborator. This stance is, however, too easily taken up, especially by someone who has not earned it or been tested by limit-events. I think the historian should attempt to work out a complex position that does not simply identify with one or another participant-position.<sup>9</sup>

So what, then, are the implications of LaCapra's grid to the study of the IRS and to locating possible subject positions for Settlers?

The experience of many children at the IRS could easily be described as a "limit event"—as a radically transgressive social experience that hinders the possibility of working through or representing its memory. With this in mind, if Settler historians are to perceive the threshold of such limit events, we must be willing to work out an anxious, fluid subject-position that considers each subject point on the tragic grid: perpetrator, collaborator, bystander, resister, even victim. At first glance, this last possibility—Settler as victim—

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<sup>9</sup> *History and Memory After Auschwitz*, 41.

seems least plausible, smacking of the revisionist tactic of painting perpetrators as victims. This objection, however, can be countered by considering that most Settlers in nations like Canada, to varying degrees, have been subjectivated (made a subject and been subjected to) in institutions conditioned by colonial history: hospitals, schools, government bureaucracies, workplaces, and so on. Clearly, such institutionalization has a profound impact on the lives of each Settler subject, at times beneficial but at others, I argue, dehumanizing.

This is neither an excuse for Settlers to shirk responsibility for unearned privilege nor to minimize substantive and lasting sociopolitical gains from colonialism. Rather, I am suggesting that each figure in the colonial exchange has been dehumanized to different ends. I contend that dehumanization of Settlers allows for the acceptance of the “spoils of conquest”, despite the fairly obvious toll on Indigenous peoples. I argue further that this apathy represents a profound loss, an ethical denuding producing alienation from wider communities of care. Decolonization of the Settler mind, thus, requires not only confronting perpetration but also pondering the Faustian nature of colonial privilege—benefit that both empowers and debilitates. As LaCapra concludes, “the purpose of this overcoming [of the tragic grid] would be the generation of a transformed network of relations that counteract victimization and allow for different subject-positions and modes of agency”.<sup>10</sup> In the case of the IRS, the effect is to refuse the “lo, the poor Indian” narrative by rejecting the image of Settler as ultimate victor.

Before outlining the methodological and theoretical approaches in each chapter, I will explain the use of certain key terms. Throughout this dissertation, I use the terms “Indigenous” or “First Nations,” as opposed to “aboriginal”, in recognition of the critique

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

levelled against this word by Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred.<sup>11</sup> Though, as Alfred points out, many Indigenous people and groups identify with the term aboriginal, its limiting definition serves the discursive needs of government:

[I]n Canada today, many Indigenous people have embraced the Canadian government's label of 'aboriginal', along with the concomitant and limited notion of postcolonial justice framed within the institutional construct of the state. In fact, this identity is purely a state construction that is instrumental to the state's attempt to gradually subsume Indigenous existences into its own constitutional system and body politic ... 'aboriginalism' is a legal, political and cultural discourse designed to serve an agenda of silent surrender to an inherently unjust relation at the root of the colonial state itself. The acceptance of being 'aboriginal' (or its equivalent term in other countries, such as 'ethnic groups') is a powerful assault on Indigenous identities. ... This continuing colonial process pulls Indigenous peoples away from cultural practices and community aspects of 'being Indigenous' towards a political-legal construction as 'aboriginal'.<sup>12</sup>

On the contrary, the term Indigenous refuses such compartmentalization and, in doing so, rejects the disciplinary taxonomy that words such as aboriginal help to order.

Some anthropologists have argued that the term Indigenous comprises a form of essentialism that, regardless of its political pretensions, continues to feed now-dismissed notions of primordialism and primitivism.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, these critics contend that the label Indigenous ignores the continual migratory—some even say colonizing—movements of all

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<sup>11</sup> I am specifically referring to the term "aboriginal" as it is used in Canada.

<sup>12</sup> Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel, "Being Indigenous: Resurgences Against Contemporary Colonialism," *Government and Opposition*, no. 4 (2005), 588-589.

<sup>13</sup> Adam Kuper, "The Return of the Native," *Current Anthropology* 44, no. 3 (2003), pp. 389.

early people. Thus, the use of the word Indigenous in this dissertation, in spite of these critiques, is an acknowledgment of its political efficacy: not as a truth claim *per se*, but as a form of strategic essentialism.<sup>14</sup> Mathias Guenther notes that the term serves those who wage “an often desperate struggle for political rights, for land, for a place and space within a modern nation’s economy and society”.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the word “Indigenous” remains an open signifier that both refuses the discursive frame of colonial domination and defers definitive meaning. As Ronald Niezen argues, a “rigorous definition [of Indigenous peoples] . . . would be premature and, ultimately, futile ... as [d]ebates over the problem of definition are actually more interesting than any definition in and of itself”.<sup>16</sup>

The use of two other terms—“Indian Residential School” and the “IRS”—similarly requires some explanation. The full articulation of the phrase “Indian Residential School” calls attention to the pejorative label “Indian,” so as not to gloss over the racially informed social engineering aims of the system. This same logic influenced the unflinching choice of the name “Indian Residential School Survivor Society” (IRSSS) for the provincial body responsible for, among other things, providing counselling, therapy, and legal advice for IRS survivors. The second term in question, the acronym IRS, is not used merely as a matter of convenience. As will be argued at length in a later chapter, it is my contention that referring to the Indian Residential Schools as simply “schools” or “boarding schools” has the effect of drawing these institutions into a family of structures that— through the use of mostly judicious discipline—both shape its charges in a largely beneficial way and improves their odds of success in wider society. My aim in the dissertation is to develop a novel way of

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<sup>14</sup> Strategic essentialism refers to the complex and problematic process by which disparate and , sometimes, competing nationalities or minority groups adopt an essentialized identity—projecting a unified front to aid in achieving certain ends. For an early articulation of the phrase, see: Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 309.

<sup>15</sup> Mathias Guenther, “The Concept of Indigeneity,” *Social Anthropology* 14, no. 1 (2006), 17-32.

<sup>16</sup> qtd. in Alfred and Cornthassel (2005), 607.

speaking about these structures, to articulate with greater precision the form and function of these carceral spaces while rejecting the received language of the colonial past. In what follows, I provide the methodological and theoretical structure of each chapter, biographies of IRS survivors interviewed, and a review of relevant literature.

Chapter one examines the architectural typology of the IRS, to argue that these structures do not share deep commonalities in design, purpose, or use with other modern institutions, such as schools, prisons, hospitals, workhouses, and so on. I make this comparative analysis to counter dismissive responses to public apologies and reparations for the IRS system found in apologist histories and in the Canadian media. What many of these “get over it” objections share is a sense that the IRS differs little from other forms of modern disciplinary structures. Such affinity arguments often support a fallacious “two wrongs make a right” position, where the suffering of another people in another institutional setting negates the particular pain felt by Indigenous people in the IRS. In the process, such equivalence theses—linking the IRS to a global field of modern institutions and social injustices—effectively foreclose specific questions of Settler culpability in Canada. To disrupt the cogency of affinity arguments, I interrogate the validity of those apparently obvious formal and programmatic relations that link IRS with other modern disciplinary structures—common forms, procedures, and aims that order both architectural structure and bureaucratic governance.

A second key issue addressed in this chapter concerns the equivocal nature of survivor testimony: some sharply condemn the IRS, some are fairly neutral, others find both fault and merit, while still others strongly endorse their experience. The ambiguous and contradictory content of this testimony also serves the purposes of those revisionists who

profess to provide the “whole story” or “another picture” of the IRS. This chapter argues that the architecture of the IRS provides for a further nuancing of critique, so that the range of personal testimonies can be considered in a network of relations, alongside the ideation and materialization of structures intended to govern Indigenous peoples. I posit that prising testimony apart from institutional design and educational policy provides a novel, critical view on the instrumental means, architectural and administrative, which ordered “Indian education” for over 100 years.<sup>17</sup> In other words, a shift from testimonial evidence to an analysis of architecture alters the object of study, revealing new features and producing new knowledge. This shift complicates the narratives of abuse and psychosexual trauma (as well as their absence) in an educational setting, compelling consideration of the economic and political functions of the IRS system.

The theoretical approach of the chapter depends primarily on Michel Foucault’s critique of “unities of discourse,” those ready-made, commonsensical links—between causes, effects, bodies of knowledge—that are accepted with little or no examination. Foucault dismantles such groupings of knowledge not only to remove the accretion of specious unities but also to disrupt their familiarity so that they may be theorized in a new light. Moreover, the aim is to see what unities may be plausibly reconstructed after such demolition. In the dissertation, I interrogate the broadly conceived discursive unity of the “modern institution” and its aims of isolation, classification, surveillance, spiritual and physical hygiene. In place of such general, transnational architectural unities, I argue for a highly variegated flow of forms and purposes, conditioned by a wide range of colonial settings, shifting temporalities, and Settler purposes. By doing so, I delineate those commonalities between the IRS and

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<sup>17</sup> Hereafter, the phrase “Indian education” refers to the historical program of Indigenous education instituted by the federal government.

other modern institutions that withstand critique, while rethinking, in this and in later chapters, those features specific to the IRS (and to colonial modernity) that demand a novel architectural typology.

To begin the dismantling recommended by Foucault—a project carried in various ways through the first three chapters—I examine the IRS through Ernest Goffman’s model of the “total institution”—structures in which users would be subjected to intensive corporeal and psychological controls meant to alter behaviour. Often in contemporary accounts the IRS is referred to as a total institution without applying Goffman’s variable model. Goffman theorized that total institutions ranged from relatively open (such as boarding schools and monasteries) to utterly closed (prisons, asylums, workhouses). By analysing the Indian Residential School through Goffman’s layered schema, I situate the IRS on Goffman’s continuum, in the process dismissing affinities between the IRS and places such as elite boarding schools, while considering the limited degree to which the IRS shares a genealogy with certain other modern institutions.

Chapter two argues that the nature of trauma suffered by Indigenous people at the Indian Residential School is made clearer through the study of particularities in institutional design, purpose, and use. I extend the case against “unities of discourse” by illustrating how the IRS cannot be understood apart from the distinct expressions of colonial power that required its construction. Through analyzing both architectural features and educational policies of state and church, I contend that the special nature of the IRS—evident in layout, materials, and function—served specifically to subvert the lifeworld of Indigenous people. Quite different from most schools that are meant to bestow upon students competencies relevant to culture, the IRS targeted the epistemological, ontological, social, and cultural



foundation of Indigeneity—systematically attacking Indigenous languages, religions, cultures, economies, political structures, families, and community ties.

Particular purpose-built rooms—dormitories, monitor rooms, family visiting areas—are examined in several IRS designs to demonstrate their role in forwarding the assimilative and, later, segregationist aims of colonial rule. These spaces shared the common aim of alienating children from family, friends, community, and culture. I also carefully examine the use of surveillance in the IRS, as a means to entrenching the social, political, and economic rationalities of colonial power. However, despite the overtly oppressive, racist aims of government and churches evident in IRS design and use, the chapter also explores some of the ways in which institutional power remains incomplete, affording opportunities for subjects to exploit to their advantage those spaces of ambiguous and uncertain authority.

This chapter applies David Scott's theoretical insights on colonial power to the subject of the IRS. Scott extends the Foucauldian concept of governmentality—the activity of any ruling body, state or otherwise, that seeks to assert control through shaping human behaviour—to consider the rationalities, technologies, and subjects of authority in colonial settings. Scott argues that substantive differences exist between European governance and what he calls “colonial governmentality”.<sup>18</sup> Such distinctions are made evident by studying the particular *targets*, *projects*, and *point of insertion* of colonial rule. For Scott, colonial power takes as its *target* the conduct of the colonized, Indigenous subject; takes as its *project* the entrenchment of social, political, and economic rationalities of colonial rule; and takes as its *point of insertion* the conditions in which the colonized body must exist and define itself. Applied to the IRS, this schema—projects, targets, and points of insertion—exposes

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<sup>18</sup> David Scott, “Colonial Governmentality,” in *Anthropologies of Modernity: Foucault, Governmentality, and Life Politics*, ed. Jonathan Xavier Inda (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 191-220.

profound disparities in design, aim, and function between these other modern institutions discussed in the first chapter.

My study of surveillance in the IRS benefits from Kevin Haggerty's theoretical critique of the conceptual model of the panopticon (meaning "all-seeing")—another Foucauldian concept derived from the 18th-century institutional designs of Jeremy Bentham. Haggerty argues that scholars use the concept of the panopticon too frequently to explain nearly all instances of surveillance. He contends instead that surveillance should be understood as part of a wider set of practices meant to render the subject visible to governing authority. With this in mind, I make connections between surveillance and the histories of disease, inoculation, and religious conversions in British Columbia, to suggest that surveillance systems in the IRS served not only to monitor the movement of bodies in space but also to "inoculate" children from the pathogen of Indigenous culture. My discussion of surveillance concludes by considering two paintings of Kuper Island IRS in the Picturesque manner. The canvases are analysed according to varying scholarly positions on the colonial mode of Picturesque painting—especially the "missionary Picturesque"—to outline how such representations not only mask histories of colonial violence but also comprise another way of looking into Indigenous life.

The chapter concludes by examining the role of the IRS in displacing traditional, Indigenous economies for those of the Settler. Government and churches aimed to displace Indigenous practices of collective ownership, nomadic hunting and gathering, and prodigal sharing for individual ownership, farming, and competitive accumulation of wealth. I employ Georges Bataille's concept of "general economy" and the "accursed share" to

demonstrate the scale and intensity of the uprooting of Indigenous economies, an often overlooked outcome of the IRS.

In chapter three, I develop a new idiom for the IRS not only to better describe its particular forms, aims, and uses, but also to self-consciously refuse received Settler terminology. The struggle for new words for the IRS stems from an aversion to calling these carceral structures “schools”—a term denoting places of self-improvement that foster social and cultural competency. Further, I argue that such affirmative language both eases the impact of this dark history on non-Indigenous publics and provides no resistance to apologist claims. I posit instead that the IRS could be thought of as a non-place—an *atopos*—designed to effect colonial rule by eroding a wider sense of Indigenous place rooted in ancestral knowledges—oral histories, cultural rituals, hereditary chiefdoms, traditional religions, regional languages, local diets, and seasonal travel.

I explore the notion of the non-place through Giorgio Agamben’s theorization of sovereign power in liberal democracies. Agamben holds that democracies rely for their very being on the power to exceed the bounds of domestic law, generally in the name of warding off terrorism, civil war, or economic collapse. Accompanying this ambiguous condition of law (“state of exception”) is the fragile human animal whose biological protection is the central concern of the state. Though the body of the subject falls under the aegis of the state, however, its political life is far from guaranteed. Rather, the inclusion in the state of citizens properly endowed with civil rights relies on the “inclusive exclusion” of others, people stripped of rights and abandoned by law (“bare life”). For Agamben, such evacuation of personhood cannot occur in places proper but require “dislocating localizations,” spaces of

exception in which the subjects of the state are abandoned by law, zones of unbridled authority where *everything* is truly possible.

I apply Agamben's theory to the Settler history of Canada, to suggest that episodes in which legal protection for Indigenous peoples were suspended—Oka, Gufstasen Lake, Ipperwash—are not only states of exception but also belong, with the IRS, to a wider field of dislocating localizations. The IRS, thus, appear as much as a negating potential as any positive form (i.e. a “school”)—a sort of latent evacuation severing Indigenous ties to ancestral place, a machine meant to produce non-citizens, inclusively excluded through new religious beliefs, cultural practices, work habits, economic philosophies, political systems, medicines, languages, and architectures.

The chapter also situates the non-place in colonial modernity, an assertion contrary to the recent work of Marc Augé who posits that non-places appears only in postmodernity, as a by-product of an alienating overabundance of events, spaces, and images. I counter Augé's thesis by examining school curricula, chapel spaces, dining halls—material and conceptual tools that functioned to shape conduct, decisions, and thought. Each of these features of the IRS, quite intentionally, dislocated the ways in which Indigenous children belonged to their ancestral territories, local communities, and family homes. I argue, *pace* Augé, that this dislocation in the non-place of the IRS is a defining feature of colonial modernity.

Chapter four extends my analysis of the IRS into the present day, to examine issues around commemorating the material and intangible traces of this troubling history. Especially in instances of such painful and unreconciled pasts, determining how to strike an appropriate balance—between commemoration and demolition/forgetting—is an uncertain process, as a wide variety of social actors (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) hold differing

and often conflicting opinions. Moreover, according to official standards for determining heritage value, the worth of former Indian Residential Schools—variously repurposed, neglected, or demolished—remains uncertain, as is the place of the IRS among designated sites of national, provincial, and regional memory. What follows is an investigation into the marginal status of the IRS in the extant network of officially valued historic places—not to apportion blame but to problematize the need to reconfigure this ongoing process of marginalization.

In British Columbia, IRS have been repurposed as (among other things) community colleges, band administrative offices, day cares, theatres, artist workshops, museums, pilgrimage sites, heritage parks, and, in one exceptional instance, a luxury resort including golf course and casino. This chapter considers the reuse of the following IRS sites: St Eugene IRS (1911; Allan Keefer, architect) in Cranbrook—now St Eugene Resort; St Paul’s IRS (1898; architect unknown) in North Vancouver—demolished, now St Thomas Aquinas High School; St Mary’s IRS (1883-4; architect unknown) in Mission—demolished, now Fraser Valley Heritage Park. Chapter four concludes with a discussion of the efforts of the ‘Namgis First Nation in Alert Bay to save St Michael’s IRS (1929; architect unknown) from demolition. Through an examination of these case studies, the aim is both to complicate the commemorative outcomes evident at these IRS and to raise questions about how to represent sites of problematic or “difficult” heritage.

Subsequently, I analyse the historical development of official policies for designating heritage value: distinguishing those vestiges of the past that matter from those that do not. I sketch the evolution of what Laurajane Smith has termed “authorized heritage discourse”—that is the international complex of expert spokespeople directing the legislative,

bureaucratic, technical, and aesthetic components of heritage preservation. I then examine a number of critical responses that, to varying degrees, have informed more recent heritage practices, retorts that focus on the dissonant nature of heritage, arguing that ultimately all heritage values are contested. Subsequently, I investigate problems of recognizing and preserving acutely painful, contradictory, and ambiguous pasts—“difficult heritage” like that of the IRS.

Difficult heritage, thus, is not an analytical category of heritage management like authorized heritage discourse. Rather it describes the phenomenon of a historical trauma associated with a certain place that exceeds the capacity of heritage practice to represent it. Accordingly, difficult heritage conservation no longer implies saving what can be easily accommodated in heritage registers. Rather it is a process of “unsettling”. Not simply a question of making space for new, disturbing memories, unsettling tends to raise questions about the nature of heritage representation itself, suggesting that it is not settled—i.e. commonly accepted, sedimented, and seemingly permanent—but rather is contestable, ambiguous, and contingent. Such outcomes tend, as well, to unsettle existing policies, as well as conventional national narratives and existing representations of history in heritage discourse. In the remainder of the chapter, I apply the concept of difficult heritage to the case studies mentioned earlier. I also draw upon the theoretical insights of Judith Butler and Sharon Macdonald to explore paradoxical issues of ethics and representation that not only vex commemoration of difficult pasts, such as the IRS, but also problematize accepted heritage standards based on perceived aesthetic and historical value.

## **Review of Relevant Literature**

Combatants take up positions around the topic of the Indian Residential School, as if around a gulf of unknowing—filled by the destruction of government documents, the restriction of archives, the suppression of traumatic memories, and the doubt of unsubstantiated allegations. Yet many gesture with certainty to this lacuna, to a perceived certainty, to truth. As such, this literature review is more of a non-literature review, traversing this gap in historical knowledge around which many contentious positions have been taken. As there is no possibility of a definitive accounting of the body of knowledge pertaining to the subject, it seems more fruitful to delineate some of these polemical encampments, to discern the features that distinguish one from another. Clearly such definitions run the risk of pigeonholing various authors, so these categories are formed with the caveat that each is very limited in scope, and that the bulk of texts written on the subject straddle a somewhat middling position.

For the purposes of this literature review, I am sketching three positions that are imprecise and that admit many more nuanced categories could be envisioned which would exclude far fewer valuable texts. The purpose of devising this schema is to delineate the more pronounced contestations over the history of the Indian Residential Schools. Who is most culpable for its horrors? What was the true intent of its designers? What is the nature of the mass social trauma inflicted? How much agency did Indigenous people have? By no means is this an attempt to solve or even fully address the issues that this comparison raises; rather the point is to map the terrain of these very significant disagreements. The three categories of histories—apologist, centrist, and radical revisionist—will be briefly defined before examining examples of each.

I used the phrase apologist—drawing from its historical origin *Apologia*, a positivist argument for the doctrine of a particular religion—to define those histories that defend the Christian mission to Indigenous peoples, downplay Church culpability for the abuses in the IRS, minimize or eliminate discussion of sexual abuse or other forms of violence, accentuate Indigenous agency, and stress the degree of government control and responsibility for the system. Apologist also is used for its more general meaning, to defend against an accusation. Very often apologist histories are self published, side stepping peer review, a strategy that allows for the dissemination of questionable conclusions based on faulty argument and methodologies.

Centrist histories are mainstream. Their authors base their conclusions on extensive research of reliable sources. They tend to demonstrate these sources through adequate citations, display scholarly standards of argument and methodology, and distribute text through reputable publishers. Centrist histories of the IRS—however safe—have been accused by more radical historians as downplaying outcomes when much of the truth of this past remains undetermined. Centrists tend to either dismiss the more sensational claims of revisionist historians or attempt to avoid resolving issues of government and church intent, favouring explanations highlighting bureaucratic neglect, disorganization, or apathy.

Radical revisionist histories attack the common perception of the Indian Residential Schools, claiming the scope and intensity of crimes committed in these institutions far exceeds those individual misdeeds reported in the press. Though some attention is paid to individual cases of sexual abuse, torture or murder, revisionists tend to explore cases and questions regarding systemic crime: disappearances, burial in unmarked graves, forced



sterilizations, unauthorized medical experiments, and, most pointedly, the possibility of intentional genocide.

### **Apologist Histories**

An example of this type is Terry Glavin's book, *Amongst God's Own: The Enduring Legacy of St Mary's Mission* (2002). It is included in the apologist category owing to its claim that the culpability for the IRS program falls squarely on the federal and provincial governments. Glavin argues that the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) who ran the day-to-day operation of St Mary's IRS were largely pawns of government, an assertion supported by the authority of the quotation of survivor Bill Williams:

They [the Oblates] got used by the Canadian government. The oblates and the native people shared the same religious beliefs—the idea of a higher power—and it was an opening for the federal government to develop that system. The point was to break up the family units in the communities.<sup>19</sup>

Glavin contends that the Oblates were reluctant collaborators who have no choice but to go along with government policies regarding compulsory education, sequestering children from parents, and the implementation of corporeal punishment.<sup>20</sup> He cites a number of outrages for which the federal government was truly responsible—overcrowding, poorly ventilated and heated facilities, high mortality rates owing to tubercular infection—as if to imply that the OMI had no accountability for mistreatment of Indigenous children. While he notes that the suffering endured in the IRS by many children was real and regrettable, he insists that

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<sup>19</sup> Terry Glavin and St. Mary's Indian Residential School, *Amongst God's Own: The Enduring Legacy of St. Mary's Mission*, (Mission, BC: Longhouse Pub, 2002), 50.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

“throughout most of their history, [the IRS] were generally staffed by well-meaning and courageous faculty”.<sup>21</sup>

These compelling claims about the strong-arm tactics of government and coercion of the well-intentioned OMI at St Mary’s would have benefited from proper citation. Perhaps the most serious flaw of Glavin’s book is the absence of any citations, regrettable in a text making such serious truth claims. There is some irony in the fact that, despite Glavin’s aim to tell “other stories” that are more “interesting” and “complicated” (i.e. somewhat redeeming), the bulk of the recollections recorded in the book are ostensibly negative in tone. To his credit, he does include the testimony of two instructors, Sr. Mary Lucille and Father John Tritschler, both of whom (unsurprisingly) provide positive recollections.

Although the author does not shy away from the question of sexual abuse, he avoids all accounts of pedophilia at St Mary’s, apparently, for legal reasons, a requisite silence. He also suggests that the worst sexual offenders were in the vast minority, but of course this position neither takes into account that these types of criminals typically abuse many children nor the issue of the institutional complicity and silence.<sup>22</sup> That said, in more than a few places Glavin demonstrates even-handedness and sensitivity to those who did suffer in the IRS.

OMI priest Thomas Lascelles’s book *Roman Catholic Indian Residential Schools in British Columbia* (1990) also fits in the apologist category. The book was published by the OMI to commemorate its Sesquicentennial Anniversary (150 years), so it is not likely to have been peer reviewed. The author makes a strong case for Indigenous agency. He uses the successes of former IRS students Andrew Paull and Stan Dixon, leaders in the Squamish and

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 27.

Sechelt Nations respectively, to substantiate his claims that certain students benefited enormously from attending the IRS.<sup>23</sup> Lascelles, more so than Glavin, seeks to absolve the church from culpability for abuses, suggesting that the IRS and the churches “became instruments in the government’s policy of assimilating the Indian people into dominant white society”.<sup>24</sup> Lascelles also notes that while most students are willing to acknowledge positive as well as negative aspects of the IRS, few are prepared to look at themselves as responsible for their own problems—a “phenomenon” that for the author casts doubt on the impartiality of those who provide entirely negative testimony.<sup>25</sup> Curiously, the author forms his own “unity of discourse” when he argues that the IRS belongs to an ancient educational trajectory—to the “apt means of advancing the twin goals of Christianizing and civilizing” that, for centuries, Rome had promulgated in Europe. Lascelles goes as far to suggest that the IRS had “precedents” in ancient Babylon, Egypt, and Israel, as well in Aztec and Mayan societies.<sup>26</sup>

What is woefully absent from the text is any admission of sexual abuse on the part of OMI priests. Indeed, though his first footnote cites Celia Haig-Brown’s “sharply critical” book *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School* (1988)—in which pedophilia at the IRS is prominently discussed—Lascelles remains utterly silent on the issue. The author concedes, in more than one place, that the Roman Catholic Church made certain “blunders” in their indoctrination of Indigenous peoples to the Gospel, though he says the “native peoples’ brokenness” has as much to do with liquor, discrimination, and

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<sup>23</sup> Thomas A. Lascelles and Order of OMI in B.C., *Roman Catholic Indian Residential Schools in British Columbia* (Vancouver: Order of OMI in B.C., 1990), 85-86.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 82

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

unemployment as does the negative impact of the IRS.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, though the book contains a great deal of testimony from ex-students, there is a strong sense that these entries were vetted so as to project a positive image for the Roman Catholic Church and the OMI.

Anglican Bishop Eric Bays's recent book *Indian Residential Schools: ANOTHER PICTURE* (2009; caps original) is the most extreme instance of apologist history included in this review. As the title of the book indicates, Bays professes to provide "another picture", i.e. a more balanced view of the history and consequences of the IRS. He claims that both "pictures"—negative and positive—need to be brought together to form a "full picture", a requisite fusion if "we wish to speak of the residential schools as a whole".<sup>28</sup> He reiterates the same caution throughout the book: that "the picture of the residential schools, to be fair and whole, needs to include the gentle and caring side, as well as the experience of harsh discipline and punishment".<sup>29</sup> What he implies is that centrist historians avoid including a fair amount of positive testimony of the IRS, though each of the centrist authors included in this literature review, in many places, address issues of Indigenous agency, resistance, staff kindnesses, and so on.<sup>30</sup>

His aim is similar to that of Lascelles and Glavin, in that he attempts to mitigate the culpability of churches for the harmful aspects of the IRS experience, in this case by inserting positive testimony of survivors and staff, insisting on the good intentions of the vast majority of teachers and principals, and by claiming the IRS could not but help but be part of the racially intolerant society to which it belonged. He then concludes that staff in the IRS were, in fact, more tolerant than average Settlers, a claim supported by their willingness to

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>28</sup> Eric Bays, *Indian Residential Schools: Another Picture* (Ottawa: Baico Pub, 2009), 38.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>30</sup> It is ironic that the very texts that he seeks to critique, especially John Milloy's *A National Crime* (1999) and J.R. Miller's *Shingwauk's Vision* (1996), are the very same sources that he cites to support crucial arguments he makes about the transmission of tuberculosis or the prevalence of sexual abuse.

work in the system and by the dictates of faith that “taught them to care for their neighbour”.<sup>31</sup> While he concedes that there were negative impacts to the students— isolation from families, corporeal punishment, separation of genders—he asserts (by the familiar device) that these problems are balanced by “another picture”, i.e. the kindness of certain staff and the advantages given to some survivors through their training. He goes so far as to suggest that the IRS has become a “scapegoat to carry much of the aboriginal discontent that comes from other sources”—by which he means inequitable treaties, land claims, and the paternalism of the federal government.<sup>32</sup>

Throughout the book, the author also uses affinity arguments to diminish church responsibility, especially against charges of racism and excessive discipline. The text opens with the following equivalence thesis:

Most people will be aware, from their own experience, that the history of all schools changes from better to worse and back again, depending on such factors as the quality of the staff, physical resources available, and the spirit of the student body” (underline original).<sup>33</sup>

Bays continues to argue that any system of education could be misconstrued as an authoritative structure forwarding an elitist agenda. On the basis of this general claim, he concludes that because the Indian Residential Schools were staffed mainly with White, Europeans the system “left itself open to accusations of colonialism, racism, and the deprivation of culture from the aboriginals”.<sup>34</sup> He also provides an account of school discipline, allowing readers to think that it occurred in the IRS, only to reveal that it was a

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., vi.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 168.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., iv.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., v.

recollection of Robertson Davies from his time in Upper Canada College. Bays also recounts his own experiences of discipline in day schools in Manitoba. While the author concedes that Indigenous children may have been less adaptable to the disciplinary structure of the IRS—owing to the lack of corporeal punishment in their communities and to their freer lifestyle at home—he again turns to an affinity argument claiming that “every school system will have within it some staff members who are not very sensitive to the needs of students”.<sup>35</sup>

The most odious chapter of the book, although a mere seven pages long, surveys the issue of sexual abuse in the IRS. The author, while acknowledging the occurrence of pedophilia in the system and the genuine worth of the various apologies given by the churches, raises in the most cursory manner the question of the degree or extent to which such crimes took place. He then engages in a transparent rhetorical technique, by which he includes several quotations from other students, instructors, and principals who report seeing no instances of sexual abuse. While he is careful not to support these claims, the inclusion of this testimony in his limited assessment appears as an endorsement.<sup>36</sup>

Bays self-published his book (*Baico*), and, like Lascelles and Glavin, the text is not peer reviewed. The lack of proper peer-reviewing, as well as Bays’s attempt to ballast the traumatic aspects of the system with a “positive” side, has drawn sharp critique from Rev. Wendy Fletcher, a professor of church history in the School of Theology at the University of British Columbia. She argues that to “insist that we weight the so-called ‘positive side’ of the residential school experience as equal with its horror re-victimizes those already harmed and prevents the enlightenment necessary for true reconciliation”.<sup>37</sup> Despite such glaring

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 89-95.

<sup>37</sup> Wendy Fletcher, “Indian Residential Schools: Another Picture by Eric Bays - CEP Online Community,” <http://info.cep.anglican.ca/2010/02/indian-residential-schools-ano.html> (accessed 1/31/2011, 2011).

methodological and ethical flaws, books such as Bays's do not have significant impact, especially with the easy circulation of uncritical information on the internet.

For example, a posting by former teacher Bill Steele found on the website for the Frontier Centre for Public Policy—a self-professed “conservative/libertarian think tank” denouncing the “climate scare” and promoting offshore oil drilling—claims that “if there is a desire to be educated in the ‘truth’, it can be found in the book *Indian Residential Schools: ANOTHER PICTURE*”.<sup>38</sup> Steele adds that “Bishop Bays is the kindest, most loving, caring soul one could meet and, in the view of many, knows more about the Indian Residential Schools, from coast to coast, than anyone else alive”.<sup>39</sup> While Steel concedes that all IRS were “not perfect”, he insists that the institutions provided “the model and infrastructure for ‘what could have been’ ... [but] governments, churches and aboriginal leadership did not have the will or interest to correct deficiencies, where they existed”.<sup>40</sup> He concludes by musing ruefully that “we had those gems [the IRS] in the palm of our hands and ground them into dust”.<sup>41</sup>

### **Centrist Histories**

J. R. Miller's book *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (1996) was the first attempt to write a comprehensive history of the IRS after the abusive treatment of children in these institutions became common knowledge. This text is peer-reviewed, bases its conclusions on extensive, duly cited sources, and is published by a reputable press (University of Toronto Press). Miller's book begins by describing the ill-fated dream of Chief Augustine Shingwauk, who envisioned a “teaching wigwam” in which his people

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<sup>38</sup> Bill Steele, “FCPP - Frontier Centre for Public Policy: It's Time to Focus on Healing,” <http://www.fcpp.org/publication.php/3365?print=yes> (accessed 1/31/2011, 2011).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

would learn to read and write from Anglican missionaries, enabling their survival in a rapidly changing world.<sup>42</sup> In Miller's opinion, blame for the failure of the Shingwauk's vision, for different reasons, falls to both government and churches.

He notes that both church and state shared a view of Indigenous infantilism, i.e. a racially informed view that these colonized people were childlike and in need of paternal care.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, the author ascribes to both state and church the near "fanatical" separation of genders in institutions, both within its walls and in the assignment of gender-specific work duties on the grounds.<sup>44</sup> He does not claim, however, that government and missionaries worked in harmony, the most persistent source of friction being the chronic lack of federal funding for the IRS.

Miller distinguishes between the harms caused by the churches and those by government policy. This also characterizes a centrist text, for neither does it seek to diminish the culpability of the missionaries nor does it lump together the aims, policies, and practices of disparate organizations. Missionary efforts to convert Indigenous people to Christianity were informed by a form of "scientific racism", substantiated by the technological and economic success of white settlers in many parts of the world.<sup>45</sup> He also blames the churches for subjecting Indigenous children to, in varying degrees, loneliness, cold formality, poor food, harsh corporeal punishment, and sexual abuse. Government, in Miller's view, were responsible for constructing and adequately funding a network of educational institutions that could provide a good education, but they failed to do so. This amounts to a form of neglect, again a centrist standpoint, for it stops short of assigning intent to government for the worst

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<sup>42</sup> J. R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 4.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 414.



problems, most notably high mortality owing to disease—an issue explicitly highlighted in radical revisionism.

Miller's book is also centrist for its claim to moderate Indigenous agency in the Indian Residential Schools. He makes plain in a chapter entitled "resistance" that, though the scope of protest about mistreatment in the IRS was limited, the forms by which such resistance was expressed were many. Complaints, violence, defying various aspects of Indian affairs policy—these were some of the ways students and parents expressed their displeasure with the IRS experience. He also makes some references to times and places where students received better treatment than others, and such kindnesses, by default, opened opportunities for students to better their lot by developing contacts with caring staff.<sup>46</sup>

Another example of a centrist history, John Milloy's book, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System* (1999), emerged from his research for the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Like J.R. Miller's *Shingwauk's Vision*, this text is also peer-reviewed, extensively footnoted, and published by a recognized press (University of Manitoba Press). Milloy's text has been better received than other manuscripts on the subject; its balanced tone may explain why he was chosen to lead the research initiative of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission—a post that he has since resigned. Milloy assigns culpability to both government and churches for the harms suffered in the IRS, though, unlike Miller, he goes to greater lengths to demonstrate the degree to which these organizations were often at odds. To this end, he makes the case that the federal government, and in particular the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA), must bear the burden of blame for the failures of the IRS. He cites chronic underfunding, poorly designed buildings, and gross medical negligence for a number of terrible outcomes—ranging from

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 422.

inadequate instruction, inhospitable facilities, malnutrition, and most significantly, high mortality rates from tuberculosis.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, though the DIA established guidelines for the administration of humane punishment, all too often these dictates were not enforced and protests of unnecessary cruelty were ignored.<sup>48</sup> That said, Milloy does spend ample time illustrating the heavy handedness of many of the IRS staff, though he neglects to include the testimony of any such workers.

Milloy's book takes a more ambiguous stance towards the question of Indigenous agency. This is evident not only in the absence of contemporary accounts of survivors but also in his choice not to pay sustained attention, as did Miller, to the question of Indigenous resistance to excesses of the IRS system. However, as does Miller, Milloy's centrist analysis avoids directly addressing the question of governmental intentionality, especially around the issue of the spread of tuberculosis. He cites several reasons why the system failed its charges so profoundly: overcrowding, poorly ventilated dormitories, per-capita funding that forced schools to enrol too many students, lack of proper medical inspections by both school and DIA officials, and funding shortfalls as a consequence of the outbreak of World War I.<sup>49</sup> What is missing from this analysis is any argument for the possibility of intentional neglect, a theme explicitly developed in radical revisionist texts attempting to develop arguments of genocidal intent.

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<sup>47</sup> John Sheridan Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999), 77-108.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

## Radical Revisionists Histories

Roland Chrisjohn's book, *The Circle Game: Rethinking the Indian Residential School Experience in Canada* (1997), aims to subvert the "standard account" of the IRS—the "circle game" by which churches and government explain the often brutal outcomes of the system as mistakes, oversights, or misdeeds of a few bad actors. Chrisjohn—an Oneida scholar and professor of Native Studies—writes in an academic manner, supports assertions with citations, constructs rational arguments, and publishes through a reputable First Nation's press (Theytus). This book is radically revisionist because Chrisjohn argues that the IRS should be considered an instrument of genocide deployed by the Canadian government and churches. He also uses the term Holocaust to the same end. Chrisjohn's text opens with the question "what if the Holocaust had never stopped?"<sup>50</sup> He then suggests that this is precisely what has happened in Canada—that colonialism and, in particular, the IRS constitute a type Holocaust. Not surprisingly, his correlation between Canadian colonial history and the Nazi genocide has drawn sustained critique. For example, David MacDonald argues that not only does this assertion ignore the particular nature of the Shoah but that such sensationalistic comparisons have the unfortunate effect of diverting attention from the particular nature of the crimes committed against Indigenous peoples.<sup>51</sup>

The crux of Chrisjohn's argument—that the Canadian government and churches are guilty of genocide—rests on the legal definition of genocide as expressed in the 1948 United

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<sup>50</sup> Roland David Chrisjohn, Sherri Lynn Young, and Michael Maraun, *The Circle Game: Shadows and Substance in the Indian Residential School Experience in Canada*. (Penticton, BC: Theytus Books, 2006), 4. Citations correspond to an online pdf of Chrisjohn's book found here: Roland Chrisjohn, "Circlegame.Pdf (application/pdf Object)," [http://www.nativestudies.org/native\\_pdf/circlegame.pdf](http://www.nativestudies.org/native_pdf/circlegame.pdf) (accessed 2/10/2011, 2011).

<sup>51</sup> David MacDonald, "First Nations, Residential Schools, and the Americanization of the Holocaust: Rewriting Indigenous History in the United States and Canada," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 40, no. 04 (2007), 1009.

Nations Genocide Convention (UNGC).<sup>52</sup> According to Article II of the UNGC, genocide is not merely the intentional killing of members of another group, but also includes the “intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such”. The means of destruction listed in the UNGC that are relevant to the history of the IRS include “causing serious bodily or mental harm”, and “forcibly transferring children of the group to another group”. Chrisjohn then relates how Canada has only adopted two of five subsections of the Convention into Canadian law, excluding the conditions described above regarding mental harm or forcibly transferring children. Chrisjohn also argues that assimilation, usually described as a form of “cultural genocide”, should simply be considered genocide, as the phrase cultural genocide betrays an ethnocentric view of culture as merely an accessory to the human body, rather than something indivisible to human being.<sup>53</sup>

Though Chrisjohn is blunt about the impossibility of knowing the precise motives of those who devised the Indian Residential Schools, he asserts the importance of rethinking the history of the IRS—and, more generally, Canada—as a series of systemic crimes. This distinguishes him from both apologists and centrists, who assign criminality to individuals and apathy, mismanagement, and inertia to bureaucracies. For this very reason he denounced Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s 2008 formal apology for the IRS, because Harper characterized the actions of the government and church as “abuse” and “neglect”, rather than as crimes.<sup>54</sup> Chrisjohn asserts that, unlike mistakes that simply “happen”, crimes are

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<sup>52</sup> Chrisjohn includes a complete copy of the UNGC on page 72. For a detailed explanation of the implications of the various genocide typologies, see: Katherine Bischoff and Natalie Fingerhut, “Border Lines: Indigenous Peoples in Genocide Studies,” *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 33 (Nov, 1996), 481.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>54</sup> An interview where Chrisjohn voices this objection can be heard here: “Program Information - Redeye - Co-Op Radio: Stephen Harper’s apology|A-Infos Radio Project,” <http://www.radio4all.net/index.php/program/28045> (accessed 2/10/2011, 2011).

deliberately committed by criminals who, if caught, are tried, sentenced, incarcerated.<sup>55</sup> This impetus toward recognizing the criminality of the IRS—especially as genocide, the most serious crime possible—runs counter to popular conceptions of Canada as a fair player. Unlike the apologists and, to a lesser extent, the centrists, Chrisjohn rejects any notion that well-intentioned staff mitigated the darker consequences of the institutions. He also, again contrary to the apologists, ascribes little agency to Indigenous actors. *The Circle Game* is radically revisionist for it rejects not only the “standard account” of IRS history but also all Canadian history, even current reconciliation efforts, as part of a complex, long standing, and intentional system of genocide.

Kevin Annett’s self-published book, *Hidden from History: The Canadian Holocaust* (2001), is to the radical revisionism what Eric Bays’s text is to apologetics. As the title makes clear, Annett extends a similar argument to Chrisjohn’s: namely, government and churches in Canada are guilty of genocide against Indigenous peoples. Annett also bases his conclusions on a similar interpretation of the UNGC. What distinguishes Annett from Chrisjohn, however, is the extent and ferocity of genocidal crimes he claims occurred in the IRS. While Chrisjohn lists a range of physical, sexual, and psychological abuses, Annett’s allegations are much worse, including charges of forced sterilization, medical experimentation, intentional exposure to fatal diseases, torture, disappearances, and murder. Worse still, he charges that some 50,000 children disappeared from these institutions, many interred in unmarked mass graves.<sup>56</sup> Annett argues that these horrible crimes were perpetrated under a cloak of secrecy, which were protected by a cabal of enormously powerful politicians, church officials, RCMP

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<sup>55</sup> Chrisjohn, (2006), 13.

<sup>56</sup> Kevin D. Annett and Truth Commission into Genocide in Canada (Canada), *Hidden from History: The Canadian Holocaust: The Untold Story of the Genocide of Aboriginal Peoples by Church and State in Canada* (Canada: The Commission, 2001), 6.

officers, and corporation heads. Culpability for this “Canadian Holocaust” is shared, if unequally, between state and churches. He goes as far as to suggest that the IRS operated like Nazi death camps, bent on a “final solution” for Canada’s Indian problem.<sup>57</sup>

Annett’s book is troubled by a series of methodological problems—over-generalizations, irrelevant analogies, *non sequiturs*, inflammatory language, and poorly cited evidence. He has been criticized, quite fairly, for declaring that all Indigenous people were subject to the crime of genocide in the IRS, despite two obvious problems: first, the majority of children attended day schools and, second, residential schools were not built in every region or province of the country.<sup>58</sup> Others accuse him of distorting facts to make the analogy between the Nazi genocide and the “Canadian Holocaust”.<sup>59</sup> For example, he quotes DIA superintendent Duncan Campbell Scott, who—in his refusal to close down or upgrade the IRS in spite of serious tubercular outbreaks—declared that the DIA was still “geared towards the final solution of our Indian Problem.”<sup>60</sup> However chilling this comment is, and whatever legitimate doubt it raises about government culpability, clearly it does not follow that this indicates a national system of death camps. More outrageously still, he claims (again without evidence), that the Vatican was aiding Nazi experimentation in the IRS before World War II.<sup>61</sup>

For the most part, Annett supports his claims by the testimony of Indigenous people, and this is perhaps the most questionable aspect of his research. He has been accused of unscrupulously abusing the permission of certain Indigenous interviewees.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, by

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>58</sup> Andrew Woolford and Jasmine Thomas, “Genocide of Canada’s First Nations,” in *Genocide of Indigenous Peoples*, ed. Samuel Totten and Robert K. Hitchcock (New Brunswick, N.J: Transaction Publishers, 2011), 67.

<sup>59</sup> MacDonald, 1007.

<sup>60</sup> Qtd. in Annett, 6.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>62</sup> MacDonald, 1008.

including personal testimony with unsubstantiated, sensationalistic material, he has managed to drive a wedge between many Indigenous people and their communities.<sup>63</sup> My aim is not to cast doubt on the veracity of such anecdotal evidence. My concern is that Annett's methods seem to be exacerbating rather than improving social relations between Indigenous people, as well as between Settlers and Indigenous groups. Moreover, he is attracting attention to the issue in such a way as to quell debate, despite a growing interest in the intricate and vexing questions of Indigenous genocides in the Americas.

In a very recent text entitled *Genocide of Indigenous Peoples*, Andrew Woolford suggests that Canada cannot for much longer evade serious, sustained study by scholars in the field of genocide studies. Such inquiry is already underway in other Settler states, most notably Australia and the United States.<sup>64</sup> Academics in this growing field are struggling to redefine phenomena such as cultural assimilation, colonial development, and Settler intent in relation to shifting and contested notions of genocide. This sort of meaningful debate promises to complicate our understanding of Settler history while skirting less-fruitful, sensationalized areas of contention. What is certain is that much of the truth about Canada's colonial history, including the IRS, remains unknown. John Milloy has stated that it may take several years and cost as much as 20 million dollars to establish mortality evidence—textual and archaeological—for all who died at the IRS.<sup>65</sup> There have also been reports of recent

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<sup>63</sup> I know this anecdotally from accounts of Indigenous people with whom I have consulted. Many times I have been asked if I am in any way connected with Annett; each time there is visible relief that I am not.

<sup>64</sup> For recent considerations of Australian "history wars" fought over issues of genocide, see: A. D. Moses, "An Antipodean Genocide? the Origins of the Genocidal Moment in the Colonization of Australia," *Journal of Genocide Research* 2, no. 1 (03, 2000), 89.; Robert van Krieken, "Rethinking Cultural Genocide: Aboriginal Child Removal and Settler-Colonial State Formation," *Oceania* 75, no. 2 (12, 2004), 125.

<sup>65</sup> Ryan Paul, "Unexplained Deaths in Residential Schools Haunt Native Communities | Canada | Intertribal Times," <http://www.intertribaltimes.com/canada/unexplained-deaths-in-residential-schools-haunt-native-communities/> (accessed 1/31/2011, 2011).

government interference in the Truth and Reconciliation, a further obstacle to establishing a wider base of reliable information.<sup>66</sup>

In the chapters that follow, I hope to make a contribution to this unsettled field. It is my contention that analysis of the design, policies, use, and repurposings of the architecture of the Indian Residential School yields particular insights not evident in other forms of evidence. With this in mind, the aim of this dissertation is to nudge the figure of this banal institutional structure closer to that uncertain horizon where rages the struggle for approximations of truth.

### **Biographies of Interviewees**

Interviews with survivors of the Indian Residential Schools were conducted in the spring of 2010 in the West Vancouver offices of the Indian Residential School Survivor Society (IRSSS). Significantly, each person interviewed has agreed to offer this testimony publicly, not only sharing their experiences but also their biographies. This is of tremendous significance, for recording such experiences anonymously—especially more difficult ones—could potentially cast participants in the role of victim, as readers would remain unaware of their personal histories of overcoming, resilience, and strength. These people not only survived the IRS but also are making important contributions to Indigenous healing, justice, education, and reconciliation. By associating their pasts with their current lives, readers will not regard these individuals as casualties of their history, but instead will recognize their numerous accomplishments and public service. The following biographies have been

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<sup>66</sup> Linda Diebel, “No Truth, no Reconciliation for Aging Residential School Survivors - Thestar.Com,” , <http://www.thestar.com/article/839663--no-truth-no-reconciliation-for-aging-residential-school-survivors> (accessed 1/31/2011, 2011).



provided by interviewees and have not been altered in any way.<sup>67</sup> The questionnaire used in interview is provided in the appendix of the dissertation.

### **Chief Robert Joseph (Hon. Dr.)**

Robert Joseph is a Hereditary Chief of the Gwa wa enuk First Nation. He is also an Indian Residential School Survivor who spent 11 years at St. Michael's Indian Residential School at Alert Bay on the central coast of British Columbia.

He spoke only Kwa Kwala as a six year old boy entering this Residential School. He was beaten many times for speaking his own language and endured other hardship and abuse. He recognizes the destructive impact that this experience had on his life, family and community. This same experience has given him the inspiration to assist aboriginals in seeking hope, healing and reconciliation. He is a former Executive Director for the Indian Residential School Survivors Society. And is currently a Special Advisor to Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Joseph has spent most of his working life as an advocate for aboriginal people. He has worked for provincial organizations in BC including the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Native Brotherhood of BC, and the First Nations Summit. He has also worked for Tribal Councils like the Nuu-Chah-Nulth, Kwakiulth District Council, and Musgamagw Tribal Council. In addition, he has worked for large and small Bands as Band Manager.

Joseph has a broad experience in dealing with public and government institutions. Throughout the years he has been Community Development Worker, Local Government Worker, District manager for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. He also served as

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<sup>67</sup> Though each of these survivors hold a prominent position at the IRSSS, it is important to note that their testimony is personal and is not meant to express the aims or policies of the IRSSS. To learn more about the mandate of the IRSSS, please consult their website: [www.irsss.ca](http://www.irsss.ca).

Aboriginal Fisheries Advisor to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. In the late 1960's, he was BC Coastal Project Manager for the Company of Young Canadians during a time when former Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau was espousing a "Just Society" for Canada.

Joseph also has some experience in media having been the first native reporter for the Vancouver Sun. He also worked on small weekly publications. In addition, he was involved with the aboriginal media including the Native Voice, Indian Voice and Neseika as well as with the Radio Audio Visual Education Network.

Joseph has served on numerous charitable organization Boards both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal. He has served on Credit Union and Hospital Boards. Joseph also strives to be active on a volunteer basis. He has led fund-raising drives both for United Way and Heart Drive in the past.

Recently Joseph has been awarded with an Honorary Doctorate of Law Degree from the University of British Columbia for his distinguished achievements in serving BC and Canada through the Indian Residential School Survivors Society and for preserving the traditions and cultures of the First Nations of BC.

He has always sought to bridge the differences brought about by intolerance, lack of understanding, and racism at home and abroad. His dedication to peace and reconciliation is supported by his chairmanship of the Native American Leadership Alliance for Peace and Reconciliation. Joseph understands that faith, hope and healing for Aboriginals will ultimately require the bringing about of good will between many parties.

### **Ms. Adeline Brown**

Adeline was born on Haida Gwaii, the sixth child born to parents Amos and Marjorie. Her father was Haida, and her mother was Nisga from the Nass Valley—Eagle clan on the Nisga side but was adopted into the Raven clan by one of the elders of Old Masset. Both of Adeline’s parents and three of her siblings attended a residential school, as well as several nieces and nephews. She is married and has five children, a foster daughter, eleven grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. Adeline was an Early Childhood Educator for about 20 years. She then decided to further her education, becoming a counsellor and earning a Master’s degree in Art Therapy. For the past six years, Adeline has worked as a Regional Health Support Worker with the Indian Residential Schools Survivor Society, helping other survivors to cope with the ongoing traumas caused by physical, psychological, and sexual abuse.

### **Mr. Charles Chapman**

Charles has worked with the Indian Residential School Survivors Society since 2001. He is a member of the Sto:Lo First Nation and comes from Skwahli, near Hope, BC. He has been active in alcohol and drug counselling for over 22 years in various First Nations communities. Charles has also worked actively in the Detox Centre and mobile treatment program in Prince George. He has been involved in a lot of group work with adults and children in conflict with the law. He spent 11 years in the Indian residential schools at Kuper Island and St. Mary’s in Mission, BC. He is a founding member of the Provincial Residential Schools Project, parent organization of this Society. He says we need to address more than quitting drinking, drugs and family violence. Charles says what must be done is to address the sexual violence that occurred at Indian residential school. As a worker in the field

of sexual abuse it is helping community members to address the problem that is happening within their communities today.

**Mr. Alvin Dixon**

Alvin has worked with the Indian Residential School Survivors Society since 1999. He is from the Heiltsuk Nation and spent 8 years at the Alberni Indian Residential School on Vancouver Island. He continued his education at UBC majoring in English and Geography and received his Professional Teacher's training and degree. He has spent most of his career in management of fisheries organizations for First Nation associations. He has held many directorships including the Native Friendship Centre, Native Education Centre, Native Brotherhood of BC, Allied Indian Metis Society and Native Fishing Association. He currently serves on the boards of Healing Our Spirit, Residential School Survivors' Council and Vancouver Child & Family Services Society. Alvin served as a member of the BC Board of Parole and is on the National Theology and Faith committee of the United Church of Canada. He has four adult children and just recently became a grandfather to his fourth lovely grandchild. He currently works as a volunteer with the Indian Residential School Survivors Society and chairs the Advisory Board to the organization. He is also an advisor to the Heiltsuk Tribal Council when they are negotiating with the province and the federal government.

**Mr. Gerald George**

Gerald has worked with the Indian Residential School Survivors Society since 2000. He is a member of the Skwah First Nation near Chilliwack, BC. Gerald spent three years attending St. Mary's Indian residential school in Mission and the Kamloops Indian residential school.

He has a certificate in Focusing Therapy and is a certified trainer in the field. He has been working in the helping profession since 1975. Gerald's main career objective is to facilitate wellness in First Nation communities in BC. Gerald values his marriage and is getting ready to celebrate his 37th anniversary. He has two daughters and is highly active in the events stemming from his communities traditional longhouse. An avid listener of Blues and Jazz music he is well known in the Valley as Gerald "Orbison." The biggest struggle First Nations are having, according to Gerald, is a struggle with trauma and the unresolved grief and shame from the loss of our Indian-ness and connection to and use of our lands. When he is not active with his work Gerald can be found exploring the traditional healing methods of many First Nation cultures

## Chapter 1: Troubling Typologies of the Indian Residential School

*Sooner or later in life everyone discovers that perfect happiness is unrealizable, but there are few who pause to consider the antithesis: that perfect unhappiness is equally unattainable. The obstacles preventing the realization of both these extreme states are of the same nature: they derive from our human condition which is opposed to everything infinite.*<sup>1</sup>

*Primo Levi, 1961*

The historian J. R. Miller has argued that in order to better understand the Indian Residential Schools (IRS) researchers must broaden their approach to draw upon either neglected materials held in denominational archives—photographic collections, artworks, letters, or diaries—or upon Indigenous oral histories. Surprisingly, he overlooks architecture.<sup>2</sup> To date, there has been little scholarly study of the design, siting, scale, and programmatic use of the IRS, nor of the relations between this infrastructure and the policies and practices guiding its operation. In this dissertation, I closely examine the “second-generation” IRS, with the aim of making a contribution to this understudied yet highly significant aspect of Canada’s architectural history.<sup>3</sup> Thus, I have researched architectural plans, archival documents, photographs, drawings, paintings, as well as conducted interviews with IRS survivors, in order to glean new insights not only into how these structures functioned but also into the complex and often contested consequences of subjecting Indigenous children to these confining institutional spaces.

A lack of access to archival material that would precisely outline the aims of staff architects employed by the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) thwarts research into the

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<sup>1</sup> Primo Levi et al., *Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazi Assault on Humanity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 13.

<sup>2</sup> J. R. Miller, “Reading Photographs, Reading Voices: Documenting the History of Native Residential Schools,” in *Reflections on Native-Newcomer Relations: Selected Essays* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 83-106.

<sup>3</sup> Day schools and industrial schools could be described as belonging to the first generation of Indian schools, industrial schools designed to hasten full assimilation. Conversely, second generation Indian Residential Schools, mainly built between the 1910s and the early 1930s, served a segregationist program.

architectural history of the system. The vast majority of relevant documents held in federal, provincial, regional, and church archives remains restricted. As well, many files have been culled by the various departments in charge of the Indian Affairs portfolio.<sup>4</sup> Searches for the architects named on IRS plans in the catalogues of Library and Archives Canada or Indian and Northern Affairs Canada yielded no results, and an extensive survey of major architectural journals published in Canada in the first half of the twentieth century uncovered only one mention of IRS construction.<sup>5</sup> This lacuna obscuring the operation of a federal system that operated for over a hundred years at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars—arguably one of the more significant architectural enterprises in Canadian history—remains inexplicable, considering the scholarly attention paid to relatively obscure architectural projects, including extensive study of primary and high school construction. I will argue throughout this dissertation that this archival and historical erasure appears as a symptom of a more complex process of negation embedded in the policies and designs ordering the schools. Owing to these limits and absences, I contend that an analysis of the plans, materials, and layouts of the IRS, as well as comparisons to earlier, elite British boarding school designs, offer a crucial, supplemental means by which to discern little-scrutinized yet profoundly important connections between design, policy, and intentionality.

Exploring such connections between the architectural design of the IRS and its social and subjective effect raise questions about the causative relations between building typology, institutional power, causation, and agency. This sort of study remains open to the temptation of fetishizing material structure, as if certain architectural configurations, once made

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<sup>4</sup> For a detailed account of the history of DIA document storage and destruction see Sean Darcy, “The Evolution of the Department of Indian Affairs’ Central Registry Record-Keeping Systems: 1872-1984.” *Archivaria* 58 (2004): 161-171.

<sup>5</sup> The journal *Construction* briefly discusses the logistical problems of building All Saints School at Lac la Ronge (Saskatchewan), as the selected site was located in a heavily wooded area, over 240 kilometres from the nearest rail station. See *Construction*, March 1922, 77.

concrete, compel certain ethical judgements. However, as architect William Sherman notes, it is absurd to ask if the building is ethical or not, for “ethical values are not imminent in a work, but exists in the intentions (cultural or individual, conscious or unconscious) that brought a work into being”.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the principles that guide ethical precepts and behaviour are not stable and universal but rather historically and spatially contingent. Thus, though study of the architecture of the IRS provides further evidence for negotiating the ethical nuances of this difficult history, it is only discernable through reference to government reports, archival documents, interview testimony, photographs, artwork, newspaper articles—in short, the evidence informing this text. Throughout this dissertation, issues of relation between form and effect will be considered at the intersection of several overlapping concerns and outcomes: materiality, design, institutional logic, government policy, church doctrine, and subjective encounter.

In this chapter, I first provide (despite the lack of information) a detailed account of the development of second-generation IRS design and corresponding Indian education policy. Following this I consider the design and function of these institutions against dismissive responses to the intergenerational trauma of the IRS found in revisionist histories or in “get over it” objections heard in the Canadian media. I contend that an ethical engagement with the legacy of the IRS requires resisting such responses and, further, that the architecture of this system offers a means to do so. I outline two fundamentally problematic premises from which conclusions downplaying the effects of the IRS are drawn. First, I question the manner in which equivocal testimony of survivors of the IRS—many praise their time in these institutions while others do not—often supports arguments that the

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<sup>6</sup> William Sherman, “Fire Wall: A Meditation on Architectural Boundaries,” in *The Hand and the Soul: Aesthetics and Ethics in Architecture and Art*, ed. Sanda Iliescu (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009), 173.



institutions themselves have been unfairly demonized. Further, I relate how revisionism and “get over it” objections tend to rely upon what I call “affinity arguments.” Such reasoning seeks to foreclose questions of culpability by correlating the history and structures of the IRS to a wider field of modern institutions and social injustices. To disrupt the cogency of the affinity argument, I interrogate apparently obvious groupings or “unities” that link IRS with other disciplinary structures—elite boarding schools, prisons, asylums—delineating those commonalities that withstand critique, while rethinking, in this and in later chapters, those features specific to the IRS that demand a novel architectural typology.

### **The Burden of Civilizing Designs**

In *Making Native Space*, Cole Harris makes clear the importance of architecture in the establishment of colonial hegemony. He quotes an early colonist, English businessman Gilbert Malcolm Sproat (1834-1913), who relates how rapid was the pace of development in the territory of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth First Nations on the West Coast of Vancouver Island. “A civilized settlement,” Sproat recounts, “was formed almost immediately in their midst, and the natives stared at the buildings, wharves, [and] steam engines ... which they had never seen before”.<sup>7</sup> This passage intimates how in the Settler imaginary, from the earlier moments of colonial exchange, the built world of Settler culture indexed both the perceived spread of civilization and the assumed state of Indigenous barbarity. Since the 1870s, various departments entrusted with the Indian Affairs portfolio have brought this architectural presence to bear on most aspects of Indigenous life, producing a wide variety of architectural designs. The Indian Residential School represents the apex of this building program, yet many related structures were devised, ranging from industrial schools, day schools,

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<sup>7</sup> R. Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002), xvi.

community centres, and agents' houses, to bungalows, furniture, and even outhouses. The IRS thus functioned as a node within an extensive network of government architecture, an infrastructural system built to both pacify the nation's Indigenous populations and to guarantee colonial settlement and economies—a radical shift achieved by enforcing changes to land use practices: assigning reserves, surveying and fencing land, abolishing communal structures, building single-family dwellings, constructing roads, wharves, and so on.

In the same period in which these new architectures were mobilized, the federal government took control of the education of Canada's Indigenous peoples. It was widely believed in the 19th century that without direct intervention in the form of education, Indigenous people would disappear from the earth.<sup>8</sup> The sharp decline in Indigenous population—owing to loss of game animals, relocations from ancestral territories, ravages of alcohol, and disease—convinced many senior government and church officials that Indigenous societies and cultures were, without radical interventions, fated to extinction.<sup>9</sup> Parallel to state and church interests in social engineering ran a genuinely altruistic, though often misguided, impulse to ease the injury of colonialism through education. Indeed many well-intentioned administrators, teachers, and staff believed in the inherent good of the IRS. Moves to ease the plight of Indigenous communities were also mirrored in wider society in numerous progressivisms in Canada and abroad, designed to better the lives of women, immigrants, underprivileged children, workers, and others. In this way, the willingness on the part of government and church officials to design, construct, and manage the IRS should not be seen as a form of false consciousness, an ideological interpellation to operate an

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<sup>8</sup> Donald J. Wilson, ““No Blanket to Be Worn in School”: The Education of Indians in Nineteenth-Century Ontario,” in *Indian Education in Canada: The Legacy*, ed. Jean Barman, Yvonne M. Hébert, and Don N. McCaskill (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1986-1987), 64-87.

<sup>9</sup> Milloy: 15; Raymond Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1996), 107.

oppression-sustaining machine. Rather, as Michel Foucault and others have suggested, modern disciplinary power and constructions of truth are coterminous.<sup>10</sup> In other words, the logic undergirding the production of such disciplinary spaces was authorized by the “truth” of smallpox, alcoholism, family dissolution, cross-cultural technical disparities, and so on. This provides one explanation for why these institutions appeared as a plausible solution and were so enthusiastically endorsed.

Ottawa entered into an uneasy partnership with the four Christian denominations charged with the day-to-day operation of the Indian Residential Schools.<sup>11</sup> Of these four the Roman Catholic Church was the most heavily involved, followed by the Church of England (Anglican), the United Church, and the Presbyterian Church.<sup>12</sup> The bulk of this national network of institutions was built between the 1860s and the 1950s and served not only the colonial aims of governments of all levels but also the Christianizing vision of various churches.<sup>13</sup> From inception, boarding schools in the Indian education system emulated the US policy of “aggression civilization”, which aimed to subvert indigenous governments, societies, cultures, and languages.<sup>14</sup> Journalist Nicholas Flood Davin was commissioned by the federal government to survey Indian industrial schools in the US. In his now infamous *Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half Breeds* (1879), Davin’s enthusiasm for American methods of separating young children from their home communities, forbidding native languages, and restricting familial contact shaped in large part the design of Indian

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<sup>10</sup> Michel Foucault, “Truth and Power: An Interview with Alessandro Fontano and Pasquale Pasquino,” in *Working Papers Collection*. ed. Meaghan Morris and Paul Patton (Sydney, Australia: Feral Publications, 1979), 109-133.

<sup>11</sup> Throughout the history of the IRS, government and churches disagreed on questions of curriculum, discipline, institutional authority, and, most persistently, funding.

<sup>12</sup> Milloy, 307.

<sup>13</sup> From the 1860s to the first years of the 20th century, a fair number of day schools and boarding schools were constructed by church organizations without input of the DIA architects. For example, St Paul’s IRS(RC) in North Vancouver was fully built before the parish approached Ottawa for funding.

<sup>14</sup> Haig-Brown, 30.

schools in Canada.<sup>15</sup> Indigenous children were to be removed “from evil surroundings” (i.e. parents and home communities) and “kept constantly within the circle of civilized conditions”, the circle circumscribed by the boundaries of the educational facility.<sup>16</sup> The particular architectural features that supported this program will be developed fully in the next chapter.

The desired outcome of this hawkish educational process is rendered in a pair of staged, before-and-after photographs of Thomas Moore, originally produced for the 1896 Annual Report for the DIA (fig. 1.1). The images reveal a central tactic of the government responsible for its formation: simply put, if Indigenous communities were to be assimilated into civilized Canadian society then only Indigenous children would be malleable enough to take on the ways of the Settlers. And, again, Ottawa relied heavily, if unsteadily, upon missionaries to advance its program meant to solve the so-called “Indian problem”. Interestingly, in the “after” picture not only is the countenance, hair, and dress of the boy radically altered, but also the setting is reconstructed carefully. He leans confidently on a classicized pedestal, the toy gun seen at left replaced by the poised, open hand of progress. Significantly the young, “reformed” student is flanked at right by modern headgear and left by a potted plant, referencing the importance of cultivation, both agricultural and personal.

By the 1910s, however, the confidence projected by this photo would wane.

Significantly, the design of the IRS came into favour as the government became increasingly

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<sup>15</sup> A full copy of the Davin report can be accessed here: Nicholas Davin Flood, “Davin Report,” [http://www.uoguelph.ca/shakespeare/multimedia/pdf/davin\\_report.pdf](http://www.uoguelph.ca/shakespeare/multimedia/pdf/davin_report.pdf) (accessed 2/3/2011, 2011).; for the history of the American Indian Boarding School system see David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 396.; Michael C. Coleman, *American Indian Children at School, 1850-1930* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993), 230.; Margaret Archuleta et al., *Away from Home: American Indian Boarding School Experiences, 1879-2000* (Santa Fe: Heard Museum, NM; Museum of New Mexico Press, 2000), 144.

<sup>16</sup> Nicholas Flood Davin, qtd. in Suzanne Fournier and Ernie Crey, *Stolen from our Embrace: The Abduction of First Nations Children and the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities*, (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1997), 55.

frustrated by the resistance of Indigenous peoples to assimilation into Settler society. The inception of the IRS design marks a definitive shift in policy, from one of cultural assimilation to segregation and quarantine. These new institutions authorized the changing position of certain administrators within the DIA—it would be more cost-effective to convert Indigenous populations into an agrarian class and sequester their communities on reserves.<sup>17</sup> In previous decades small day schools formed the backbone of the Indian education system. They were simple in design, cost effective, and constructed on or near reserves (fig. 1.2). But after the turn of the century, official opinion continued to harden against children maintaining close ties with their families and communities, and consequently familial dissociation became a favoured policy. Hayter Reed, a high-ranking official in the DIA, insisted that “the more remote from the Institution and distant from each other are the points from which the pupils are collected, the better for their success”.<sup>18</sup> By enacting such dispersive IRS catchment policies, Reed extends Davin’s early recommendations to alienate child from parent.

Prior to the development of this new architectural form, the DIA had built a number of industrial schools. Though these intuitions shared some design features with later IRS, they were comparatively modest in scale (figs. 1.3 and 1.4). Industrial schools also differed in that they often were situated closer to urban centres, providing both vocational training and lodging to both girls and boys. It was conceived that this new class of skilled labour would be assimilated into Settler economies, with the ultimate goal of dissolving Indigenous identity.<sup>19</sup> The schools failed in this, though, because attendance at the industrial schools was

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<sup>17</sup> Department of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ending 31 March 1910* (hereafter Annual Report), 307.

<sup>18</sup> Milloy, 30.

<sup>19</sup> Miller, J.R., 1996, 101.

voluntary and, thus, absenteeism proved problematic, as children traveled with parents on seasonal hunting trips and for ceremonies. In addition, the costs of employing qualified teachers proved prohibitive, and, owing to sub-par curricula, the students of the industrial schools were usually unable to compete with Settlers for skilled jobs.

Conditions in more than a few second-generation IRS were often appalling, especially in the first decades of their operation. The system received inadequate funding from the federal government, and, as a consequence, school administrators scrambled—often unsuccessfully—to provide adequate curricula, accommodations, medical treatment, and nutrition to the students.<sup>20</sup> Many students were forcibly confined in these institutions. Most received inadequate education, a mix of basic language lessons, religious training, and daily stints of what can only be described as forced labour. Pupils often were malnourished, neglected, and in many instances received corporeal punishment for speaking their native language. Child molestation was so rampant that a judge in a recent court case referred to the IRS as “institutionalized pedophilia”.<sup>21</sup> Contagious diseases, such as smallpox, influenza, and tuberculosis infected many students in much higher numbers than non-Indigenes. As a disproportionate number of students were dying from influenza and tuberculosis while enrolled in first-generation institutions, second-generation IRS were configured to provide a more healthy environment, by installing improved ventilation systems and more commodious living quarters.<sup>22</sup> The effort failed on all counts, however, as overcrowding and

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<sup>20</sup> Milloy, 51-75.

<sup>21</sup> Supreme Court Justice Douglas Hogarth used this term to describe Alberni Residential School during the 1995 sentencing of dormitory supervisor Arthur Henry Plint. See: “School’s “Sexual Terrorist” Jailed 11 Years: “the Indian Residential School System was Nothing More than Institutionalized Pedophilia” (Arthur Plint),” *The Vancouver Sun (Index-Only)*, Mar 22, 1995.

<sup>22</sup> Kuper Island Residential School presents the bleakest statistics in this regard: in 1915, in the survey of students who had attended the school over the past twenty-five years, it is mentioned that in the total of two hundred and sixty-four known students, one hundred and seven had died. See: Milloy, 93.

fatalities from serious disease persisted.<sup>23</sup> Coincidentally, at the height of the construction of this new building type, compulsory education for Indigenous children was passed into law (1920), as was already the case for non-Indigenous Canadians. A significant difference, however, for Indigenous families was the manner in which parents could be fined or jailed for refusing to send their children to school. Moreover, Indigenous children were often forcibly removed from their homes and communities, though many students did attend voluntarily.<sup>24</sup>

This model of Indian education—based on racial segregation, isolation from families and communities, close cooperation with church organizations—continued without interruption at the IRS until the close of the second world war. In 1946, a policy towards desegregation of Indian education was first enunciated, when the special joint committee of the House of Commons came to the following conclusion: “it is a firm opinion of this department that the children will receive better care in their own homes under the guidance of their parents than they would in [IRS] residence”.<sup>25</sup> Five years later this policy was enacted into law, and though most of the 1951 revisions of the Indian Act were largely cynical recapitulations of earlier, racist legislation, the adoption of integrated education reveals a concerted effort to chart a new course for Indian education. However, this shift in outlook was not based in some new, egalitarian mood in Ottawa. Rather, officials in the DIA and the Federal government sought more effective means to reduce costs and to effect the elusive aim of fully assimilating Indigenous peoples.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>In 1930, a special inspector labelled St. Eugene as a “veritable tubercular institution,” a crisis that nearly caused the closing of the school. See: Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), RG10, vol. 6453, file 884-5, 3.

<sup>24</sup> Marie Battiste, “Micmac Literacy and Cognitive Assimilation,” in *Indian Education in Canada: The Legacy*, 35.

<sup>25</sup> Milloy, 189.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.

Beginning in the early 1960s, the government—in response to shifts in public opinion informed by the desegregation of black students in the United States—began to phase out the IRS.<sup>27</sup> Most Indigenous students by this time attended new day schools on reserves or were bussed to integrated public schools off reserve. Interestingly, despite the seemingly steady and measured moves by the federal government to abandon the IRS model, substantial investment in renovations to St. Michael's in Alert Bay, well into the 1960s, suggest that the government was not entirely confident in its own change in policy. With greater conviction, the DIA began to secularize Indian education.<sup>28</sup> With the shift to desegregation, the IRS increasingly became a sort of quasi-orphanage, home to Indigenous children who for a host of reasons found themselves without family support. Well into the 1970s, this trend continued to the point that the majority of children boarded at the IRS—in some instances over 80 percent—came from “broken homes”.<sup>29</sup>

The White Paper of 1969 made clear the government's intent to terminate funding for the IRS.<sup>30</sup> More generally, the document also suggested plans to repeal the Indian Act, dismantle the DIA, dismiss land claims, and to divest from Canada's First Nations the status of a distinct group, assigning instead a status similar to other ethnic minorities. Arguably the last in a series of concerted government efforts to assimilate Canada's Indigenous peoples, the White Paper provoked strident Indigenous opposition across the country. Cree leader and critic Harold Cardinal notably countered with the “Red Paper”, formally entitled “Citizens Plus” (1970). The following year in *The Unjust Society* (1970), Cardinal parted the

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<sup>27</sup> Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990), 140.

<sup>28</sup> As will be discussed in a later chapter, the enduring heritage of Christian education received by many Indigenous students remains one of the more intractable and ambiguous outcomes of the IRS.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 214

<sup>30</sup> The full text of the White Paper can be accessed here: Jean Chrétien, “Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy (the White Paper, 1969),” <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ai/arp/lis/pubs/cp1969/cp1969-eng.asp#chp10> (accessed 9/20/2010, 2010).



“buckskin curtain”, revealing to non-Indigenous Canadians the mechanics of the nation’s systemic racism.<sup>31</sup> Therein he extended his critiques of the White Paper and countered PM Pierre Trudeau’s declaration that Canada was at last a “just society”. Similarly, the White Paper stirred agitation at Blue Quills Residential School in Alberta.<sup>32</sup> A sit-in of up to 300 people from several provinces, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, occupied the school, compelling meetings with the DIA and eventually securing the transfer of the institution—as well as control over local, Indigenous education—from the Federal government to the Blue Quills Native Education Council.<sup>33</sup> This was the first of many such transfers of title, the implications of which will be discussed in a later chapter.

### **Testimony and the Parallax View**

To date, survivor testimonies—from damning to laudatory in their representations of residential schooling—provide some of the most crucial coordinates with which to map the field of power relations that operated in the IRS.<sup>34</sup> Yet personal accounts, owing to their subjective and conflicting nature, tend to divert attention away from these structures as instruments of government policy. Moreover, the fact that some students genuinely praise the schools has lent weight to apologist refutations and to dismissals of the trauma suffered by most in these structures as mere “psychodrama,” as something to “get over.” Roland

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<sup>31</sup> Harold Cardinal, *The Unjust Society; the Tragedy of Canada’s Indians* (Edmonton: M.G. Hurtig, 1969).

<sup>32</sup> Diane Persson, “The Changing Experience of Indian Residential Schooling: Blue Quills, 1931-1970,” in *Indian Education in Canada: The Legacy*, 165.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. See also: Lucy Bashford and Hans Heinzerling, “Blue Quills Native Education Centre: A Case Study,” in *Indian Education in Canada: The Challenge*, ed. Jean Barman, Yvonne M. Hébert, and Don N. McCaskill (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1986-1987), 126-141.

<sup>34</sup>For a small sample of autobiographical accounts from residential school survivors, see: Elizabeth Furniss, *Victims of Benevolence: The Dark Legacy of the Williams Lake Residential School* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1995), 142.; Elizabeth Graham, *The Mush Hole: Life at Two Indian Residential Schools* (Waterloo, Ont: Heffle Pub, 1997), 502.; Agnes S. Jack and Secwepemc Cultural Education Society, *Behind Closed Doors: Stories from the Kamloops Indian Residential School*, Rev. ed. (Kamloops, B.C: Secwepemc Cultural Education Society, 2006), 226.; Basil Johnston, *Indian School Days* (Norman, KS: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 250.; Isabelle Knockwood and Gillian Thomas, *Out of the Depths: The Experiences of Mi’Kmaq Children at the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia*, 2nd ed. (Lockeport, N.S: Roseway, 1992), 159.; Shirley Sterling, *My Name is Seepeetza* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1992).

Chrisjohn and Tanya Wasacase suggest survivor testimony poses similar problems for the impending Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC):

We have no doubt that the Indigenous people who testify at the forthcoming sessions will be telling the truth, and nothing but the truth. They cannot, however, tell the *whole* truth, which resides, in our best guess, in Cabinet documents, memoranda of agreement, consultation documents, and the minds and hearts of people who cannot be compelled to be open and honest.<sup>35</sup>

Doubtless even with all government documentation revealed, the “whole truth” would remain obscured, yet it appears that arriving at a closer approximation of the truth of the IRS will require gathering and analysing other discrete bodies of knowledge—in this instance, the testimony of IRS staff charged with criminal acts, as well as the discursive practices of government.

With some irony, the need to delineate the logic of IRS design from equivocal testimony in such spaces first became clear during an interview with Chief Robert Joseph, then the executive director of BC’s Indian Residential School Survivors Society. After some discussion of the heterogeneity of student experiences, Chief Joseph asked what I thought my conclusions would be once I had completed my study. A typically uncertain scholarly reply was given, to which he quipped “But you won’t be saying that the Church and government had the right idea, will you?”<sup>36</sup> After the laughter subsided, I began to understand the need to mark differences between—on one hand—ambiguous and, at times, contested student narratives and—on the other—mentalities informing the ideological and technical fabric of

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<sup>35</sup> Roland Chrisjohn and Tanya Wasacase, “Half-Truths and Whole Lies: Rhetoric in the ‘Apology’ and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission,” in *Response, Responsibility and Renewal: Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Journey*, ed. Gregory Younging, Jonathan Dewar, and Mike DeGagné (Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2009), 225.

<sup>36</sup> Personal interview. 10 Feb 2009.

the IRS. As many commentators have shown—even in the most oppressive, controlling spaces—fissures, cracks, and overlooked places exist in which the programme of constraint fails, or at least operates less efficiently.<sup>37</sup> Also, some people always fare better than others, regardless of surroundings. Thus this ambivalence of institutional space, shifting between systemic authority and personal agency, material restraint and subjective retort, resists full definition.<sup>38</sup> However, a degree of openness within these institutional spaces, and the multifarious testimony they produce, cannot describe or diminish the instrumental rationality of a system whose idea, if not evil, was clearly indefensible.<sup>39</sup>

What is at stake in this argument is not simply the recasting of the hierarchy of causation and affect (governmentality over subjectivity) nor is this an attempt to reify complex systems and flows of power in the materiality of institutional structures. Indeed, survivor testimony gathered in interview provides crucial information and support for arguments made in subsequent chapters. My contention is that analysis of the architecture of the Indian Residential School system allows for a further nuancing of critique, so that the range of personal testimonies are considered in a network of relations, alongside the ideation and materialization of structures intended to govern Indigenous peoples. This shift complicates the narratives of misdeeds and psychosexual trauma (as well as their absence) in an educational setting, compelling consideration of the economic and political functions of the IRS network. However ineffective

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<sup>37</sup> See: Primo Levi, *Moments of Reprieve* (New York: Summit Books, 1986).; Michel Foucault, “Space, Knowledge and Power (Interview Conducted with Paul Rabinow),” in *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, ed. Neil Leach (New York: Routledge, 1997), 367-379.; Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford, OX, UK; Cambridge, MA, USA: Blackwell, 1991).; Eleanor Conlin Casella, *The Archaeology of Institutional Confinement* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007), 174.

<sup>38</sup> A nuanced study of the spatial ambivalences of institutional power is found in: Lu Ann de Cunzo, “Exploring the Institution: Reform, Confinement, Social Change,” in *Historical Archaeology*, ed. Martin Hall and Stephen W. Silliman (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2006), 167-189.

<sup>39</sup> Jamie Scott, a spokesperson for the Anglican Church, has conceded that “the ‘good guys’, no matter how kindly or well intentioned, have to confront that they were complicit in a system of evil”. See: Maggie Farley, “Canada to Apologize to Native Students, 18 June 2008,” *Los Angeles Times*, <http://milkriver.blogspot.com/2008/06/nat-apologies-to-stolen-students.html> (accessed 7/22/2010, 2010)..

and ultimately unsuccessful this system was, it remains important to note its part in the attempt to dissolve the sovereign integrity of Indigenous nations, to exploit local resources and labour, and to effect an arguably criminal program of cultural and social erasure. Seen this way, the IRS—as a carefully designed system implementing a Canadian *apartheid*—shifts the content of apology from one of neglect, from “failing to protect” as stated in PM Stephen Harper’s apology, to a more purposeful set of wrongs attendant to the processes of building modern, colonial nations.

I posit that prising testimony apart from institutional design and educational policy provides a critical, parallax view on the instrumental means, architectural and administrative, which ordered Indian education for over 100 years. Critical theorist Slavoj Žižek’s appropriation of the astronomical concept of the parallax view is instructive in considering the relations between testimony and architectural form and design. Žižek notes that:

the standard definition of parallax is the apparent displacement of an object (the shift of its position against a background), caused by a change in observational position that provides a new line of sight. The philosophical twist to be added, of course, is that the observed difference is not simply “subjective,” due to the fact that the same object which exists “out there” is seen from two different stances, or points of view. It is rather that, as Hegel would have put it, subject and object are inherently “mediated,” so that an “epistemological” shift in the subject’s point of view always reflects an “ontological” shift in the object itself.<sup>40</sup>

In other words, a shift from testimonial evidence to an analysis of architecture alters the object of study, revealing new features and producing new knowledge. Moreover, as has

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<sup>40</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 17.

already been alluded to, our understanding of the IRS appears conditioned as much by the absence of documentary evidence as by survivor testimony. In this way, the parallax view of institutional design and form provides needed detail to produce better approximations of the nature of the IRS.

### **Affinities in Purpose and Design?**

I refer to perceived similarities between the IRS and other European institutions as “affinities” in this subsection to allude to James Clifford’s incisive critique of the Museum of Modern Art’s ill-fated 1985 exhibit, “‘Primitivism’ In 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern”.<sup>41</sup> Clifford convincingly argues that the term affinity—denoting deep kinship ties—was poorly chosen by MOMA to describe a set of thin, formal relations between, on one hand, African, Oceanic, North American, and Arctic “tribal” artefacts and, on the other, the “primitivism” of Pablo Picasso’s early Cubist works.<sup>42</sup> Despite the mere superficial resemblance between a number of carefully chosen Indigenous objects and the number of equally carefully selected Picasso pieces, the concept of affinity opened a Family of Art umbrella under which crowded a diverse set of cultural practices and representations. The concept of “art”, thus, cleared an ahistorical space in which the identities of Indigenous artists, as well as the particularities of local cultures, are subsumed.

I argue that in much the same way, seeking affinities between the IRS and other institutional forms, programs, and procedures inevitably produces an ahistorical space of correspondences, evacuating particular, colonial pasts. The imposition of the IRS, in concert with the reserve system, opened up opportunities for usurpation of trillions of dollars of resources, facilitated the subjugation of a multitude of sovereign, Indigenous nations,

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<sup>41</sup> James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988), 0.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

irreparably damaged many languages, displaced more than a few communities, and cut short too many lives. Seeking too close a correspondence between the IRS and other modern institutions, such as elite boarding schools, prisons, hospitals, asylums, etc., creates a Family of Suffering, per se, in the process deflecting troubling ethical questions facing Settlers. The stakes in this question are high, as arguments that the IRS are simply one of many damaging institutions often inform typical “get over it” refrains.

In his revisionist history *Indian Residential Schools: Another Picture*, former Bishop Eric Bays goes as far as to compare the experience of students at the IRS to that of Robertson Davies at one of Canada’s elite educational institutions, Upper Canada College.<sup>43</sup> Bays relates an account of corporeal punishment at the college to suggest that the disciplinary regime suffered by many Indigenous children at the IRS differed little from that of Settler children at other schools. Another affinity objection voiced in the media—especially in anonymous replies to online stories of the IRS reparations process—complains that many people from different cultures and nationalities likewise have suffered institutional violence but have received neither compensation nor commemoration. For example, in reply to a CBC story, “rgrgirl” wrote:

Should I sue England for the Highland Clearances as my family was put on a boat?? Should I sue England for the other side of my family from Ireland as they were poor and sent over here because they were poor?? Should I sue the Government for millions as they banned Gaelic (my cultural language) from being taught in schools in 1971???

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<sup>43</sup> 79.

<sup>44</sup> “CBC News - Canada - PM Cites ‘Sad Chapter’ in Apology for Residential Schools,” <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2008/06/11/aboriginal-apology.html#socialcomments> (accessed 8/1/2010, 2010).. It bears mentioning that Scottish nobles also played a substantive role in Highland clearances.

Or “Conservatives rule” who wrote, “I’m a survivor of Quebec’s school system. Where’s my apology and compensation?”<sup>45</sup>

These opinions should not be considered a convenient strawman. So prevalent are these anonymous, dismissive arguments against apology and reparation that it became the subject of an article in the *Winnipeg Free Press* in the lead up, in Winnipeg, to the first national meeting of the Truth Reconciliation Commission.<sup>46</sup>

Less controversially yet no less incorrectly, Thomas Markus argues in *Buildings and Power* (1993) that the exportation of educational policies and architectures to colonial settings, regardless of differing sociopolitical contexts, “suggests a deeper ideological unity founded on a similar model of relations”.<sup>47</sup> It is precisely these sorts of equivalence theses—that the IRS derives from and connects to other modern institutions in a “deep unity”—that this and subsequent chapters aim to demolish. I contend that modernization and modernity are not so general that the manifestation of these processes and conditions in a colonial setting can be considered consonant with those in urban, and often European, settings.<sup>48</sup> Even within colonial territories, profoundly different institutional spaces are produced according to differing purposes, means, subjects, and sociocultural contexts.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Mary Agnes Welch, “But how do we Reconcile? - Winnipeg Free Press,” <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/But-how-do-we-reconcile-96176694.html> (accessed 7/31/2010, 2010).

<sup>47</sup> Thomas A. Markus, *Buildings & Power: Freedom and Control in the Origin of Modern Building Types* (London; New York: Routledge, 1993), 41.

<sup>48</sup> The following spare definitions of modernization, modernity, and modernism are offered with the caveat that each term resists definition, owing to their contested and unstable meanings: modernization refers to conditions of rapid social, economic, and technological change; modernity, to the temporal and spatial horizons within which the conditions of modernization are experienced; and Modernism, complex and often competing cultural responses to the social, cultural, and political landscapes of modernity. The terms modernity, modernization, and Modernism possess both negative and positive connotations. They express on the one hand hopes for a better life, aspirations for social reform and equality, and utopian visions for a perfect society—and, on the other, fears, anxieties, absurdities, and alienation, the sense of being unmoored from a continuous past and uprooted from organic community.

In light of the heterogeneity of modernity, David Scott argues for the need to delineate differences not only between European and colonial modernities but also between a range of colonial experiences of modernity. He extends Michel Foucault's concept of governmentality—what he refers to as “colonial governmentality”—with the aim of discerning in each particular past specific *practices, targets, and points of insertion* of governance. He seeks to produce a variegated, nuanced, and fluid model of colonial governmentality that can account for shifting forms of power across periods of colonial history. For Scott

the crucial question is ... how to impose an historicity on our understanding of the rationalities that organized the forms of the colonial state ... [I]t is necessary to understand, it seems to me, that within the structures and projects that give shape to the colonial enterprise as a whole, there were discontinuities, in which different political rationalities, different configurations of power, took the stage in commanding positions.<sup>49</sup>

His insistence upon identifying the specific and heterogeneous expression of colonial power will be explored at length in my analysis of the IRS next chapter, to underscore the need to reject equivalences allowing for the formation of broad institutional affinities.

This is not to minimize institutional violence experienced by non-Indigenous children. An apt example of this is the grim history of Home Children, those 100,000 destitute children displaced from the British Isles to Canada between 1869 to 1930, some with the consent of their parents, some to neglectful homes, still others received adequate

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 28.



care but never were free from the stigma of being a home child.<sup>50</sup> The same could be said for the Dr. Barnardo Homes in England that provided shelter for hundreds of thousands of children but also exposed a great many to physical, mental, and sexual abuses.<sup>51</sup> Even the elite boarding school system in England has come under scrutiny in recent years, wherein some students suffer traumas owing to separation from parents, harsh discipline, hazing, and sexual abuse.<sup>52</sup> Many of the architects of the residential school system themselves likely attended boarding schools. Duncan Campbell Scott, perhaps the most reviled superintendent of Indian Affairs, argued for residential schools by insisting that “our best men and women were brought up, away from the home influences and following the example, day and night, of their teachers.”<sup>53</sup>

It even could be argued that each modern subject has, to varying degrees, been constituted through one type of institution or another. Institutions clearly have a profound impact on the modern person, at times beneficial but also often a site of suffering. However, by resisting the temptation to create affinities of institutional function and subjection, we avoid standardizing the dimensions of systemic violation, as if each bears a common trace that can be read through the other. Experiential and spatial correspondences, thus, flatten specificities of pain, inevitably producing muted responses to such general schema. It seems reasonable to suggest that an ethical response to traumatic pasts such as those endured in the

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<sup>50</sup> See: Kenneth Bagnell, *The Little Immigrants: The Orphans Who Came to Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1980).; Gail H. Corbett, *Nation Builders: Barnardo Children in Canada* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2002), 133.; Marjorie Kohli, *The Golden Bridge: Young Immigrants to Canada, 1833-1939* (Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, 2003), 462.

<sup>51</sup> For histories of the Dr. Barnardo Homes see: Sue Martin, *No Way Home: The Terrifying Story of Life in a Children's Home - and a Little Girl's Struggle to Survive* (London: Vermilion, 2007), 273.; Lydia Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans: Poor Families, Child Welfare, and Contested Citizenship in London* (New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 252.; Brendan O'Mahony and Dr Barnardo's, *A Capital Offence: The Plight of the Young Single Homeless in London* (London: Routledge, 1988), 182.; June Rose, *For the Sake of the Children: Inside Dr Barnardo's, 120 Years of Caring for Children* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1987).

<sup>52</sup> Nick Duffell, *The Making of Them: The British Attitude to Children and the Boarding School System* (London: Lone Arrow, 2000).

<sup>53</sup> *Annual Report*, 1913, 409.

IRS demands a thorough consideration of particular landscapes—seeking new comprehension devices, new parallax views—rather than imposing the gloss of affinities upon human misery or the instruments that might inflict it.

But if the model of affinities actually obscures relations between the IRS and other modern institutions, why bother at all to make such comparisons? In short, there is a need to clearly delineate the forms, tactics, and logic of European institutionalization that were grafted to the IRS, again not as a question of derivation but more of dialectical change, informed by specific and heterogeneous historical contexts. I am not suggesting, however, that no formal or programmatic similarities exist between the IRS, their European antecedents, and other colonial institutions such as Upper Canada College. There are many productive points of comparison worth discussing in detail.

To be clear, my purpose in studying such similarities is not to demonstrate the ways in which the IRS somehow evolved from European prototypes or is closely related to other colonial structures. As will be argued later, coercive induction, curricular shortcomings, and cultural and familial dissolution, key features of the IRS, demand new ways of classifying these institutions. Instead, by examining the *practices*, *targets*, and *points of insertion* typical of British and other colonial institutions, what becomes clearer are the nuances of the ideological, procedural, and technological operation of the IRS. Demonstrating these disparate outcomes and purposes requires clearly stating those operational modalities that, at least superficially, appear nearly identical, for it is these qualities that substantiate affinity arguments. Making these similarities plain allows for a degree of concession—again, some features and outcomes bear resemblance and merit attention—while providing a means to not only anticipate objections but also, in subsequent chapters, refute the affinity or deep unity

arguments. In other words, considering other modern institutions in relation to the IRS provides the means to better understand the particular transference of these new changing ways into new colonial terrains.

In making such comparisons, however, it would be a mistake to isolate school buildings from what Michel Foucault has called the “carceral archipelago”, the network of institutions—prisons, workhouses, asylums, factories, military barracks—as well as regulatory and disciplinary practices ordering these spaces.<sup>54</sup> The design of the IRS shares with most other carceral institutions the biopolitical aim of producing “docile bodies” (i.e. functional subjects) from “difficult populations” who imperil day-to-day operations of civil society.<sup>55</sup> Studies of structures of institutional control have received sustained scholarly attention owing to Foucault’s writings, especially in the field of penology, though much contemporary analysis seeks to complicate or refute his, at times, narrow conclusions about human agency.<sup>56</sup> Nonetheless, Foucault’s insights into the relations between state control, architectural design, and a cluster of procedures for controlling subjects—as disparate as bureaucratic classification, anthropometry, surveillance, medical examinations, and exercise routines—continue to inform research into the built environment.

Significantly, Foucault’s model of the carceral archipelago does not indicate his interest in describing continuities between institutional typologies. He cautions that “we must rid ourselves of a whole mass of notions, each of which, in its own way, diversifies the theme

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<sup>54</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), 297.

<sup>55</sup> Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization; a History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), 299.

<sup>56</sup> For example, Ann de Cunzo argues that carceral institutions rarely produces the docile bodies that Foucault popularized. She and many others stress a certain degree of openness within institutions, wherein a range of embodied responses occurs that allows for resistance and the maintenance of a degree of psychological separation. See: de Cunzo; see also: Linda Mahood, *Policing Gender, Class, and Family: Britain, 1850-1940* (London: UCL Press, 1995), 215.

of continuity”.<sup>57</sup> In his critique of “unities of discourse,” he further argues that “we must question those ready-made syntheses, those groupings that we normally accept before any examination, those links whose validity is recognized from the outset”.<sup>58</sup> However, Foucault also balks at a radical heterogeneity, in which each historical outcome remains utterly discontinuous. Rather, though history is devoid of unified meanings as a “face of an age”, “world spirit”, and so on, it remains intelligible through dismantling accepted generalities, examining their smallest details, and rethinking what aspects remain related. He clarifies this methodological point:

I shall not place myself inside these dubious unities in order to study their internal configuration or their secret contradictions. I shall make use of them just long enough to ask myself what unities they form ... I shall accept the groupings that history suggests only to subject them at once to interrogation; to break them up and then to see whether they can be legitimately reformed; or whether other groupings should be made; to replace them in a more general space which, while dissipating their apparent familiarity, makes it possible to construct a theory of them.<sup>59</sup>

In what follows, I consider the IRS in relation to the broader carceral archipelago. I do this to begin the work of interrogating, after Foucault, the commonsensical grouping of institutional types. I argue that, in this and successive chapters, that formal and programmatic correspondences between the IRS and other modern institutions comprise a passing, superficial resemblance more than a deep, kinship or affinity. Further, I contend that

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<sup>57</sup> Michel Foucault. *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 24.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

discerning those formal or programmatic unities that cannot be reasonably dismissed from those clearly implausible opens the way for a novel technological redefinition of the IRS.

### **Passing Likeness and the Carceral Archipelago**

Most architects designing modern institutions in developed countries in the late 19th and early 20th centuries believed in what Carla Yanni calls “environmental determinism”—the notion that buildings, by their material configuration, can shape human behaviour.<sup>60</sup> The design of such structures and the sets of corrective procedures practiced therein comprised the core of the care, rather than medicines, therapies, community-based solutions, or family interventions. It should be conceded—however draconian these solutions appear—that, to a degree, the “building-as-cure” approach had found its impetus in a desire to ameliorate deficient living conditions in urban centers. A similar sense prevailed in colonial Canada: that the abysmal outcomes of contact visited upon many Indigenous nations could only be rectified by religious conversion, education, and limited inclusion in the economic activities of Settler culture. By default, such radical social engineering required the support of new architectural typologies.<sup>61</sup> What follows is an analysis of the design and programmatic aims of a range of modern institutions—prisons, insane asylums, workhouses, reform schools, boarding schools.

Shared conviction in the transformative effect of modern, institutional architecture finds its counterpart in a set of common procedures and aims: isolation, classification, surveillance, spiritual and physical hygiene. For example, penitentiary design in mid-nineteenth-century America imposed solitary confinement (and in some instances complete

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<sup>60</sup> Carla Yanni, *The Architecture of Madness: Insane Asylums in the United States* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 8.

<sup>61</sup> Nearly forty years before Confederation, the Imperial government shifted its Indian policy—from actively seeking Indigenous, military cooperation to promoting “civilization” through education. See: Donald Wilson, 70.

silence) on inmates, in the belief that separation from others, in a monastic manner, would instil moral virtue.<sup>62</sup> Eastern State Penitentiary (1821-9), designed by James Haviland for the city of Philadelphia, provides one of the more notorious examples of what was called the “separate system.”<sup>63</sup> Inmates endured solitary confinement in cells located in one of seven radial arms. “Feed doors” limited contact with guards as well. Informed by the theories of philosopher and social reformer Jeremy Bentham, cellular isolation was the key feature of the programme at Eastern State, as it was thought to preclude inmate solidarity and combat recidivism.<sup>64</sup>

An emphasis upon separation and isolation also informed the development of a new model for the insane asylum designed in nineteenth century America by the nation’s most prominent asylum builder, Dr. Thomas Story Kirkbride.<sup>65</sup> Kirkbride believed that in order for his facilities to render cures, mentally ill patients needed to sever ties with their families.<sup>66</sup>

Horace Buttolph, a contemporary of Kirkbride, declared further that living with family

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<sup>62</sup> Marcus, 127.

<sup>63</sup> For contemporary accounts of Eastern State Penitentiary see: Charles Dickens, *American Notes* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1985), 232.; Richard Vaux, “Brief Sketch of the Origin and History of the State Penitentiary for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, at Philadelphia,” McLaughlin Bros, <http://www.gale.com/ModernLaw/>; <http://www.gale.com/ModernLaw/> Note: Available to subscribing institutions. For critical histories, see: Norman Bruce Johnston et al., *Eastern State Penitentiary: Crucible of Good Intentions* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1994), 116.; Michael Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue: Punishment, Revolution, and Authority in Philadelphia, 1760-1835* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 338.. For general studies of prison history and penology in the United States and Europe see: Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*; Robin Evans, *The Fabrication of Virtue: English Prison Architecture, 1750-1840* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 464.; Thomas G. Blomberg and Karol Lucken, *American Penology: A History of Control* (Hawthorne, N.Y: Aldine de Gruyter, 2000), 259.; Norman Bruce Johnston, *The Human Cage: A Brief History of Prison Architecture* (New York: Walker, 1973).; Norman Bruce Johnston, *Forms of Constraint: A History of Prison Architecture* (Urbana; Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 197.; Janet Semple, *Bentham’s Prison: A Study of the Panopticon Penitentiary* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1993), 344.; Randall G. Sheldon, *Controlling the Dangerous Classes: A Critical Introduction to the History of Criminal Justice* (Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 2001), 322.; Erving Goffman, *Asylums; Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*, 1st ed. ed. (Garden City, N.Y: Anchor Books, 1961).

<sup>64</sup> Marcus, 127.

<sup>65</sup> Yanni, *The Architecture of Madness: Insane Asylums in the United States*,

<sup>66</sup> Gerald N. Grob, *Mental Illness and American Society, 1875-1940* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1983), 53.

members exacerbated the illness of patients, to the degree that “the removal of a person from home and the associations with which their excited, depressed or perverted feelings have risen, is often nearly all that is required to restore the healthy balance of the faculties.”<sup>67</sup> In nineteenth-century Britain, the notion of the “pastoral colony”—removing underprivileged children to educational facilities in remote areas—gained momentum owing to growing (and largely justified) fears of pitiless exploitation of child labour within larger cities and towns.<sup>68</sup> For instance, Montagu Burgoyne’s 1829 plan for a rural settlement at Potton in Bedfordshire outlined the construction of a settlement for 40 boys and 40 girls who would be removed from their parents’ homes to attend a “school of industry” where they would learn shoemaking, sewing, and farming.<sup>69</sup>

In addition to isolation and segregation, institutional precursors to the IRS relied upon new architectural forms to support systems of classification and surveillance. Jeremy Bentham’s plan for the panopticon (literally “all seeing”), though rarely built, exerted widespread influence on prison, workhouse, asylum, and school design in Europe and North America, especially in the nineteenth century (fig. 1.5).<sup>70</sup> Bentham drew inspiration from his brother Samuel’s earlier design, the so-called “Panopticon Inspection House”, a twelve-sided polygon affording a central viewpoint from which to supervise unskilled labourers in training.<sup>71</sup> The panopticon was configured chiefly to compel obedience by producing in

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<sup>67</sup> Horace Buttolph, qtd. in Yanni, 56.

<sup>68</sup> James Stephen Taylor, “Philanthropy and Empire: Jonas Hanway and the Infant Poor of London,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 12, no. 3 (Spring, 1979), 285-305.

<sup>69</sup> Markus, 47.

<sup>70</sup> Though a variety of centric prisons were built in many countries—America, Columbia, Cuba, Portugal, Scotland, Vietnam, among others—few prisons incorporate the features dictated in Bentham’s panopticon scheme. Centric prisons, typified by a circular arrangement of cells surrounding a guard tower, do not constitute a true panopticon, for inmates—without soundproofing, listening tubes, controlled lighting, remote controlled blinds—would have opportunities to hear others inmates, watch guards, and find ways to escape constant surveillance.

<sup>71</sup> Kathryn Morrison and English Heritage, *The Workhouse: A Study of Poor-Law Buildings in England* (Swindon: Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, 1999), 38.

inmates or students a sense of constant scrutiny regardless of any actual surveillance. Bentham argued that if inmates/students experienced institutional power as visible but unverifiable—i.e. a central inspection tower could be seen but the guards within could not—they would begin to police themselves owing to the mere perception of constant surveillance.<sup>72</sup>

Though not a true panopticon, the layout of Eastern State Penitentiary was informed by the “central inspection principle” championed by Bentham, a procedure supported by classifying and isolating prisoners.<sup>73</sup> Similarly, Sampson Kempthorne’s 1830s design for the British workhouse employed a central guard housed in an axial tower, with indigent inmates incarcerated in its radial wings (fig. 1.6). Surveillance performed a key function within the workhouse, underwriting the central aims of separating, classifying, and, ultimately, inculcating corporeal and moral hygiene in those confined within its walls. *Architectural Magazine* praised Sampson Kempthorne’s design as “excellently arranged ... [as] attention is being paid by the architect to the principles of separation and classification, to achieve cleanliness, to ventilation, and to general convenience”.<sup>74</sup> This cluster of forms and procedures could be seen, in a certain light, as progressive, owing to the need to provide different treatment to different inmates. Clearly, the non-compliant (“unruly”), temporarily infirm, or underemployed required different accommodations and treatment. Moreover bettering hygienic conditions through improved ventilation, heating, and lighting registers a response to serious (if poorly understood) diseases, such as cholera, tuberculosis, and typhus. That said, the overriding purpose for the development of these procedures and structures

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<sup>72</sup> Jeremy Bentham and Miran Bozovic, *The Panopticon Writings* (London; New York: Verso, 1995), 3. Bentham, 3.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Qtd. in Morrison and English Heritage, *The Workhouse: A Study of Poor-Law Buildings in England*, 46



emerged from a Malthusian distaste for the perceived luxuriousness of extant poorhouses (colloquially known as “paupers palaces”), as well as in response to the merciless principle of “less eligibility” enshrined in Britain’s Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. These new institutions earned the name “deterrent workhouses”, as conditions therein were so distasteful as to deter only the most desperately poor from entering willingly, a decision compounded by accepting incarceration in addition to spartan living conditions.<sup>75</sup>

Similarly, nineteenth-century designs for school buildings in Europe and North America incorporated panopticonism as a means to effect student compliance.<sup>76</sup> Thomas Markus comments that in nineteenth-century Britain the classroom became a key battleground for ideological struggle, with every manner of reformist politician and churchgoer tilting over how best to produce the “vast moral steam engine” (i.e. a new school system) required to manage ever-expanding new publics.<sup>77</sup> For example, the Lancastrian monitorial system—prominent in the first half of the 1800s—depended upon silence and obedience of the students, whose visibility allowed close inspection by a single headmaster, assisted by a network of teaching assistants. Panoptical refinements were made to boarding schools as well. The plans for New College at Hull centralize the headmaster’s quarters to ensure adequate surveillance (figs. 1.7 and 1.8). In his oft-cited architectural treatise *Modern*

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<sup>75</sup> For the sociopolitical, as well as architectural, implications of the development of the deterrent workhouse, see Simon Fowler, *Workhouse: The People, the Places, the Life Behind Doors* (Kew: National Archives, 2007); Norman Longmate, *The Workhouse* (London: Temple Smith, 1974).; Kathryn Morrison, *The Workhouse: A Study of Poor-Law Buildings in England*; Brian J. Bailey, *Almshouses* (London: R. Hale, 1988).

<sup>76</sup> For histories of school construction in nineteenth century Britain see Markus, 41-94; see also: Deborah E. B. Weiner, *Architecture and Social Reform in Late-Victorian London* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994); for the American context, see: Henry Barnard et al., *Henry Barnard’s School Architecture* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1970).; William W. Cutler III, “Cathedral of Culture: The Schoolhouse in American Educational Thought and Practice since 1820,” *History of Education Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (Spring, 1989); Ben E. Graves and Clifford A. Pearson, *School Ways: The Planning and Design of America’s Schools* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993); Dell Upton, “Lancasterian Schools, Republican Citizenship, and the Spatial Imagination in Early Nineteenth-Century America,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 55, no. 3 (Sep., 1996); for Canada, see: J. George Hodgins, *Hints and Suggestions on School Architecture and Hygiene with Plans and Illustrations* (Toronto: Printed for the Education Dept., 1886).

<sup>77</sup> Markus, *Buildings & Power: Freedom and Control in the Origin of Modern Building Types*, 41

*School Buildings* (1902), architect Felix Clay highlights the efficient dormitory configuration at New College, for “two dormitories containing seventeen beds are so arranged that one master can overlook both”, and additionally “two smaller rooms containing nine beds are also so arranged so that supervision can be maintained”.<sup>78</sup>

The design and program of the IRS shares many features of the modern institutions discussed above: environmental determinism, as well as imposing isolation, segregation, classification, surveillance, and notions of spiritual and physical hygiene. Yet, as will be argued in this and successive chapters, these similarities constitute more of a passing resemblance than deep kinship. As with institutions already discussed, the uniformity of design common to the second-generation IRS, erected mainly between 1910 and 1935, highlights the belief in environmental determinism. The vast majority of these buildings were equally drab in appearance, employing a prominent entranceway capped by a spire, emphasizing the religious curriculum taught within (fig. 1.9). The layout usually conformed to an H-shaped configuration, a central block flanked by two attached pavilions, with chapel situated in back (fig. 1.10). Floor plans were highly standardized, each institution laid out with a similar series of classrooms, kitchens, student dormitories, bathrooms, infirmaries, staff-sleeping quarters, workshops, sewing rooms, and recreation rooms. Building materials also were standardized: brick typically was the preferred material for exterior and interior walls, pierced by nearly identical fenestration; most interiors were fitted with similar exposed I-beam post and lintel supports, prefabricated decorative ceiling panels, doors, flooring, and so on. Additionally, the sheer scale of the IRS shared another common distinction—the

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<sup>78</sup> Felix Clay, *Modern School Buildings, Elementary and Secondary: A Treatise on the Planning, Arrangement, and Fitting of Day and Boarding Schools, having Special Regard to School Discipline, Organisation, and Educational Requirements; with Special Chapters on the Treatment of Class Rooms, Lighting, Warming, Ventilation, and Sanitation* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1902).

greater majority were the largest buildings in the region. Indeed, St Eugene remained the largest structure in south eastern British Columbia for several decades.

Inserted with little variation into a wide variety of places, these massive edifices, built often from incongruous materials on a monotonous template trumped the particularities and needs of local cultures, not to mention any extant architectural fabric. Admittedly, this formal seriality suggests an effort to reduce government expenditure. Moreover, insensitivity to surrounding structures and precincts, especially those of earlier periods, can be said of much Modernist architecture. Yet the repetitiveness of architectural form, layout, and programme stamped out across Canada cannot be separated from the overarching, racially-motivated social engineering programme it housed. Especially on the west coast of Canada, where masonry was rarely used as building material, the alien, immovable, and instrumental appearance of brick cultivated a certain institutional awe and, thus, a sense of unfamiliarity, dislocation, and authoritative permanence. As such, the standardized materials and layout suggest confidence in one basic plan that could produce a series of environments that would determine similar, assimilative effects on students regardless of affiliation—a one-size-fits-all paternalism, designed to regulate and spatialize the “civilizing” progressivism of Settler culture.

In this light, it is telling that the federal government enacted a program of standardization prior to the intensive construction of second-generation IRS after World War I. The 1912 DIA Annual Report recounts how Department architects had toured often aging IRS in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta for the purpose of renovating derelict structures—both to improve sanitary conditions but also to standardize their layout so that

the network of buildings would serve a “higher plane of usefulness”.<sup>79</sup> Such tropes of utility and verticality suggest a belief that regularization itself could turn the tide in the struggle to solve the “Indian problem”. Moreover they connote an ascendant point of a binary, its opposite the perceived and oft-decried disorderliness of Indigenous life.<sup>80</sup>

The general impetus to isolate inmates, the mentally ill, and destitute children from their homes and families also informed the logic of the design and operation of Indian Residential School. Indian Agent W. M. Halliday, now infamous for his role in seizing and selling Kwakwaka’wakw potlatch paraphernalia, praised this feature of the IRS:

The industrial or boarding school is the most profitable school ... as the pupils are always in attendance, and are not kept at home on account of outside influences such as the parents getting up too late, or going out to a party, or such excuses as are made by the children attending day schools. The pupils are more or less always under the eye and influence of the teachers, and very much greater progress is made by them than is shown at any of the day schools.<sup>81</sup>

That same year, Indian Agent Thomas Deasy (Queen Charlotte Agency) went further, arguing for compulsory attendance, to ameliorate the wrongs caused primarily by a lack of parental discipline.<sup>82</sup> He argued that “where the Indian is allowed to do as he likes ... and go where he pleases, without restraint, he will not only pick up the vices of his forefathers; but

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<sup>79</sup> *Annual Report*, 1912, 302.

<sup>80</sup> It is also telling that this period, in which the second-generation IRS appear, marks a pronounced shift in tactics to resolve the Indian problem—from assimilation to segregation—a topic discussed at length next chapter.

<sup>81</sup> *Annual Report*, 1912, 391.

<sup>82</sup> By 1920, with amendments to the Indian Act, compulsory attendance became law. However, as Jean Barman notes, some families managed to resist mandatory attendance. Thirty years after the passing of the law, the federal census revealed that 40% of Indigenous over the age of five were reported to have had no formal education. Barman, *Indian Education in Canada: The Legacy*, 10.

will endeavour to follow in the footsteps of those associating with him”.<sup>83</sup> This passage intimates how many DIA officials believed it crucial to their sociopolitical agenda to isolate students from family and community, limiting transmission of what they believed to be immoral behaviour to Indigenous youth.

Significantly, as mentioned above, a fair portion of second-generation IRS were constructed in remote locations or in areas that had few or no traditional associations. This isolating aim also was made manifest spatially by segregating students within the institution according to gender and age. Boys were confined to one wing of the H-shaped structure, and girls to the other—the eldest housed in dormitories on the top floor and the youngest on a lower floor (fig. 1.11). The centre block typically housed administrative offices and staff chambers, which remained off limits to students, and were barred by locked doors. In this way the residential school can be seen as one of a number of architectural and land-use instruments meant to extend the civilizing process through isolating and individuating. This alienating scheme would be repeated with little variation throughout the IRS system, disrupting family and community ties, as estranged brothers, sisters, cousins, and friends would receive punishment for attempting to communicate.<sup>84</sup> Such estranging effects are evident also in curriculum, a subject elaborated upon in greater detail in later chapters.

As is the case with the aforementioned institutions, surveillance also factored significantly in the IRS. The same aim evident at New College, to improve the means by which to watch students, is apparent in the installation of “monitor rooms” in most IRS (fig. 1.12). This chamber, operated by adults (religious or lay staff) was designed to survey

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<sup>83</sup> *Annual Report*, 1912, 408.

<sup>84</sup> IRS survivor Adeline Brown has pointed out in personal conversation that the individual bed to which a child was assigned represented the first implement of isolation, as most children previously would have shared sleeping space, and thus also bodily warmth and comfort with siblings. Significantly, IRS dorms were notoriously cold.

student dorms to ensure obedience and safety (The design of these monitor rooms will be discussed in much greater detail next chapter.). Other activities in these institutions were kept under strict surveillance, such as the church services, parental visitation, or meal times, at times with the aid of senior students. But, as will be argued in the following chapters, surveillance is but one of many features of the IRS requiring closer examination to discern why this institutional system demands refutation of facile correspondences to other building types.

### **Among Total Institutions: The Indian Residential School**

As discussed above, the designs of much institutional architecture in the mid-to-later modern period, including those of the IRS, sought to isolate, classify, surveil, and impose standards of moral and bodily hygiene on inhabitants. Erving Goffman has labelled many such spaces of regulation as “total institutions”, built to control inmates by overseeing the smallest details of daily life.<sup>85</sup> Interestingly, detractors of the IRS have applied Goffman’s concept broadly without applying the specific analytical tools made available by Goffman and other scholars who have extended his schema. For example the Assembly of First Nations publication *Breaking the Silence* (1994) unequivocally labels IRS as total institutions:

These were places within which all activities of the children—eating, sleeping, playing, working, speaking—were subject to set timetables and regulations determined by staff comprised of supervisors and teachers who, for the most part, belonged to a variety of Christian denominations. Residential schools, in a way not unlike other total institutions such as penitentiaries, were places where two distinct groups of people lived and

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<sup>85</sup> Erving Goffman, *Asylums; Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1961), 11.

worked—children and adult staff—and one group (the staff) had the power to determine on a daily basis, the conduct of behaviour of the second group, the First Nation children.<sup>86</sup>

In its 1996 Report on Institutional Child Abuse, the Law Commission of Canada similarly confirmed and defined the IRS as a total institution, but, again, without employing the discourse of Goffman or others. As it goes, owing to the elasticity of Goffman's schema, many institutions could be considered total—including Upper Canada College. However, Goffman and others working with his model developed categories for differentiating institutions. These subcategories of the total institution will be posed against the IRS to extend the interrogation recommended by Foucault, to further consider the plausibility or implausibility of unities constructed to situate the IRS in a series with other modern institutions.

The degree of application of corporeal and psychological controls in total institutions varies from relatively mild to severe: mild institutions are referred to as “open”, where inmates voluntarily enter and have an uncoerced desire “to be stripped and cleansed of personal will” (such as a monastery); severe institutions, referred to as “closed”, are characterized by involuntary confinement, locked doors, and the unwanted institutional efforts to break individual will.<sup>87</sup> Within Goffman's theoretical account of open or closed institutions, a fair amount of variation exists, allowing for both an intermediate category, as well as a variety of differing purposes. These range from providing labour for the institution (what Goffman calls an “external task to perform”), simple confinement (“end in itself”), or

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<sup>86</sup> Assembly of First Nations, *Breaking the Silence: An Interpretive Study of Residential School Impact and Healing as Illustrated by the Stories of First Nation Individuals* (Ottawa: Assembly of First Nations, 1994), 4. See also Chrisjohn, Young, and Maraun, *The Circle Game: Shadows and Substance in the Indian Residential School Experience in Canada*, 150-166

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

invasive psychological reformation (“transmogrification”).<sup>88</sup> A useful sophistication to Goffman’s model, developed by Amitai Etzioni, assesses inmate compliance to institutional rule according to categories of “coercive”, “remunerative”, or “normative”.<sup>89</sup> According to Goffman’s scheme, prisons, asylums, workhouses would be categorized as closed and coercive total institutions, whereas most boarding schools, such as Upper Canada College, would be considered open and normative. In this regard, the spatial operation of the IRS bears little resemblance to Upper Canada College or other such elite spaces. By applying Goffman and Etzioni’s criteria, the Indian Residential Schools appear closed and coercive, requiring both external tasks to perform (student labour) and transmogrification (religious, language, and academic training). In this light, the IRS share more than a few characteristics common to reform schools, prisons, or slave labour camps.

This claim is substantiated by considering Goffman’s model of institutionalization, which is comprised of four stages. First, inmates suffer some degree of mortification, structured humiliations that deprives them of an extant sense of self. Common tactics include removal of personal effects, public removal of clothing, group disinfections, cutting or shaving of hair, changing given and family names, assigning ill-fitting clothing and shoes. Most IRS subjected Indigenous children to a number of these, often conducting group delousing and showers, substituting numbers and Christian names for Indigenous names, providing substandard clothing, and shearing braided hair thought sacred by many Indigenous pupils.

Assiniboine writer Dan Kennedy recalls the loss of his braids:

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<sup>88</sup> Christie Davies, “Goffman’s Concept of the Total Institution: Criticisms and Revisions,” *Human Studies* 12, no. 1/2, Erving Goffman’s *Sociology* (1989), 89.

<sup>89</sup> Amitai Etzioni, *Complex Organizations; a Sociological Reader* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961).



In keeping with the promise to civilize the little pagan, they went to work and cut off my braids, which, incidentally, according to the Assiniboine traditional custom, was a token of mourning—the closer the relative, the closer the cut. After my haircut, I was wondering in silence if my mother had died, as they had cut my hair close to the scalp.<sup>90</sup>

The barrage of bewildering, coercive mortifications, especially for children as young as five, cannot reasonably be compared to willful, monastic mortifications, instead resembling practices typical to military camps or prisons designed to break individual will. Moreover, though elite boarding schools have and continue to subject children to mortifications, the *practices, targets, and points of insertion* differ sharply from that evident at IRS—a point to be enlarged upon in following chapters.

For Goffman, the second stage of institutionalization required inmates to learn “house rules”, to understand both the punishments for deviance and the rewards for compliance. Again, the institutional structure of the IRS compares to that of closed and coercive institutions. Many students, confronted by language barriers, struggled in vain to learn what was expected, and ran afoul of disciplinarians before having a chance to familiarize themselves with school policies. Physical and psychological punishments—ranging from denial of food, forced kneeling, or public humiliations to extreme corporeal punishment, such as blows to the head, whippings, or (at least at one IRS) confinement to stocks—were, especially in the early years of the IRS, utterly alien to most Indigenous children. Most missionaries and government agents failed to grasp the subtlety of long-standing Indigenous disciplinary techniques, such as silence, disapproving eye contact, practical jokes, ridicule, or

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<sup>90</sup> Qtd. in Grant, 19

in extreme instances public humiliations.<sup>91</sup> Duncan Campbell Scott even suggests that the general refusal of Indigenous parents to hit children indicates a weakness of character:

The Indian parents are not strict enough with their children, leaving it to the teachers to correct their faults. The school uplifts them, for a few hours, each day, the home and surroundings are not aids to the school. I have been among Indians for half a century, and have to see the first parent chastising his or her child.<sup>92</sup>

Conversely, some students gained favour by being the “pets” of a particular teacher—enforcing order in the dining hall during meal times, informing on fellow students, and the like. Others bettered their lot by participating in church activities, such as singing in the choir or being an altar boy. Special recognition was given to those who announced they hoped to become a priest, nun, minister, etc. Participation in dance troupes, brass bands, sports teams, also offered participants relief from institutional routine, owing to travel to other towns and cities. Moreover, staff tended to favour these students, and fellow students tended to hold them in higher regard. Much positive testimony highlights participation in church activities, sports, music, or dancing, and such extracurricular activities are credited by some as building a foundation for future successes.

Goffman’s third and fourth stages of institutionalization involve an intricate cycle of transgression, getting caught, receiving punishments, followed by “secondary adjustments”, i.e. learning how to negotiate the system to one’s advantage. Josephine \_\_\_\_\_, who attended Kamloops IRS, explains how cooperation with the authority of the nuns provided one of the surer ways of coping: “when you done as you were told and worked hard, you received little

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<sup>91</sup> Vicki English-Currie, “The Need for Re-Evaluation in Native Education,” in *Writing the Circle: Native Women of Western Canada*, ed. Jeanne Martha Perreault and Sylvia Vance (Edmonton: NeWest Pub, 1990), 47.

<sup>92</sup> *Annual Report*, 1913, 440.

promotions. You no longer have to work in the hallways or in the bathroom. You don't have to scrub anymore. You went up the ladder".<sup>93</sup> This accommodation of authority cannot be considered the same as agency, as negotiating secondary adjustments requires acquiescing to certain psychological coercions or "transmogrifications".

The question of agency raises one of the sharpest critiques of Goffman's model: its failure to delineate variegated criteria capable of accounting for factors such as race, gender, sexuality that doubtless complicate the delivery and reception of authority.<sup>94</sup> Further, as Eleanor Casella suggests, Goffman's binary of power—on the one hand meted out by staff, and, on the other, suffered or resisted by inmates—fails to account for the "multiple, situational, conflicting, and opportunistic experiences of power within staff and inmate groups".<sup>95</sup> Much has been written about the "resistance" of Indigenous students to the "domination" experienced in the IRS. Yet recent theorizations of power that pay more attention to issues of plurality, diversity, contingency, improvisation, as well as the fluidity of negotiation, upset stable categories of guard, inmate, or patient, in favour of a multi-relational approach. These insights promise to enrich future research into this contentious question of the relation between agency and coercion in the IRS, especially when discussing the tactics of children. These challenges to Goffman's theory are cited here to make clear that I am not suggesting that the IRS ever approached a de facto space of total control, as no design can ever impose complete submission over its subjects. Yet it is still important to map out specific architectural strategies, however unsuccessful, that aimed to do precisely this.

Despite its flaws, Goffman's thought allows for an interrogation of the carceral archipelago, helping to sort those dubious unities of discourse from those groupings that, as

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<sup>93</sup> Qtd. in Knockwood, 108.

<sup>94</sup> de Cunzo, 167-189

<sup>95</sup> Casella, 72

Foucault has stated above, can be “reasonably reformed.” Clearly notable resemblances exist between the IRS and more coercive and closed total institutions, though again these resemblances do not describe the vastly different *practices, targets, and points of insertion* evident in IRS such as Kamloops or St. Michael’s. These key differences, concerned with the assimilation or containment of Indigeneity—a topic enlarged upon in detail in the following chapters—profoundly trouble affinity arguments and compel the recasting of existing categories for describing the IRS.

Taken together, the IRS shares certain common forms and functions with others in the carceral archipelago. Each isolates, separates, and classifies its charges; most deploy tactics typical to total institutions—mortifications, imposing rules, accommodating adjustments; all require surveillance systems that aim to produce docile, self-policing inmates. And yet, despite these significant similarities, I argue that profound discontinuities in the specific *practices, targets, and points of insertion* of the IRS most forcefully refute the “deep ideological unity” hypothesis. In the Canadian context, the ahistorical, cross-cultural affinity of institutionalization and suffering masks the specific, colonial history and outcomes in which each IRS is implicated. Moreover, these sorts of generalizations distract Settler descendents from recognizing their privileged position as a consequence of these particular histories—a topic to be discussed in greater length in a later chapter. As Slavoj Žižek reminds us, “the only appropriate stance is unconditional solidarity with *all* victims”, while avoiding the “moralizing mathematics of guilt and horror”. In other words, while Žižek argues that all violence carries equal weight, he also suggests that an ethical response

requires attention to the particulars of injury, free from an absurd, comparative calculus of pain.<sup>96</sup>

With this in mind, I argue in the next chapter that distinct architectural forms and expressions of colonial governmentality evident at the IRS provide concrete, particular, and unassimilable material needed to complicate and resist “get over it” objections based on equivalence or affinity positions. There is a genuine need among Indigenous people in communities across the country to attempt to work through the burden of this history. Equally important, non-Indigenous people need to confront, reflect, and situate themselves in relation to this violent past. This attempt at working through is radically different than “sucking it up” or “getting over it”. In a recent speech to the Faculty of Law at the University of Toronto, Justice Murray Sinclair, chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, reminded the audience that “it took 150 years to reach this point in time. It will take many generations to restore relationships and balance.”<sup>97</sup> Moreover, Dakota historian Waziyatawin has suggested that “no one will be committed to righting the wrongs if they cannot recognize and name those wrongs”.<sup>98</sup> I contend that part of this recognition and naming requires a rethinking of the specific material and spatial operation of this architecture, to understand the particular and localized means of enacting policy. With this in mind, what fundamental differences exist between this system and the network of other institutions that routinely render injury to modern subjects?

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<sup>96</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real!: Five Essays on 11 September and Related Dates* (London; New York: Verso, 2002), 51-52.

<sup>97</sup> The full address can be heard at: “Justice Murray Sinclair Address to Faculty of Law, University of Toronto,” [http://www.law.utoronto.ca/visitors\\_content.asp?itempath=5/5/0/0/0&specNews=766&cType=NewsEvents](http://www.law.utoronto.ca/visitors_content.asp?itempath=5/5/0/0/0&specNews=766&cType=NewsEvents) (accessed 2/13/2011, 2011).

<sup>98</sup> Waziyatawin, “You can’t Un-Ring a Bell: Demonstrating Contrition through Action,” in *Response, Responsibility and Renewal: Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Journey*, ed. Gregory Younging, Jonathan Dewar, and Mike DeGagné (Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2009), 194.

## Chapter 2: Telling Disparities: Form, Function, and the Indian Residential School

*Nothing could better justify the colonizer's privileged position than his industry, and nothing could better justify the colonized's destitution than his indolence. The mystical portrait of the colonized therefore includes an unbelievable laziness, and that of the colonizer, a virtuous taste for action.*<sup>1</sup>

Albert Memmi, 1957

Hereditary 'Namgis Chief Wedlidi Speck has noted that the designs and layouts of the IRS produced compartmentalized spaces alien to children from Indigenous cultures.<sup>2</sup>

Traditionally Indigenous children received spiritual and technical instruction in mobile, multivalent spaces, either in the longhouse in winter months or at a variety of summer camps or other sites located along travel routes.<sup>3</sup> Each of these structures and sites would be connected to a complex series of ancestral, cosmological, and spiritual narratives, disseminated to children by elders in oral histories. The longhouse, for instance, was generally understood as the embodiment of the ancestral lineage of a ruling chief and a container for ancestral spirits: the entrance comprised the devouring mouth of the ancestor; the interior beams, ribs; the four corner posts, limbs; the exterior walls, skin; and the central hearth, the brain which burned with the fire of mind.<sup>4</sup> The house was considered a sacred yet functional structure, affording places for sleeping, ceremony, and teaching, while providing an architectural conduit to the spirit world.<sup>5</sup> In this way, spaces of technical instruction were coterminous with those of spiritual instruction. Producing discrete, purpose-built pedagogical spaces serve no purpose for cultures with such holistic ontologies. Speck relates how, on the contrary, the separation in the IRS of secular instruction in classrooms from religious

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<sup>1</sup> Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, 1st American ed. ed. (New York, Orion Press, 1965), 79.

<sup>2</sup> Personal Interview: 10 March 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Geoffrey Carr, "Atopoi of the Modern: Revisiting the Place of the Indian Residential School," *ESC: English Studies in Canada* 35, no. 1 (2010), 109-135.

<sup>4</sup> Susan Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 237.

<sup>5</sup> Irving Goldman, *The Mouth of Heaven: An Introduction to Kwakiutl Religious Thought* (New York: Wiley, 1975), 64.

teaching in chapels and assembly halls, assigning spirit to one space but not another, produced an effect of fracturing self from ancestors and spirits—antithetical to practices in the longhouse—prompting some to refer to the IRS as a “house of no spirit.”

In this chapter, I will develop the notion that what distinguishes the IRS from other institutions—elite boarding schools or structures in the modern, carceral archipelago—is the particular manner in which this sociocultural fracturing flows from the design and policies of the institutions. As proposed in the previous chapter, several points of connection exist between most “total institutions”, including an emphasis on classification, separation, isolation, surveillance, spiritual and corporeal hygiene. However, what is obscured in such comparisons are the temporal and spatial specificities of purpose and procedure. I contend that much of the impetus for constructing new structures for Indigenous peoples sprang from misunderstandings regarding the function and efficacy of their extant stock of buildings—a topic taken up in greater detail in this chapter. More importantly, however, I argue that the dissociative outcomes so often associated with the IRS stem not only from a wide range of new building technologies but also discursive practices, knowledges, and regimes of truth produced especially for this encounter. For this reason, the purpose, design, layout, program, and materials of the IRS cannot be understood through comparison to other modern institutions.

In order to delineate the significant ways in which the IRS performed discrete functions quite apart from other total institutions, I will refer mainly to Foucault’s concept of governmentality. More prominently, this chapter is informed by the extension and application of this theory to colonial history, what David Scott has termed colonial governmentality. The concept of colonial governmentality refers to the discursive practices

of colonial governance, in particular those recasting the social life of colonies as amenable to the interventions of colonial modernization— not through force but through modern forms of regulatory discipline. Via the framework of colonial governmentality, questions of surveillance, catchment, as well as the economics of the IRS are explored to suggest the need to attend to particularity. Such careful study forecloses facile conclusions typical to equivalence theses, while demanding new words to describe the operation of the IRS—a topic considered in greater detail in a later chapter. The theoretical position advanced here will be supported by analysis of architectural plans, archival documents, secondary sources, and from survivor testimony gathered in interview. Not surprisingly, testimony, as discussed above at length, has an equivocal effect, yet it provides valuable, precise information regarding the operation and affect of the architecture of the IRS.

### **Governmentality and Institutions of Colonial Power**

In this chapter, I will argue that what distinguishes the IRS from other modern institutions—to borrow from David Scott—is its *points of insertion*, *targets*, and *projects*. Scott argues that discerning the particular features of colonial governmentality requires study of how colonial power takes as its *point of insertion* the conditions in which the colonized body must exist and define itself, takes as its *target* the conduct of the colonized subject, and takes as its *project* the entrenchment of social, political, and economic rationalities of colonial rule. In this chapter, I will develop my analysis of the architecture and policies of the IRS through this theoretical triad. Before examining in detail the architectural features and policies for the IRS through this conceptual lens, Foucault's use of the concept of governmentality and its extension to analysing colonial societies will be considered.



What then does governmentality mean, and what is at stake in examining the architectural plans, structures, and materials of the IRS through this theoretical model? As Jonathan Inda explains, Foucault devised the portmanteau term governmentality from the words governmental and rationality, to designate “not just the activities of the state and its institutions but more broadly any rational effort to influence or guide the conduct of human beings through acting upon their hopes, desires, circumstances, or environment”.<sup>6</sup> Governmentality spans a heterogeneous network of action and thought, encapsulating a complex of authorities, expertises, strategies, and technologies that seek to govern conduct and to assert particular forms of control.<sup>7</sup> The following three criteria of governmentality appear especially central to Foucault’s thought and have likewise influenced others who have developed his theories for considering colonial social spaces: the *rationality of government* (i.e. regimes of rationalized truths, knowledges, and analytical frames that authorize action); the *technologies of government* (material and conceptual tools) by which authorities shape conduct, decisions, and thought; the *subjects of government*, defined as the sorts of persons, agents, or identities that are produced by or inform a range of governmental practices. Significantly governmentality suggests a strategic field of power relations that acts not only on but also through the subject, wherein power becomes internalized, sedimented, performative, and thus a question also of the relationship of a perceived self to itself.<sup>8</sup> As such, the power of governance remains partial—open to revision, resistance, and revolt.

For Foucault, the concept of governmentality accounts for shifting systems of modern governance—from a defensive, Machiavellian mode meant to stabilize the always unsteady

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<sup>6</sup> Jonathan Inda, “Colonial Governmentality,” in *Anthropologies of Modernity: Foucault, Governmentality, and Life Politics*, ed. Jonathan Xavier Inda (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2005), 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>8</sup> Mark G. E. Kelly, *The Political Philosophy of Michel Foucault* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 61.

authority of the Prince, to an “art of government” reliant upon the economic model of the familial household concerned with “men and things,” and then to a “science” of government built on statistical analyses of populations (births, disease, deaths, wages, marriages, etc.). This latter form facilitates a science of political economy attending to “the perception of new networks of continuous and multiple relations between population, territory, and wealth”.<sup>9</sup> Significantly, however, Foucault does not apply his theory of governmentality to colonial history, though in the 1990s postcolonial theorists began to apply his concept of governmentality to better understand the particulars of colonial rule.

In his seminal article entitled “Colonial Governmentality”, David Scott employs Foucault’s concept of governmentality, with the aim of delineating the key differences that exist between modern knowledge, procedures, and systems manifest in Europe since the first period of colonial expansion and the appearance of similar competencies in colonial settings. His project to better discern the political rationalities of colonial power is not dependent upon a “decentering” of European history but instead attempts to reformulate the “practices, modalities, and projects through which *the varied forms of Europe’s insertion* into the lives of the colonized were constructed and organized [italics original] “. <sup>10</sup> He argues for the need to better understand the formation of colonial power, not dependent on broader currents of global modernization or predictably coincident with the exercise of colonialism, but rather dependent upon the “historically differentiated structures and projects of colonial rule”.<sup>11</sup>

Scott’s analysis of colonial governmentality extends and, in significant ways, departs from Partha Chatterjee’s earlier contention that colonial modernity differs considerably from

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<sup>9</sup> Michel Foucault, “Governmentality,” in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 99.

<sup>10</sup> Scott (2005), 193.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 195.

European modernity. According to Chatterjee, what distinguishes colonial modernity from European modernity is what he terms the “rule of colonial difference”, in which the colonized are perceived and represented by the colonizers as radically Other, with race as the central determinant of enforced difference. Chatterjee argues that “the more the logic of a modern regime of power pushed the processes of government in the direction of a rationalization of administration and the normalization of the objects of its rule, the more insistently did the issue of race come up”.<sup>12</sup> Scott concedes that it is important to understand the various ways that colonial power is not simply a replication of modern power manifest in Europe, but he cautions against the homogenizing tendency of Chatterjee’s binary, which opposes European and colonial modernities.

Not only does Scott wish to make a distinct difference between European and colonial modernities, but also he seeks to produce a complex model of colonial governmentality that can account for shifts in colonial rule in different settings and historical periods. Scott contends that:

critically rethinking the problem about the modern in its relation to the colonial ought to entail displacing the modernization narrative such that not only can modernity no longer appear to us as the normalized telos of a developmental process, but consequently colonialism can no longer seem to consist in the mere historical reiteration of a single political rationality whose effects can be adequately assessed in terms of the “more or less” of force, freedom, or reason. And in such a refigured narrative, the formation of colonial modernity would have to appear as a discontinuity in the

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<sup>12</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 19.

organization of colonial rule characterized by the emergence of a distinctive political rationality.<sup>13</sup>

For Scott, as mentioned in the previous chapter, understanding colonial governmentality requires imposing a historicity on our understanding, so as to discern the temporal differences, the discontinuous manner in which different modes of colonial rule evolved to assume closer biopolitical and disciplinary imbrication.<sup>14</sup> This notion is key not only to establishing the discontinuities between the IRS and other modern institutions in the carceral archipelago but also to understanding the appearance of shifting institutional forms that housed Indigenous education in Canada and abroad.

Significantly, however, Scott does argue for certain commonalities in varied manifestations of colonial governmentality.<sup>15</sup> A common feature evident in colonial modernities is the production of social space in which resistance is not merely contained or accommodation simply encouraged, but rather one in which both resistance and accommodation cannot help but be defined by new terrains of modern colonial rule.<sup>16</sup> As Scott notes, “with the formation of the political rationality of the modern colonial state, not only the rules of the political game but the political game itself changed”.<sup>17</sup> This has profound implications when considering the equivocal testimony of either the laudable or damnable qualities of the IRS, as this range of subjective responses are likewise defined by the particulars of educational policy and the design and construction of institutions. In other words, though there was a choice of how to respond to subjection at the IRS, this range of

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 204

<sup>14</sup> Stephen Legg, *Spaces of Colonialism: Delhi's Urban Governmentalities* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2007), 25.

<sup>15</sup> As pointed out in conversation with Rhodri Windsor Liscombe, the British colonial system also sought a degree of uniformity and effectiveness through the public demonstration of long-established ceremonies, manners, rituals, sport, uniforms, and more.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 214.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 197-198.

choices conveyed in testimonial experience could only be defined in relation to new social spaces ordered by new instruments of colonial governmentality.

To reiterate, Scott argues that discerning the particular features of colonial governmentality requires an understanding of what he terms the *targets, projects, and point of insertion* of colonial power. Colonial power takes as its target the conduct of the colonized, Indigenous subject, takes as its project the entrenchment of social, political, and economic rationalities of colonial rule, and takes as its point of insertion the conditions in which the colonized body must exist and define itself. Applied to the IRS, this schema—projects, targets, and points of insertion—exposes profound disparities in design, aim, and function between these other modern institutions discussed in the first last chapter. Moreover, what becomes apparent through these narratives is the need to disrupt the language currently used to describe these “schools”, an intervention that will be ventured in detail in the next chapter.

### **Initial Points of Insertion: The Dormitory**

To begin discerning the IRS as a particular point of insertion into Indigenous lifeworlds, consider the overarching aim of the IRS and how it differs from non-Indigenous boarding schools. Cree scholar Linda Bull notes that

Other residential schools did not share the following characteristics:

- a) Academic programs were not the focus of Indian residential schools: in fact, the schools did not even provide solid academic programs.
- b) Parents had no say about their children’s attendance at Indian residential schools; they had no part in the decision to attend, and could not withdraw their children from them.
- c) In many cases, children did not speak the language used in the

school, and were forbidden to speak the language they knew. The specific aim of this goal was to remove the children from the influence of their parents<sup>18</sup>

Thus, unlike most boarding schools that educate or even indoctrinate students into standards and competencies relevant to their culture, the Indian Residential Schools—by displacing Indigenous families, languages, cultures, religions, and economies—functioned specifically to do the opposite. In what follows, I argue that the design features of the IRS can never be separated from this divisive project.

The dormitory provided a key means for effecting sociocultural dissolution, separating the student cohort according to age and gender. It could be argued that institutional segregation and isolation appear as a general *technology of government* (the material and conceptual tools by which authorities shape conduct, decisions, and thought), appearing frequently in non-Indigenous schools. However, the manifestation of such aims in the IRS—the specifics of colonial governmentality—cannot be divorced from the larger colonial project of disrupting Indigenous community both inside and outside its walls. An anonymous survivor describes the tactical operation of the dormitory system at St. Michael's IRS in Alert Bay:

My brother was in one dormitory, and I was in another, and then a couple of years later, my younger brothers came into the big school [St. Michael's]. They were junior boys, I was an intermediate, and [name deleted] was a senior boy. We were divided into three dorms. You'd think that because your brothers were in the big school, you could establish a relationship with them.

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<sup>18</sup> Linda Bull, 1991, "Indian Residential Schooling: The Native Perspective," *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 18, suppl. (1991), 1-63.

I now know it wasn't structured for that. There was a separation of the junior boys from the intermediate boys from the senior boys. And so socially, you couldn't always interact, and you couldn't establish family ties. It was a very destructive situation, to discourage family relationship building like that.<sup>19</sup>

The practice of segregating Indigenous children within the IRS dormitories from the opposite gender, older siblings, and friends cannot be understood without taking into account federal government policies of isolating Indigenous children from their families, communities, and cultures. Though such dispersive tactics do bear superficial resemblances to, for example, the "pastoral colony" built to "reform" London's underprivileged, urban children (remote location, rudimentary education, disciplinary labour), the desired outcome was radically different. This difference, moreover, is evident both in the administration and the design of the IRS.

As such, the design of these institutions ought to be understood alongside the aim to build spaces in which colonized subjects must redefine their identities. In this way, the IRS produced, for some, a space of near-intolerable alienation, one that would require years or decades to ameliorate. Chief Joseph relates his early encounters at six years of age in the dormitories at St. Michael's IRS:

When I first got introduced to the dorms ... I had never slept away from the proximity and closeness of a loving family. And suddenly there were thirty or forty little beds lined up side-by-side ... in my first year it was very frightening to be in a big, huge dorm with all these other little kids ... you had the supervisor barking orders and you didn't know what he was saying

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<sup>19</sup> Steffen Bohni Nielsen, *Civilizing Kwakiutl: Contexts and Contests of Kwakiutl Personhood, 1880-1999* (Århus: University of Aarhus, 2001), 248.

because you don't understand his language ... I couldn't make sense of it all. When you don't understand most things, you sort of live in fear, because if you did something wrong you would be centered out very quickly, cuffed in the ear, cuffed behind the head, sometimes it was leather straps or whatever. The whole culture of the dorm was one of confinement ... The whole culture was based on fear. I guess that's how they managed groups of people ... We didn't experience that before we went to the dorms.<sup>20</sup>

It is to be expected, however, that for other students the dormitories afforded a neutral or even positive experience. For instance, Adeline Brown notes that "I actually liked it [the dormitory] because I had my own bed. That was a big thing".<sup>21</sup> And, yet, Brown in a personal conversation pointed out that for many Indigenous children the dormitory bed to which a child was assigned represented the first implement of isolation, as most children previously would have shared sleeping space, bodily warmth, and comfort with siblings. Charles Chapman recalls, in a similarly complex fashion, that "I didn't find it [gender separation] to be an issue when I was there ... [but] I noticed when people were having difficulty ... that a few students that I remember were sort of withdrawn".<sup>22</sup> This complicated account of the IRS dormitory indicates further nuances of such testimonial evidence: the articulation of experiences of coping or even enjoyment in these institutional spaces are typically uttered respectfully, against an assumed backdrop of the suffering of less-fortunate others. Indeed, this unspoken and often sorrowful context provides definition for the horizons of positive accounts of the IRS. Nowhere does one hear of Indigenous people highlighting the positive testimony of other survivors, as if it stems the tide of critique regarding the system and

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<sup>20</sup> Personal interview: 25 March 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Personal interview: 13 April 2010.

<sup>22</sup> Personal interview: 1 April 2010.



structures of Indian education. This appears, as explained in the introduction, solely a revisionist strategy employed by non-Indigenous apologists.

Certain design features of IRS dormitories provide an opportunity to complicate such testimonial evidence, providing further reasons to consider the IRS as an instrument particular to Canadian colonial governmentality. Such architectural elements are made visible through contradistinction with the configuration and programme of certain English boarding schools, through which components of the IRS, at least superficially, seem to share a family resemblance. The dormitories of the IRS do share one prominent, progressive feature of the English boarding school: the open plan. In his book *Health At School* (1887), Dr. Clement Dukes—resident doctor at Rugby School and an authority on hygiene and boarding school design—argued passionately about the merits of the open plan.<sup>23</sup> Dukes praises open dormitory plans over cubicles or private rooms (though cubicles and private rooms were favoured by parents), for reasons of ventilation, surveillance, and moral propriety. With cubicles or closed rooms it is difficult to maintain constant air circulation at night, and such barriers also prevent “a boy who would control others for good, carrying out his duties and desires”.<sup>24</sup> Not surprisingly, such private spaces are also discouraged for they “allow boys to get together for immoral purposes, unseen and undetected”.<sup>25</sup>

Though the architects of the IRS likewise opted for open dormitories, they differed significantly from those recommended by Dukes and others in the amount of square footage allotted per student. The architectural plans for the Lejac IRS (1919; R. Guerny Orr, architect) are particularly instructive, for they provide both dimensions of the residential

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<sup>23</sup> A testament to the influence of Dukes’s text is evidenced by its liberal citation twenty-five years later in Felix Clay’s notable book on day and boarding school design, *Modern School Buildings*, discussed in the previous chapter.

<sup>24</sup> Clement Dukes, *Health at School Considered in its Mental, Moral, and Physical Aspects* (London: Cassell, 1887), 78.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

wings, as well as recommendations for the number of students meant to occupy each dormitory (fig. 2.1). The senior boys dormitory comprised approximately 1040 square ft., measured 9 feet in height, and accommodated twenty-three students. This arrangement provided approximately 45.2 square ft. of floor space per student, and totalled approximately 407 cubic ft. of space per student. These figures are approximately twenty percent less than the minimum provisions for space listed in 1911 contracts between the DIA and various Churches (500 cubic ft.) meant to establish the “scientific” limits on student enrolment in relation to dormitory size.<sup>26</sup>

Felix Clay recommends that students should have at least 60 square ft. of floor space each and, further, that beds should be separated at a minimum by 3 ft.<sup>27</sup> He then lists the square footage per student at a variety of schools, including the Leys School, Cambridge (62 ft.<sup>2</sup>), Clergy Orphan School, Bushey (66 ft.<sup>2</sup>), and the New Buildings, Christ’s Hospital (72 ft.<sup>2</sup>). Dukes goes further than Clay, suggesting that each student requires as much as 88 square ft. of floor space and 800 cubic ft. of space.<sup>28</sup> He cites philanthropist and prison reformer John Howard, who argued that inmates in solitary confinement should be afforded at least 80 square ft. Dukes asks “if such a space be requisite ... for prisoners, how much more is it needed for growing girls and boys? Are our sons and daughters ... to be worse housed than our prisoners and paupers?”.<sup>29</sup> These spatial disparities between English boarding schools and the IRS seem to suggest—especially in light of a shared literacy in progressive dormitory design—that the function of the IRS was more one of warehousing than education. IRS survivor Alvin Dixon provides visceral insight into the lived experience

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<sup>26</sup> Milloy, 87.

<sup>27</sup> Clay, 225.

<sup>28</sup> Dukes, 84.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

of such cramped spaces: “There was no real privacy in the showers, in the toilets, in the dormitories. I bet you that the beds were no more than a foot apart. And again that’s where the noise and smell came in”.<sup>30</sup> With this in mind, I argue that the authoring of such incommodious spaces cannot be considered apart from the myriad of other oppressive regulatory schemes—the Indian Act, reserves, the Potlatch Law, and so on—endemic to Canadian colonial governmentality.

Comparing surveillance systems and procedures between the English boarding schools and the IRS provides similarly illustrative contrasts that underscore the operation of colonial governmentality. To maintain student discipline, Clement Dukes advocated the use of prefects to monitor the activities in the open dormitory. Prefects were students, selected for their seriousness, honest character, and sense of duty.<sup>31</sup> In Dukes’s opinion, the power of “carefully chosen prefectorial authority”, i.e. student surveillance, was the linchpin for maintaining the moral health of any dormitory.<sup>32</sup> Eerily prescient, Dukes warns that without proper provisions of surveillance, children will be subjected to an “unnatural system of education” in which they will participate in acts of “defilement” (though Dukes does not name them specifically, masturbation or same-sex encounters), a fate that leads to expulsion, disgrace, and loss of future prospects. Felix Clay also recommends the use of a prefectorial system, recommending that each dormitory should contain at least one monitor room that provides a clear view of the dormitory, either through an open door or through a window (fig. 2.2).<sup>33</sup> Such monitor rooms should not be confused with similar rooms meant to provide a vantage point for headmasters, as noted in the discussion of New College, Hull in the

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<sup>30</sup> Personal interview: 25 March 2010.

<sup>31</sup> Dukes, 95.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>33</sup> Clay, 241.

previous chapter. As evident in Clay's proposed design, the monitor room works in tandem with a chamber for the housemaster that adjoins the dormitory, the former occupied by an older student, and the latter, by an adult supervisor.

The use of the monitor room in the IRS diverges sharply from this procedural model, in that adult supervisors occupied both spaces, thus producing an entirely different regime of discipline open to a variety of new evils not articulated by Dukes or Clay. Moreover, the designs of certain monitor rooms found in the IRS demonstrate significant sophistication over those found in English predecessors, and those refinements demand rethinking the genealogy of the IRS and its function in wider processes of colonial governmentality. Monitor rooms in the IRS were operated by religious or lay staff. Cruder versions of the monitor room would provide a clear view of the children's dormitory but also of supervisors entering or exiting (fig. 2.3). More sophisticated examples allowed for supervisors to enter and exit unseen through a hallway door. Some monitor room designs even provided multiple sightlines through the curtained windows. For example, the plan for Kuper Island Residential School (1914-1916; R. M. Ogilvie, architect) indicates a tripartite sightline, looking simultaneously outside, into the small boys' dormitory and, also, into the small boys' washroom (fig. 2.4). Tellingly, Charles Chapman has noted a significant discrepancy between the plans and the actual layout of the upper dormitory floor of Kuper Island IRS: the window to the washroom was not installed; a passageway between the girls' and boys' dorms was never executed; and the configuration of the dormitory entrance was changed to conceal the comings and goings of monitors (fig. 2.5).<sup>34</sup> Though the window to the boys' washroom was not installed, the intensified surveillance techniques designed by the architects at the

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<sup>34</sup> Personal Interview: 1 April 2010.

DIA raise a number of questions regarding surveillance and its role in inculcating a series of “civilizing” behaviours meant to intervene in bodily, psychological, and spiritual matters.

Before examining these questions in detail, one of the more troublesome aspects of these designs needs to be addressed. The dormitory was often the site of clandestine pedophilia, as victimized students could encounter abuse in a culture of silence observed by perpetrators, victims, and bystanders alike.<sup>35</sup> The monitor rooms especially served as covert sites for pedophiles, as they were either in or near dormitories and, as mentioned, often fitted with doors and curtained windows. Significantly, not every IRS used monitor rooms, and these discrepancies seem to play out along denominational lines, with Roman Catholic institutions most often fitted with them. That said, institutions managed by other nominations, such as the United Church’s Alberni IRS (1939: J. Halley, architect), maintained surveillance through carefully placed supervisor’s rooms—however, without the emphasis on visual scrutiny (fig. 2.6). Alvin Dixon remembers he felt most afraid and insecure in the proximity of a supervisor’s room.<sup>36</sup> Alberni IRS, it should be remembered, was the institution at which Arthur Henry Plint worked as a dormitory supervisor. Convicted in 1995 of over thirty counts of physical and sexual abuse, Plint was labelled a “sexual terrorist” by Supreme Court Justice Douglas Hogarth and sentenced to eleven years imprisonment.<sup>37</sup>

Difficult questions are raised when considering relations between such designs and the charge by Justice Hogarth that IRS constituted a form of “institutionalized pedophilia”. I am not contending that such spaces by themselves produce such criminality nor that a clear

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<sup>35</sup> Jack, 164.

<sup>36</sup> Personal Interview: 25 March 2010.

<sup>37</sup> Roger Stonebanks, “Aug 25/98: ‘Sexual Terrorist’ Fingers Res School Principal, DIA,” *Victoria Times-Colonist*, <http://sisis.nativeweb.org/resschool/aug2598bciv.html> (accessed 11/7/2010, 2010).; see also the disturbing account of Willie Blackwell, whose testimony against Plint helped in his conviction in Fournier, 64-71.

intention to abuse informs their design. However, a dialectic is suggested here between the paternalistic governmentality that informed spaces and policies to correct and acculturate children through confinement, surveillance, corporeal punishment, and other coercive persuasions, on the one hand, and the extension of these practices into psychosexual abuse, on the other. Institutionalized power relations between adults and children (and within their ranks) in the residential school setting, supported by colonial racism, made relationships between children and their ostensible guardians vulnerable to all sorts of pathologies. This is not merely a case of neglect, as implied in Stephen Harper's apology; it is a matter of the connection between such designs and colonial governmentality, of a near-limitless authority to segregate and re-form Indigenous subjects that compelled and authorized the behaviour of social actors in the IRS.

Nevertheless, this same dialectic, between design and compulsion/authorization, is evident in an inverse outcome: in certain instances, groups of students formed allegiances, facilitated by the open setting of the dorms, to resist the advances of nocturnal molesters by refusing to silently witness the abuse of another.<sup>38</sup> Ironically, in such cases adherence to so-called progressive dormitory design protected Indigenous children from those who supervised the institution. Charles Chapman, however, complicates the relations between the open dorm design, visibility, and student safety. Apparently, during daylight hours, students at Kuper Island found a safe haven in the dormitories, as "there was more of us there together, [and] it was all in the open, so we could all see each other because the beds were so low".<sup>39</sup> However, in darkness, Chapman relates his fear of this same space, as "it just didn't seem to be a safe place ... if something [sexual abuse] was happening up there and other

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<sup>38</sup> Jack, 63.

<sup>39</sup> Personal Interview: 1 April 2010.

students were awake, they wouldn't say anything or do anything".<sup>40</sup> This startling disparity of experiences in the dormitories—as a shifting site of vulnerability or solidarity—does not excuse the relation between design and governmentality but, instead, indicates the imminence of its possible failure. In other words, in any institution the exercise of authority through architectural design remains incomplete, prone to lapses and resistance. Yet despite this degree of openness, it is important to remember that the IRS dorms, as *point of insertions*, were spaces in which both resistance and accommodation could not help but be defined by such new instruments and procedures of colonial governmentality. This assertion is not to deprive Indigenous actors of agency, but to indicate how, as Scott noted earlier, such points of insertion irrevocably change “not only the rules of the political game but the political game itself.”

### **Targets of Colonial Governmentality: The Indians Parlour and “Other” Spaces**

As mentioned earlier, colonial power takes as its target the conduct of the colonized subject. In what follows, I argue that such targeting of children required support from the architecture of the IRS, to manage contact between Indigenous students and their families and communities. Robert Joseph relates the first moment he entered the IRS and contended with the severing of ties to family and community:

I saw this long corridor to the left and to the right and I didn't know then that the directions to the left and the right would be forever etched in my mind ... If you were a little girl entering the school you turned to the right ... and if you were a little boy, you turned left. And forever after that the building symbolized that segregation, dividing people up, and that in itself embedded a

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

long sense of detachment to my loving relatives and a sense of loneliness ... Suddenly you're not going to grow up ever again with that connection I told you about earlier when we lived in overcrowded houses, when everybody had a place in there, a value in there, was loved, nourished, and cared for ... When we walked in the front door and went to the left or to the right, we suddenly became very lonely little human beings".<sup>41</sup>

I argue in what follows that this experience of segregation and profound alienation can be tied to the sociopolitical function of certain spaces and policies of the IRS, designed to alter the conduct of Indigenous children by disrupting their connections to families and communities.

As noted, relocating Indigenous children from their home communities was widely favoured as a means to isolate children from the influences of parents and others. Catchment policies also suggest the tactic of breaking up familial relations. As best as can be pieced together from testimony—government documents detailing catchment have been destroyed—families were often split apart, with brothers, sisters, or cousins inexplicably enrolled in institutions distant from other family members. Alvin Dixon, who attended the Alberni IRS on Vancouver Island, recalls the manner in which his siblings were separated from one another:

It was very abnormal not only abnormal... my older sisters went to Alert Bay. [Another] ... went to Coqualeetza in the Fraser Valley, and then she went to Alert Bay after with the other ones. My two youngest sisters went to Alert Bay as well. But when I left Alberni the youngest of my two younger sisters went there as well. And the youngest brother went to Edmonton... So that

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<sup>41</sup> Personal Interview: 25 March 2010.



obviously was a very serious act of separating. Not [sent] to separate dorms but separate places. So when we got together in the summer, it was really strange.<sup>42</sup>

Additional barriers were imposed between students and their families through restrictive visiting privileges, compounded by the often prohibitive travel distance required of parents. Adeline Brown, who left the Queen Charlotte Islands to attend Edmonton IRS, notes that “because Edmonton was so far away from Haida Gwaii, nobody from that area would come to visit ... I don’t remember any family ever coming to see their children at all”.<sup>43</sup> Despite remote relocations and restrictive visiting privileges, the IRS still had to accommodate those families able to visit students.

Accordingly, each institution designated set areas for familial visits, and differences in form and practice manifest, as with dormitories, along denominational lines. In certain Catholic institutions, supervised visits were conducted in racially segregated spaces: for Indigenes, the so-called “Indians Parlour” (or Indians Room); for Settlers, the “white parlour”, though it was not always referred to by this name.<sup>44</sup> The purpose-built Indians Parlours, first seen in plans for industrial schools, served to limit physical and visual access to the institution, as well as to ensure that no Indigenous languages were spoken between visitants (fig. 2.7). Visiting family would enter the parlour directly through an outside doorway, whereas children would enter via an interior door made accessible to their assigned pavilion by a hallway or adjacent room. Later IRS designs incorporated the Indians Parlour into the main building, but still with the aim of limiting sightlines into the school and preventing family and other visitors from entering the main doors of the institution. (fig. 2.8).

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<sup>42</sup> Personal Interview: 25 March 2010.

<sup>43</sup> Personal Interview: 13 April 2010.

<sup>44</sup> Grant, 153.

Still others did include visiting rooms nearer the central axis of the building, a position that required Indigenous guests to enter through the main door of the school.

An anonymous informant recalls his experience of the effects of the Indian Parlour at Kamloops (RC) IRS:<sup>45</sup>

Dad came to visit us. I remember somebody would come and call us and they take us up to this little room and we'd wait for him, and he'd come and visit.

We were all young and he'd just start crying. I guess he couldn't work and look after us at the same time.<sup>46</sup>

Anishnaabe writer, storyteller, and scholar Basil Johnston relates a similarly alienating experience of visits with his sister, also in residence at Spanish Indian Residential School (RC) in Ontario:

The few first moments, all Sis did was look up at me, her eyes black and misty with sadness and bewilderment at being wrenched from her mother and sisters and transported to an alien place where “suffer little children to come unto me” was largely forgotten by sisters and priests. After the greeting of “Ahenee,” and some questioning glances between us, Sis snuggled up against my leg. An hour later we said “Bye.”<sup>47</sup>

Charles Chapman confirms the effectiveness of the Indians Parlour to limit the use of Indigenous language between visitants at Kuper Island IRS, in that supervisors did not even need to warn against such exchanges, as the punishments were known to be so severe that none would risk it.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Kamloops IRS was designed in 1923, R. G. Orr, architect.

<sup>46</sup> Qtd. in Jack, 137.

<sup>47</sup> Basil Johnston, 154.

<sup>48</sup> Personal Interview: 1 April 2010

Significantly, it appears that Indian Parlours were not built in Protestant institutions.<sup>49</sup> St. Michael's IRS (AN) and Alberni IRS (UC) conducted family visits in a corridor that ran between the second floor of the main building and the chapel attached at back.<sup>50</sup> This corridor was equipped with long, retractable bench seating that would be used only for family visits. Unlike the Indians Parlour, clearly delineated and named in architectural plans, these visiting corridors are not indicated on any plans, nor apparently did students know them by any particular name. Interviews with survivors of these two Anglican IRS suggest that, despite similar architectural layouts, visiting practices were far stricter at St. Michael's than at Alberni.

Robert Joseph remembers visits at St. Michael's as stilted and choreographed, bracketed by the restrictions on speaking Kwakwala and the continuous surveillance of school supervisors:

When our parents or grandparents came to visit, they used to have to sit here [indicates on plan the visiting corridor] ... There would be a guy or gal [IRS supervisor] standing there the whole time. As soon as the parents left, they would confiscate everything they thought was contraband, which was most things. But they never stopped standing there, watching ... We couldn't speak or respond in Kwakwala, even though our older people who couldn't speak English were there ... Part of the penalty for speaking Kwakwala was to lose gifts brought from parents or to lose visiting privileges to the village on the weekend. If you have somebody there intensely watching it begins to erode

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<sup>49</sup> To date, research has divulged no instance of an Indian Parlour at a Protestant IRS, though admittedly plans have not been surveyed for every Protestant institution.

<sup>50</sup> The architect of St Michael's is unknown, as the plans for the building are not held in the collection at LAC. The building was erected in 1929.

the intimacy of family ... they should have been private, personal moments that helped us get through the rest of it. That there was a breakthrough of mind, and heart, and spirit, with the people we knew who loved us. But there they were, having somebody stand there all the time.<sup>51</sup>

However, survivors of both Roman Catholic and Protestant IRS testify to enjoying a measure of privacy when visiting family.<sup>52</sup> Alvin Dixon remembers visits in the prescribed corridor at Alberni fondly, as administrators even allowed parents to take children out of school for private dinners in town:

We [the family] would meet there [the corridor] and discuss what we wanted to do... Again no supervision -- we could talk about anything we wanted ... there wasn't anybody eavesdropping.<sup>53</sup>

Moreover, when neighbouring parents from Bella Bella (Dixon's home community) were visiting their children at Alberni, they were allowed to gather up other children from the community and take them all to dinner. This unusual visiting policy was one of the features of Alberni that informs Dixon's largely favourable opinions: "Alberni was a special school ... Except for the Plints at that school, things were quite different there." Again, this equivocal manner of praise, on one hand indicating just administrative practices, is articulated, on the other, against a tacitly acknowledged traumatic ground—in this case the horrendous misdeeds of Arthur Henry Plint.

Despite these architectural, procedural, and experiential differences, the common purpose of these spaces—"reforming" student conduct by regulating contact with their families—takes on significant political dimensions, considering the degree to which officials

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<sup>51</sup> Personal Interview: 25 March 2010

<sup>52</sup> For favourable accounts of family visits in Roman Catholic IRS, see: Grant, 154.

<sup>53</sup> Personal Interview: 25 March 2010

in the Department of Indian Affairs considered such isolation essential to subverting ancestral political structures, cultural practices, and economies. Though opinions in the DIA were divided regarding the influence of parents, the dominant position held that students received maximum possible benefit by separating with families and home communities.<sup>54</sup> Indian Agent W.M. Halliday reveals the degree to which the IRS was meant to effect this schism between children, their families, and elders in the Alert Bay region and, as well, the extent to which such divisions had profound political implications:

In my last report, I drew your attention to the fact that the Indians in this agency [Kwakewlth] were so wrapped up in the potlatch customs and system, that they looked with the greatest indifference upon education. Education has a tendency to break up the old customs, and the young men who received more or less education at the industrial or day schools look upon the potlatch as an evil. At present they are in the minority, and there is not one of them strong enough mentally to come out and take the leadership against the potlatch and be able to put up with the opposition of the older men... If one such should arise and throw down the gauntlet, and have the necessary eloquence and leadership, victory would be assured.<sup>55</sup>

The following year, after noting some dissatisfaction with the stubbornness of the potlatch, W.M. Halliday makes clear his belief that assimilation is inevitable, but that this will only be accomplished by an intergenerational effort and a more intensive school system. “The work of the industrial and boarding schools”, he states, “is more far-reaching than the

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<sup>54</sup> One typical example of dissenting view is evident in the opinion of an Indian Agent, who, in 1911, noted that “My experience has taught me that the co-operative influence of the parent is one of the strongest and best forces in the work of uplifting the children.” *DIA Annual Report*, 1911, 127.

<sup>55</sup> *DIA Annual Report*, 1912, 336.

day school, as the pupils are entirely away from the home influence of the parents during the greater part of the year.” In this way, in his words, each generation of ex-pupils—through their reconstituted conduct—will form a “link in the chain between barbarism and civilization.”<sup>56</sup> It is important to remember, when considering the overall impacts of this anti-potlatch policy, that potlatch is not merely a cultural practice, but is, as Joseph Masco points out, a “transaction with legal, economic, socio-structural, and religious dimension[s].”<sup>57</sup> With this in mind, the purpose of Indians Parlour and other such visiting spaces (limiting and regulating familial relations) makes clear the biopolitical imperatives of colonial governmentality. In this case, the aim was to produce a comprador class of ex-students who would unseat the ancient, socio-political hold of the Kwakwaka’wakw in the Alert Bay region. Moreover, the subject-making function of these regulatory spaces—however flawed or incomplete—provide an irreducible distinction, a particular technological form and operation endemic to the IRS not seen in other boarding schools, orphanages, prisons, military barracks, workhouses, hospitals, and so on.

An interesting parallel exists between the aims of the DIA articulated by W.M. Halliday and those of the 1832 Colebrook-Cameron Committee, dispatched by the British government to colonial Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka) to draft a program of economic, administrative, and judicial reform. In addition to recommending a lengthy list of socioeconomic changes, Commissioner W.M.G. Colebrook also advised that funds should be allocated to purchase printing presses to boost newspaper circulation. Colebrook declared that the “very limited operation of presses has tended to check the progress of moral and

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 1913.

<sup>57</sup> Joseph Masco, ““It is a Strict Law that Bids Us Dance”: Cosmologies, Colonialism, Death, and Ritual Authority in the Kwakwaka’wakw Potlatch, 1849 to 1922,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, no. 1 (1995), 43.

intellectual improvement, and in those parts of the country where there is little intercourse with Europeans, the ignorance and prejudices of the people have been perpetuated”.<sup>58</sup> The attempt to create a rational public sphere by means of newspaper circulation would widen the exchange of “reasonable opinion” while disqualifying and undermining the foundation of Indigenous knowledges. It was hoped that the circulation of non-Indigenous thought would encourage Indigenes to engage in discourses closely allied with the rationality of colonial rule.

In this way, the operation of colonial governmentality—targets, projects, points of insertion—becomes visible, though through entirely different means. The need to delineate disparities between colonial governmentality and that associated with European modernization are substantiated by considering a recent account of the Colebrook-Cameron committee found in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*: the reforms “signified for Ceylon the first manifestation of constitutional government, the first steps toward modernizing the traditional economic system, and the beginnings of a uniform system of justice, education, and civil administration”.<sup>59</sup> Implicit in this matter-of-fact description of modernization is a totalizing ideal of modernity as the normalized *telos* of a development process, as if the aim to foreclose Indigeneity, evident in BC and Sri Lanka, does not change the form of its application.

This resembles the classic account of the public sphere forwarded in Jurgen Habermas’s early and influential book, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. In Habermas’s conceptualization, a modern, rationally governed public sphere developed in

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<sup>58</sup> Scott, 2005, 209.

<sup>59</sup> “Colebrook-Cameron Commission (British Commission) -- Britannica Online Encyclopedia,” <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/125187/Colebrook-Cameron-Commission> (accessed 8/8/2010, 2010).

spite of hostile forms of church and state authority, through shared interests in mercantilism and print culture. Modernization and the subsequent increase in civil liberties (i.e. freedoms) were won by the force of a new liberalism, overmatching irrational forces of authority. This takes up the Kantian theme that the promise of liberalism depends entirely upon public expressions of rationality. What Habermas (and Kant for that matter) overlooks is the manner in which power informs modern political rationality—that “power works not *in spite of* but *through* the construction of a subjectivity normatively experienced as the source of free will and rational, autonomous agency”.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, what eludes description in this *telos* of development are those new, public spheres and institutions emerging in colonial holdings, as well as the geopolitical particularities of the *targets, projects, and point of insertion* of colonial rule.

### **Sighting the Targets of Colonial Governmentality**

As described earlier colonial power takes as its target the conduct of the colonized, and, as such, this sort of biopolitics depends heavily upon tactics and methods of surveillance. Basil Johnson’s eloquent recollection of Spanish IRS lends a sense of the ubiquity of close surveillance in the institution:

The eyes began their surveillance in the morning, watching the washing of hands and faces. The eyes followed all the movements and the dressing of the beds; the eyes were transfixed on the backs of the worshipers during mass. Throughout the day the eyes traced the motions of hands at table; the eyes glared at the figures bent and coiled in work; the eyes tracked the flight of the ball and puck and the movement of feet during play; the eyes were trained on

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<sup>60</sup> Scott, 2005, 201.



the prints of pencil on paper; the eyes censored letters received and letters written. The eyes, like those of the Wolf, peered in the dark in watch over still, sleeping forms. The eyes were never at rest.<sup>61</sup>

In what follows, I will examine the historical antecedents as well as the implications of the various architectural supports needed for the exercise of surveillance in the IRS.

Close surveillance, as evident in the design and function of Indians Parlours and monitor rooms, was believed crucial to advancing the program of the IRS. Surveillance was applied unevenly, in that in certain spaces students were subjected to greater scrutiny than in others. Rooms where male and female students were in closest contact were characterized by heightened surveillance: classrooms, chapels, and dining halls. Conversely, students found opportunities to evade the watchful eye of supervisors. During his stay at Kamloops IRS, Gerald George notes that “the only time that I don’t remember being watched was when we would go for a jog in the morning”.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, Charles Chapman would retreat to an unsupervised, basement washroom in the boys recreation room to find a private moment. He recalls that “that was probably the only time I felt safe ... that there wasn’t anybody there [watching]”.<sup>63</sup> Robert Joseph also remembers that the boys’ recreation rooms were not particularly closely surveyed, and, even if they were, the close proximity of so many boys who were permitted to play loudly made surveillance a difficult task.<sup>64</sup> Significantly, the intensity of surveillance also varied depending upon the ages of students. As evident in the earlier discussion of monitor rooms at Kuper Island, younger children were subject to much more intensive spaces and procedures of watching. While it is true that young children

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<sup>61</sup> Johnston, *Indian School Days*, 138

<sup>62</sup> Personal Interview: 9 March 2010.

<sup>63</sup> Personal Interview: 1 April 2010

<sup>64</sup> Personal Interview: 25 March 2010

typically require the most supervision, I argue that this focus on the most vulnerable users served additional purposes. How, then, to conceptualize surveillance in the IRS, in light of its support for colonial governmentality? What of the model of the panopticon that Foucault discussed as a prelude to his theorization of governmentality?

The monitor rooms with their curtained windows and unseen entrances do echo aspects of Jeremy Bentham's panopticon, in that the power enabled is both "visible and unverifiable." However, I argue that the panopticon concept does not apply suitably to surveillance in the IRS, for in a panopticon, the watcher is central and can see the entirety of the inhabitants in one sweep. Conversely, the intensity of surveillance at the IRS fluctuated from room to room, the most intense falling upon the youngest children. Beyond such formal and programmatic concerns, a more pressing issue informs the need to reconceptualise surveillance in the IRS—chiefly to avoid categorizing these institutions as one among many panoptical structures and, in the process, flattening important spatiotemporal differences understood more productively through the theoretical lens of colonial governmentality.

Interestingly, sociologist Kevin Haggerty asks if the conceptual model of the panopticon, like its namesake, has also become oppressive:

The sheer number of works that invoke the panopticon is overwhelming. More problematically, the panoptic model has become reified, directing scholarly attention to a select subset of attributes of surveillance. In doing so, analysts have excluded or neglected a host of other key qualities and processes of surveillance that fall outside the panoptic framework. The result has been that the panoptic model has been overextended to domains where it

seems ill-suited, and attributes of surveillance that cannot be neatly subsumed under the ‘panoptic’ have been neglected.<sup>65</sup>

Haggerty suggests further that the panopticon comprises only one moment in Foucault’s thought regarding a wider set of biopolitical practices meant to render the subject visible to governing authority. Accordingly, he argues that a more capable theorization of surveillance should be nuanced by Foucault’s later discussion of governmentality. With the critique of the panoptical model in mind, I make connections between surveillance and the histories of disease, inoculation, and religious conversions in British Columbia, to suggest that surveillance systems in the IRS served not only to monitor the movement of bodies in space but also to “inoculate” children from the pathogen of Indigenous culture. I ask if surveillance at the IRS could be characterized more accurately as something viral, a form of vaccination injected into the very young. This immunization—i.e. the germ of Settler culture—was meant to be dispensed in quantities large enough to disrupt Indigenous identity and compel new forms of conduct, but not potent enough to allow for full-blown admission into “civilized” society. Taken this way, surveillance is not merely visual but also, as Foucault mentions earlier, a “technology of government”, one of several material and conceptual tools by which authorities at the IRS shaped conduct, decisions, and thought.

Surveillance played a crucial part in promoting new hygiene habits and instruction for Indigenous students, an aim informed by not only the inordinately high amount of tuberculosis suffered in Indigenous communities but also a general sense that Indigenous culture was pathological. At the close of the nineteenth century, Methodist missionary George Raley related instruction to a form of immunization:

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<sup>65</sup> Kevin D. Haggerty, “Tear Down the Walls: On Demolishing the Panopticon,” in *Theorizing Surveillance: The Panopticon and Beyond*, ed. David Lyon (Cullompton, Devon: Willan Publishing, 2006), 23.

Let me remark, these people often perish for ‘lack of knowledge’ concerning the primary elements of domestic economy. In the Indian houses there is utter thriftless ignorance regarding the simplest matters of household duties ... Miss Long is trying to inoculate them with a love of cleanliness and order; she is training them in sewing, cooking, and other departments of household industry.<sup>66</sup>

Similarly the 1910 DIA annual report justifies removing Indigenous children from their homes so that they can be kept safe under the scrutiny of IRS administrators, “where the utmost care is taken of them”.<sup>67</sup> As late as 1935, a supporter of United Church IRS concluded that “Residential Schools are front-line trenches in the warfare on Indian disease ... [and are] key to the solution of the problems of Indian health.”<sup>68</sup> Significant antecedents exist to the surveillance systems found in the design of the IRS, and in the following pages, these connections will be developed in detail to demonstrate the shifting spatiotemporal forms of colonial governmentality. Indeed, so profound are the connections between surveillance, contagion, inoculation, and education in British Columbia that it could be argued that the province was subdued not at the end of a gun but by syringes and schools.

One of the most well-known surveillance systems, the oft-vilified Durieu system, was conceived and installed in the second half of the nineteenth century in British Columbia by the Roman Catholic Bishop of New Westminster, Paul Durieu (OMI). The Durieu system formally borrows from the Jesuit *reducciones*, 16th-century settlements built in South America, for the purpose of assimilating Indigenous cultures through Christianization.

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<sup>66</sup> Kelm, 61.

<sup>67</sup> This claim is not substantiated by either statistical evidence of student mortalities, inspector reports, or medical examiner reports. See: DIA *Annual Report*, 22; for statistical evidence and examples of gross neglect, see: Milloy, 77-108.

<sup>68</sup> Kelm, 61.

Durieu also drew on experience gained by the OMI missionaries in Québec and later in the Pacific Northwest.<sup>69</sup> His system exerted control over the behaviour of Indigenous peoples in a particular village, chiefly to unseat Indigenous religion with Catholicism. In addition to promoting Roman Catholic concepts of Christianity, the Durieu system suppressed Indigenous marriage practices, compelled temperance, and discouraged miscegenation. The system took root in the 1870s in regions devastated by smallpox outbreaks, aided by mass smallpox inoculations and coincident conversions supervised by Durieu.<sup>70</sup> Each village subject to Durieu appointed an “Indian court,” its judges appointed from the ranks of local elders and other notables in the community. Durieu aimed to “civilize” local populations without the intervention of provincial or federal government. Court sessions were conducted in the evening after prayers, in which charges for transgressions such as missing church services, family quarrels, intemperance, or sexual misconduct would be heard, deliberated upon, and, if deemed necessary, punished.<sup>71</sup> The church would appoint two chiefs for each village, and these chiefs in turn would appoint “watchmen” who would patrol and survey the village, reporting those who flouted the rules. The watchmen, as Keith Thor Carlson points out, not only reported on the violations of villagers, but also monitored the activities of the local shaman and his followers. As such the watchmen were “point men in establishing and maintaining a new set of internal social divisions”.<sup>72</sup>

Despite the instrumental, systematic approach of the Durieu system, results were uneven in different communities as was the constitution of the various Indigenous

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<sup>69</sup> See Elizabeth Furniss, “Resistance, Coercion, and Revitalization: The Shuswap Encounter with Roman Catholic Missionaries, 1860-1900,” *Ethnohistory* 42, no. 2 (Spring, 1995), 142.; Huel, xix

<sup>70</sup> Vincent J. McNally, *The Lord’s Distant Vineyard: A History of the Oblates and the Catholic Community in British Columbia* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press: Western Canadian Publishers, 2000), 129-139.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>72</sup> Keith Thor Carlson, *Colonial Fracture and Community Cohesion: Governance in the Stó:Lō Community of Shxw’ōwhámél*, [http://www.fngovernance.org/research/keith\\_carlson.pdf](http://www.fngovernance.org/research/keith_carlson.pdf) 2007 (accessed 2/16/2011).

bureaucracies. Some scholars argue that it remains unclear to what extent this system permanently altered Indigenous culture, as much of the research in this field has neglected both the persistence of certain traditional practices (feasting, horse racing, or canoe racing) and potentially important research materials, including mission reports, contemporary newspaper accounts, and oral histories.<sup>73</sup> The stakes remain high in such reconsiderations of the impacts of the Durieu system, in light of revisionist accounts, such as that found on the website of the Fraser Valley Heritage Park (the former site of St. Mary's Residential School in Mission BC). This site claims that missionaries adhered to the Durieu system, which dictated that "in each village, eucharistic chiefs, catechists and watchmen were appointed to oversee the spiritual good of the people in the absence of the priest".<sup>74</sup> Aside from such debates of motives and impacts, I argue that Durieu's system should be considered part of a larger tradition of surveillance practices rooted in traumatic histories of disease and inoculation, indicating a trend toward intensified management of the bodily and moral hygiene of Indigenous subjects.

An Anglican variant of the Durieu system was deployed in Metlakatla, BC, a utopian missionary village built in 1862 for the Tsimshian nation by the Anglican missionary William Duncan. The "Metlakatla System" chiefly aimed to uproot the bulk of Indigenous cultural and religious practices in the name of "civilization" and "progress." Similarly, surveillance was used in conjunction with corporeal and shaming punishments to underpin a

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<sup>73</sup> See: Jacqueline Gresko, "Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online," [http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id\\_nbr=6080&interval=25&&PHPSESSID=4hajca83u27ao7v7kg11utpom5](http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=6080&interval=25&&PHPSESSID=4hajca83u27ao7v7kg11utpom5) (accessed 2/16/2011, 2011).; Rodney Arthur Fowler, "The Lemert Thesis and the Sechelt Mission," *CCHA Historical Studies*, 57 (1990), 51-64.

<sup>74</sup> See: "Fraser Valley Heritage Park," <http://www.heritagepark-mission.ca/buriedatomi.html> (accessed 2/16/2011, 2011).

new form of Christianized, Indigenous bureaucracy.<sup>75</sup> Further, the impetus for obedience to the Metlakatla System found its source, as did Durieu's, in the calamitous spread of smallpox amongst the local Indigenous populations. A further point of comparison could be made in the way in which architecture played a role in deploying these various forms of surveillance-based controls. In both Durieu and Duncan's systems, the European-style house figures significantly. By substituting single-family dwellings for communal housing, and by further atomizing family units, the social fabric became more responsive to the pressures of surveillance and priestly control.

The Catholic missionary Joseph Brabant expressed his distaste for Ahousat housing, to justify his refusal to work within such structures:

In the Chief's home twelve different families had their home—twelve different open fireplaces supplied the room with smoke and heat. There were no windows in the house, although the crevices between the wall planks permitted some light to enter. How could I instruct these people in such a horrible place of filth and smoke? Not to mention the noise made by the quarrelling of the women, the crying of children and the fighting dogs—and then the immodest bearing of the numerous inmates!<sup>76</sup>

Perceptible in this complaint is the Settler desire to produce spaces in which the senses can penetrate and, without difficulty, apprehend, sort out, and categorize each individual member of the longhouse. In a similar vein, the Methodist missionary Thomas Crosby, reminiscing about his time as a Methodist missionary to the Coast Salish and Tsimshian nations,

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<sup>75</sup> Jean Usher, *William Duncan of Metlakatla: A Victorian Missionary in British Columbia* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1974), 63-90.

<sup>76</sup> Augustin J. Brabant and Charles Lillard, *Mission to Nootka, 1874-1900: Reminiscences of the West Coast of Vancouver Island* (Sidney, B.C: Gray's Pub, 1977), 90.

exclaimed that “the old heathen home, from its very character, was the hot-bed of vice.”<sup>77</sup> Only European-style housing provided spatial configurations required for redemption, through its intensified partitioning of architectural and social space. William Duncan even suggested, somewhat fetishistically, that the windows and sashes installed in Metlakatla’s communal plank houses possessed the power to “promote civilization”.<sup>78</sup> What animates each of these complaints is a distaste for fluid and elastic Indigenous living arrangements, and, conversely, the modern compulsion of ordering and compartmentalizing. Further, such intensive yet unevenly applied methods of modifying Indigenous conduct—in this case, surveillance via new architectures and regulations—suggest the operation of a transitional form of colonial governmentality, one that would become much more refined and broadly applied in the IRS.

The perceived sense of moral and hygienic danger posed by communal living endured well into the twentieth century, and similar objections to those voiced by Crosby or Brabant are found in the INAC annual reports. The much lionized Dr. Peter Bryce, who authored the controversial Bryce Report of 1907, fretted about the licentiousness and overcrowding:<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Adele Perry, “From “the Hot-Bed of Vice” to the “Good and Well-Ordered Christian Home”: First Nations Housing and Reform in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia,” *Ethnohistory* 50, no. 4 (2003), 587.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 594.

<sup>79</sup> Dr. Bryce submitted a report to the DIA in 1907 making clear the catastrophic prevalence of tuberculosis among Indigenous children in the Indian schools. He referred to the institutionalization of children as a “trail of disease and death”, a tragic state of affairs made possible by the poor design, disorganized administration, and insufficient funding. Though he cited instances in which fifty percent of students died in a particular IRS—one school, Fire Hills suffered the death of 75% of students during the first sixteen years of operation—the DIA did little to heed his analysis. In 1922, Bryce authored a pamphlet entitled “The Story of the National Crime being an Appeal for Justice to the Indians in Canada”, in which he recapitulated his earlier stance towards the preventable crisis of tuberculosis, as well as Departmental apathy to his recommendations—most pointedly on the part of Duncan Campbell Scott—then the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs. For Bryce’s 1907 report, see: Peter Bryce, “Report on the Indian Schools of Manitoba and the North-West Territories,” <http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/bibliography/3024/3.html> (accessed 1/29/2011, 2011).; for his 1922 pamphlet, see: Peter Bryce, “The Story of a National Crime: Being an Appeal for Justice to the Indians of Canada; the



The report of the inspector visiting the Lytton agency speaks of the overcrowded house conditions resulting in the promiscuous living of the people, sleeping mostly on the floor of their rancheries, and urges that steps be taken to improve this.<sup>80</sup>

Similarly Duncan Campbell Scott praised a perceived progressive shift in housing in British Columbia from “wretched little shacks “or “large barnlike unventilated and unsanitary structures [longhouses]” to single-family dwellings of log or frame construction. He goes as far as to suggest that proof of the Haida Nation’s status as the province’s most progressive is evident in their “up-to-date frame houses that compare favourably with those found in the average white community”.<sup>81</sup>

As Mary-Ellen Kelm points out, the faith of church and government officials in the reforming power of the design of the European house was misplaced. Not surprisingly, the imposition of colonial housing failed to solve existing problems while creating new ones. The new houses built on reserves were overcrowded, poorly ventilated, with inadequate heating and plumbing. Moreover, with families abandoning seasonal travel for settled, wage-earning lifestyles, the ill-equipped buildings saw nearly continuous habitation.<sup>82</sup> Persistent affliction of Indigenous communities by infectious diseases, especially tuberculosis, confirms the failure of such “improvements.” In the early twentieth century, during the period of bungalow imposition, infectious diseases among Indigenes affirmed in the minds of many Settlers that Indigenous communities were by their nature unhygienic.<sup>83</sup> Such

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Wards of the Nation, our Allies in the Revolutionary War, our Brothers-in-Arms in the Great War,” <http://www.archive.org/details/storyofnationalc00brycuoft> (accessed 1/29/2011, 2011).

<sup>80</sup> *DIA Annual Report*, 1912, 401.

<sup>81</sup> *DIA Annual Report*, 1920, 53.

<sup>82</sup> Mary-Ellen Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-50* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 1998), 42-52.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

perceptions were ignorant of traditional techniques by which Indigenous communities migrated to alternate summer and winter camps, to avoid an unhealthy accumulation of refuse.<sup>84</sup>

Significantly, concerns of hygiene were not ends in themselves, but as Adele Perry argues “discourses of dirt were powerful and flexible ... [as] they helped to mobilize housing as a tool of imperial reform”.<sup>85</sup> Housing became such a central issue that government officials, missionaries, and others regarded housing as “something of a mirror, a powerful reflector of people’s characters—something that might otherwise be deviously masked”.<sup>86</sup> In other words, the bungalow appeared to make visible to Settler eyes that which cultural difference and racial intolerance had concealed. Suffice to say the reflection of “character” mirrored by the single-family dwelling did not travel freely in both directions but instead offered a detached view from above, while bolstering nested hierarchies of perceived propriety. As with the Indians Parlours or the monitor rooms, the bungalow indicates that the ways in which visibility and surveillance inform the exercise of colonial governmentality—networks of sites, discourses, and practices charged with the task of ordering Indigenous souls and lives.

### **Visuality and the Missionary Picturesque: Two Views of Kuper Island IRS**

A pair of paintings of Kuper Island IRS offer a rare opportunity for a compelling analytical shift—to read through Settler artwork the operation of surveillance and its role in normalizing colonial governmentality. I contend that these two canvases illustrate how surveillance of colonial spaces were concerned not only with ruling bureaucracies and

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>85</sup> Perry, 593.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

institutions but also infiltrated the cultural production of the colonizing classes. As Derek Gregory explains, culture does not merely reflect upon lived experience but instead is “a series of representations, practices, and performances that enter fully into the constitution of the world”.<sup>87</sup> Painted by artist, architect, and nun Elizabeth Labossière (Sister Mary Osithe, RC), the artworks present opposite views of Kuper Island IRS, set within either an expansive land or seascape (figs. 2.9 and 2.10). In what follows, I develop the ways in which the landscape genre employed by Osithe appears coterminous with an anxious desire to command a panoramic view of usurped territories often deemed wild or empty. David Spurr points out that the author of such texts “is placed either above or at the centre of things, yet apart from them so that the organization and classification of things takes place according to the writer’s own system of value”.<sup>88</sup> The encompassing powers of visuality, thus, appear to confirm both the dominant position of the observer and the newly established political order that authorizes the perch from which to gaze.

The refiguring of visual hierarchies in colonial settings have consistently found expression through the Picturesque style evident in Osithe’s paintings. The Picturesque, a many sided aesthetic ideal, flourished in mid-to late 18th-century England. Though the term appeared in early 18th century essays on garden design, its concept only became widely known after William Gilpin devised a new system of Picturesque landscape painting. His theories of landscape composition, elaborated in his domestic tour literature, would be extended by Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight, in turn informing the landscape

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<sup>87</sup> Derek Gregory, “(Post)Colonialism and the Production of Nature,” in *Social Nature: Theory, Practice, and Politics*, ed. Noel Castree and Bruce Braun (Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 85.

<sup>88</sup> David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 16.

design of Lancelot “Capability” Brown and Humphry Repton.<sup>89</sup> Though promoted by these theorists as a disinterested aesthetic of agreeability and pleasure, the Picturesque bore profound political implications.

For example, in a fairly positive account, renowned architectural historian David Watkins—in his book *The English Vision: The Picturesque in Architecture, Landscape and Garden Design* (1982)—argues that the Picturesque, over the 150 years of its popularity in England, contributed a great deal to national identity and design acumen.<sup>90</sup> Conversely, John Barrell argues for the “dark side of landscape”, by which he means that representations of landscape are informed by a concealed ideological thrust that such images both express and support.<sup>91</sup> Anne Bermingham has extended Barrell’s by suggesting that the particular form of nature and landscape advanced by practitioners of the Picturesque “embodied the values and worldview of the wealthy landowning class... in which property was almost an ontological condition for the Picturesque association of ideas.”<sup>92</sup> Via this imaging system, contentious issues such as the encroachment of industrialization, the continuing enclosure of the Commons, and the violence of agrarian revolt were glossed over by an aesthetic of pleasure and landscape consumption.

Elizabeth Bohls extends Birmingham’s politics of the Picturesque to consider its operation in colonial settings. For Bohls, the aesthetic distance that animates the metropolitan Picturesque—between urban dwellers confronted by the advance of modernization and an imagined bucolic landscape—takes on entirely different connotations in colonial outliers. In

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<sup>89</sup> Rhodri Windsor-Liscombe, “Richard Payne Knight: Some Unpublished Correspondence,” *The Art Bulletin* 61, no. 4 (Dec., 1979), pp. 604.

<sup>90</sup> David Watkin, *The English Vision: The Picturesque in Architecture, Landscape, and Garden Design* (London: J. Murray, 1982), 227..

<sup>91</sup> John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting, 1730-1840*, 1st paperback ed. (Cambridge: New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 179.

<sup>92</sup> Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740-1860* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 83.

such “remote” places, aesthetic distance is that between colony and metropole, a remove that informs the desire to fix the inescapably dynamic and entangled relations between colonizers and colonized.<sup>93</sup> The initial deployment of the Picturesque in colonized territories unquestionably served instrumental means, as a tool for military draftsman, engineers, and surveyors to record landscapes, aides for future exploration and development.<sup>94</sup> With the arrival of settlers, not only the process of colonization but also the means of its representation—i.e. the Picturesque—was naturalized.<sup>95</sup> The colonial Picturesque, in this way, “converts a pictorial imperative into a gesture of self-protection that allows the colonial gaze a license to convert its ability not to see into studiously visual representations”.<sup>96</sup> In other words, the landscape rendered through the Picturesque genre opens an aesthetically pleasing view on dispossessed regions—generally through one form of violence or another—while averting discernment of the operation of colonial governmentality.

The Osithe paintings perform a similar transposition, occluding insight into the history of struggles in the region via landscapes pacified by the figure of Kuper Island IRS. Osithe’s “Mount Breton from Kuper Island” depicts Indigenous workers toiling in the fields, the layout of which appears squared with the institution’s dormitory wings. A sense of orderly geometry is reinforced not only by the border of gauzy softwoods seen at left, but also by the wooded area evident on the island placed in the painting’s mid-ground, as well as the vast wilderness dominating Mount Brenton. Importantly, this colonial variant of the

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<sup>93</sup> Elizabeth A. Bohls, “The Planter Picturesque: Matthew Lewis’s Journal of a West India Proprietor,” *European Romantic Review* 13, no. 1 (2002), 63.

<sup>94</sup> Helen Bergen Peters, *Painting during the Colonial Period in British Columbia, 1845-1871* (Victoria, B.C: Sono Nis Press, 1979), 80.

<sup>95</sup> For a general discussion see: Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London; New York: Routledge, 1992), 257. For the British Columbia context, see: J. I. Little, “West Coast Picturesque: Class, Gender, and Race in a British Colonial Landscape, 1858-71,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 41 (2007), 5-41.

<sup>96</sup> Sara Suleri, qtd. in Bohls, 65

Picturesque should not be confused with the “civic Picturesque” expounded by William Gilpin. Pramod K. Nayar argues that Gilpin’s civic Picturesque typically expunges all traces of labour, whereas the colonial or “missionary” Picturesque depicts an unruly landscape transformed through work.<sup>97</sup> Such toilsome transformations evoke both the difficulties of missionary work—conversions, church building, personal sacrifice—as well as an eternal and latent Christianity released from the soil through cultivation. In other words, the missionary Picturesque imposes a Christian georgic order upon *terra nullius*. Consequently, the missionary Picturesque connotes toil and intention rather than leisurely consumption, as the newly colonized territories only became its subject through considerable effort.

In this way, Osithe’s missionary Picturesque depicts not only landscape but also children reformed by the IRS. Typical to the Picturesque genre, the figures are small, yet, in this case they are active, applying lessons learned within the institution to the newly settled land. The imposition of the missionary education project, bent to rhythms of enrolment, conversion, study, work, and graduation finds its parallel in cycles of tilling, planting, fertilizing, harvesting, and crop circulation. As Nayar makes clear, the missionary Picturesque “attempts to cultivate the land and the moral landscape of the natives, with the aim at the creation of a Christian garden. This trope is often borrowed from prevalent vitalist theories of regeneration, cultivation, and botany”.<sup>98</sup> Agricultural cultivation, as evident in the photo of Thomas Moore discussed in the last chapter, alluded to its perceived part in cultivating civilization. With this in mind, the painting can be read as a teleological claim supported by a commanding viewpoint—sweeping from the primitive shadow of an ancient

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<sup>97</sup> Pramod K. Nayar, *English Writing and India, 1600-1920: Colonizing Aesthetics* (London; New York: Routledge, 2008), 97.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

conifer at left, through a swath of transitional softwoods, to an open space subdued by a cluster of gabled buildings, and culminating in the masterful institution at right.

Such views of fertile, cyclical, and reformed landscapes are especially interesting considering that Kuper Island was the site of the only repulsion of the Royal Navy by an Indigenous fighting force.<sup>99</sup> On April 20, 1863, a small, poorly armed group of Lamalcha warriors—estimates of the numbers range from eight to as many as twenty-two—took up defensive positions against the approach of the gunboat *Forward* as it steamed into Lamalcha Bay. The gunboat had been dispatched to capture members of the Lamalcha responsible for killing settlers, possibly considered trespassers on Lamalcha territory.<sup>100</sup> The commander of the *Forward*, finding a seaside village fortified by a blockhouse and earthworks, determined it best to lob munitions into the fortifications. Shortly afterwards, the concealed warriors returned musket fire from a flanking position, killing the first and only British serviceman to die in the line of duty in British Columbia.<sup>101</sup> The ensuing hour and a half firefight resulted in few casualties, and for the time being, the *Forward* retreated, though it returned later to raze the village with cannon fire. In light of these violent episodes, Osithe's view of Kuper Island IRS and its bucolic surroundings stand in as a sort of architectural lieutenant, exerting the force of colonial governmentality in place of successful military engagement. Moreover, the image of orderly structures and landscape, easily penetrated by the Settler's gaze, asserting control over territory that not too many years before had been the site of a battle with unseen enemies.

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<sup>99</sup> Chris Arnett, *The Terror of the Coast: Land Alienation and Colonial War on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, 1849-1863* (Burnaby, B.C: Talonbooks, 1999), 139.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

The second Osithe painting (c.1910), depicting a view of Kuper Island IRS from the water, similarly substitutes a violent social memory for an image of pacified, entrenched rationalities of colonial rule.<sup>102</sup> To the viewer, the institution looms atop an embankment, its grounds contained behind a taut wire fence. Curiously, two Indigenous figures in the midground are situated outside of the fence, one prone in the grass, suggesting stereotypical indolence. Here too the missionary Picturesque functions as a device for gazing upon nature but also into human nature, in this case the nature and conduct of the colonized Penelakut locals. That these figures remain outside of the fenced territory suggests not only the consequence of failing to institutionalize local peoples but also reiterates the necessity of surveillance, of looking upon and into, through the civilizing force of missionization.

The wharf seen at right, not visible in the first painting, introduces another highly significant issue that will comprise the remainder of this chapter—that of relations between the IRS, colonial governmentality, and economics. Again, in the context of the enduring memory of bombardment by the gunship *Forward*, a wharf of this size demonstrates the effectiveness of new systems of control of which the IRS is only one component. Not too long before, the Royal Navy was unable to land on the shores of this small island. However, by the time Osithe produced this grisaille canvas, Kuper Island, the IRS, and transnational flows of capital exchange had been linked irrevocably. In light of these changes, these paintings do not merely reflect new socioeconomic order but aid its constitution. The missionary Picturesque not only projected Settler desires for orderly, domesticated, and Christianized territories but also depicted commodified colonial landscapes, naturalizing expansion of global economic networks while rendering new, productive roles for Indigenes in an emerging capitalist society.

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<sup>102</sup> Apparently the memory of this attack burned brightly for the Penalkut well into the 1930s: Ibid., 140.



## **Indolence, Industry, and the Project of Colonial Governmentality**

In the fall of 2009, notable book historian Leslie Howsam presented a paper at UBC on the history of the Bible in British Columbia and its impact on Indigenous communities. Howsam is a respected authority on the transnational flows and forces implicated in the dissemination of knowledge through books—authors, publishers, printers, distributors, readers. Yet, in considering Bible “transactions” between missionary societies and Indigenous people in British Columbia, she overlooked the connection between the Bible and built environment—the houses, as it were, for the text of Christianity.<sup>103</sup> Clearly, without networks of missions and mission churches, as well as institutions of Indian education, the range of the Bible’s dissemination would have been profoundly diminished. Moreover subsequent development of roads, wharfs, sawmills, fish processing plants, mines, trading posts, and so on, formed circuits through which goods and capital moved—and through these same circuits flowed religious texts. Contagion, as discussed, facilitated the initial spread of Christian doctrine. However, with increasing modernization and development, economic needs such as a steady labour force, access to natural resources, and increased agricultural production, helped propel the Christian mission of churches and government. Placing the Bible in this larger infrastructural context, brings into focus relations between religious instruction, architectural systems, and flows of capital—not only those needed to fund the construction of religious and educational institutions but also those generated by industries injected into the province at roughly the same moment as Christian institutions of Indian education.

The notoriety brought about by allegations of sexual abuse seems to have overshadowed one of the more significant functions of the IRS—replacing Indigenous

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<sup>103</sup> Leslie Howsam, *Cheap Bibles: Nineteenth-Century Publishing and the British and Foreign Bible Society* (Cambridge England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 245.

economies with that of Settler culture. As outlined above, the *project* of colonial governmentality comprises the entrenchment of its social, political, economic rationalities. In what follows, I will consider how economic exigencies brought on by modernization, as well as the concept of “industry” and the perceived virtuousness of farming, informed the project of colonial rule—shaping policies of Indian education and designs of the IRS.

By 1871, as British Columbia entered Confederation, resource industries were attracting a great deal of capital investment and would soon become among the main employers of Indigenous men and (to a lesser extent) women. The fur trade had by this time begun to give way to industrial harvesting of minerals, lumber, and salmon for domestic and international markets.<sup>104</sup> The development of the transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway not only facilitated the expansion of logging operations, making lumber the most important product of the province, it also initiated a major demographic shift in which Indigenous people declined from 65 to 80% of the province’s population in 1872 to a mere 3% in 1931.<sup>105</sup> Clearly, securing Indigenous labour in the first years of Confederation was crucial to industrial expansion.

Reports authored prior to Confederation demonstrate that from the outset government struggled to recast Indigeneity so as to integrate it with networks of rapidly expanding resource industries. For example, an 1874 report from the Department of the Interior championed the acquisition of private property as a means to transform Indigenes from wards of the state to full citizens. This new, reformed and Indigenous citizen is imagined against the perceived fallenness of those existing contemporaneously:

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<sup>104</sup> Rolf Knight, *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Labour in British Columbia, 1848-1930* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1996), 122.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

The system of living with the rude savage is from hand to mouth. He has no inducement to acquire property, because it would only further expose him to the attacks of his enemies. [When] ... his immediate wants [are] appeased, he relapses into his accustomed indolence. It may be said that this inertia is the chief legacy which he bequeaths to his children ... [T]ime must be given him to understand the motives and acquire the habits of the white man, who labours to accumulate wealth in order that he may have the means of support in sickness or old age, or of giving his offspring a start in life. But when these motives come to be understood and acted upon by the Indian, the evidence of which is the possession of considerable property acquired by his own industry and thrift, it shows that he may safely be entrusted with the rights of full citizenship. To grant enfranchisement to the intelligent and well-behaved Indians would probably train them to still further self-reliance, and encourage their brethren who are lagging behind to make greater exertions to overtake the Anglo-Saxon in the race of progress.<sup>106</sup>

Regardless of the degree of this author's sincerity—i.e. the possibility of Indigenes overtaking Settlers in the “race of progress”—the institutions of Indian education, as will become evident, factored heavily in the aim of forging new Indigenous societies in an industrious mould.

In *A History of Alert Bay and District*, Elizabeth Healey describes how an entrepreneurial venture of two early Settlers led to the construction of the first residential school in the region, indicating the mutually supportive functions of such early industrialization and Indian education. Known today only by their last names, Spencer and

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<sup>106</sup> *DIA Annual Report*, 1874, 85.

Huson landed in 1866 at the mouth of the Nimkish River, aiming to exploit the rich fish stocks of the river. Very quickly they realized that a lack of reliable labour posed the largest obstacle to establishing a successful saltery, as locals would often leave the area to travel to community functions such as weddings or potlatches.<sup>107</sup> Healey claims that once stores were opened providing a variety of goods, the reliability of local inhabitants as employees somewhat improved.<sup>108</sup> In an effort to hasten this transition from a gift economy to one of production and consumption, Spencer and Huson persuaded a missionary—Reverend Alfred James Hall of the Anglican Church Missionary Society—to establish a mission at Alert Bay.

Hall believed that if he provided rudimentary education to the neighbouring Indigenous populations they would become better workers.<sup>109</sup> Consequently he turned his own home into a proto-residential school, teaching the gospel, English, music—but also lumbering skills for men and domestic skills for women. Significantly in 1887, the Industrial Aid Society, an affiliate of the Church Missionary Society, provided Hall funds to construct a sawmill that would produce timber for market but also for the construction of local houses and a new school for Indigenous boys.<sup>110</sup> By the early 1890s, at the urging of the Missionary Society, the DIA deemed it necessary to construct an industrial school nearby charged with providing vocational trades training for boys. Soon after the DIA also built a modest school for girls, delivering domestic instruction, grooming future wives for male students, and encouraging the adoption of Christian values in hopes of producing Christianized, Indigenous families.<sup>111</sup> The history of the initial forays of resource-based economic development in the region, from the outset, reveals an interdependent series of aims between

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<sup>107</sup> Elizabeth Healey, *History of Alert Bay and District* (Vancouver, B.C: Alert Bay Centennial Committee, 1958), 24.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Nielsen, 234.

missionization, Indian education, and industrialization. In other words, the project of colonial governmentality, involved the entrenchment of the rationalities of colonial rule, manifest simultaneously across a cluster of religious, social, political, and economic interventions.

Such complex flows of finance and faith also characterize the germinal history preceding the construction in Cranbrook of St. Eugene IRS. In 1874, Father Leon Fouquet (OMI) filed a land claim in St. Mary's Valley—the territory of the northern Ktunaxa—to establish a permanent mission. Fouquet built a cabin, flour mill, and farm. This first humble structure served as living quarters and school. Later, in the late 1880s, the DIA erected the first industrial school in this region on this site, at the same moment the formerly nomadic Ktunaxa resigned themselves to confinement on reserve lands.<sup>112</sup> To facilitate this, the DIA bought a 13.5 hectare lot from the OMI, part of which comprised the original mission established by Father Fouquet. Establishing the school adjacent to the grounds of the mission extended the logic by which this new precinct operated. Not only was the government able to bolster the Oblates' program of closely supervised religious inculcation, but also they sought to further subvert the ancestral nomadism of the Ktunaxa, as well as their fluid social, cultural, and economic practices.<sup>113</sup>

Fouquet's successor, Father Nicola Coccola (OMI), financed a number of mission buildings with funds resulting from the 1893 discovery of one of the richest base metal deposits in the world. After receiving a sample of galena (lead ore) from a Ktunaxa man known as Pierre, Father Coccola staked two claims, one for himself and one for Pierre. Coccola short-sightedly sold his claim for a paltry \$12,000 and used the money to build St.

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<sup>112</sup> Ktunaxa archivist Margaret Teneese noted in a personal conversation that the decision to settle on reserve land was founded in Ktunaxa fears of massacres and other atrocities committed by federal armed forces, such as those known to the southern Ktunaxa residing in the United States.

<sup>113</sup> Dana Johnson. "St Eugene Residential School, Cranbrook, British Columbia" (Gatineau, QC: Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, 1996), 10.

Eugene Church—prefabricated in Italy—today a National Heritage Site (fig.). Pierre similarly sold his interests, his monthly trips on horseback to the bank to collect lifetime royalties a subject gracing picture postcards. Within a decade St. Eugene Mine yielded in excess of \$10,000,000 of ore, and has since provided the capital for the founding and production of the multinational mining conglomerate Cominco.<sup>114</sup> The infusion of Coccola’s mining profits at the mission, however trifling, helped sustain its operation for several years and further rooted the social life of the Ktunaxa. The stability of this gathering place doubtless influenced the decision of the DIA to build the first “second generation” IRS in Canada, a structure so significant that the DIA referred to it as its “flagship school”(fig. 2.11).<sup>115</sup> This rationality was further entrenched within three years of the completion of St. Eugene when the DIA purchased an additional 20 ha of land from the Sisters of Providence for the purpose of raising crops and livestock, a common practice not only to ensure food and funding for the school but also for converting a nomadic people into a static, agrarian class. As was the case at Alert Bay, the extension of the project of colonial governmentality—that is the entrenchment of its social, political, economic rationalities—springs from the interdependent operation of industry, missionization, and Indian education.

As noted in the previous chapter, industrial schools were meant to provide sophisticated training to Indigenous students, so they could compete with Whites for highly skilled technical jobs. Certain industrial schools offered instruction in carpentry, cabinetmaking, boatbuilding, blacksmithing, shoemaking, saddle making, and printing.<sup>116</sup> However, such programs were ineffective, owing mainly to the lack of funding, adequate

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<sup>114</sup> Ktunaxa website lists this sum. See: “St. Eugene - Heritage,” <http://www.steugene.ca/resort/interpretive-centre/heritage> (accessed 11/30/2010, 2010).

<sup>115</sup> *DIA Annual Report*, 1914, 198.

<sup>116</sup> Knight 103.

facilities, and suitable instructors. Interestingly, by 1910 the assimilative thrust of this policy was shifting toward one of containment. The DIA determined it would be more economically feasible to convert Indigenous populations into an agrarian class and to sequester their communities on reserves. In the 1910 *Report*, the Department makes clear its aim to limit Indigenous participation in the so-called “race of progress.” It states that “it was never the policy [of the DIA] ... to transform an Indian into a white man”, but instead to “fit the Indian for civilized life in its own environment”.<sup>117</sup> This quote indicates a marked shift from a policy of full assimilation to one of quarantine and *apartheid*. Moreover, the annual report makes clear the need to sustain a system of Indian education, however pared down, for “without education and with neglect the Indians would produce an undesirable and often dangerous element in society”.<sup>118</sup>

These second-generation IRS, as mentioned last chapter, had a much larger capacity and were constructed chiefly according to a template design developed by the architecture branch of the DIA. They were situated, more often, in locations more remote than industrial schools, and employed more complex systems of ventilation, water supply, sanitation, and food preparation. These changes reflect a significant shift in colonial governmentality, namely the DIA move to taking greater control over the operational aspects of the system, including school design, enrolment, and curriculum.<sup>119</sup> With the adoption of the IRS model, education consisted of basic scholarly instruction, as well as rudimentary training in agriculture for boys and “home economics” for girls. Accordingly, new IRS were fitted with purpose-built rooms in which boys learned blacksmithing, farming, and carpentry and girls learned to sew, cook, and to maintain a hygienic household. The architectural layout of these

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<sup>117</sup> *DIA Annual Report*, 1910, 307.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> Milloy, 93.

spaces appears as sparse as the curriculum that ordered them. Survivor testimony reveals that by the beginning of the 1950s, most training rooms operated in separate structures outside of the IRS, and provided little in the way of relevant instruction.

What persisted, despite this major policy shift, was the presumed importance of industry (now agrarian/domestic) and individualism to reforming Indigenous character. The annual report of 1911 refers to the need to “break away from the idea of holding everything in common”.<sup>120</sup> Looking back over the past four decades, the report states that “only forty years ago the Indians in Western Canada were still in their nomadic state ... [but] in 1910 [when] the net result of their industrial earnings was over half a million dollars, one cannot doubt the uplifting effect of education ... by which we may hope to make the Indian a self-supporting man.” Industry, thus, comprised a major conceptual tool for advancing colonial governmentality, at its base connected to religious belief, educational programs, and the economics of production and consumption.

The above-noted inclusion of agricultural instruction into the curriculum of the IRS served pragmatic and ideological ends. As a consequence of the government’s quota system, funds disbursed based on numbers of enrolled students, schools were chronically underfunded and were directed to produce as much food and fuel on site as possible. Produce and livestock raised on IRS lands supplied food to the institution, the choicest bits generally eaten by staff; in certain instances agricultural goods were sold to local communities to generate funds.<sup>121</sup> Until the 1950s, able-bodied senior students at many institutions (mostly boys) were expected to work as much as half a day tending to agricultural work; their duties usually comprised tending fields, milking cows, and cutting wood. Additionally, girls at

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<sup>120</sup> *DIA Annual Report*, 120.

<sup>121</sup> Furniss, *Victims*, 54



some schools made all the clothing worn by students.<sup>122</sup> This system of unpaid labour led in certain instances to outright exploitation. Parents often complained that, owing to the rigours of agricultural work, children suffered from exhaustion. In a personal conversation, Nuu-chah-nulth artist Ron Hamilton pejoratively described the IRS, with this history in mind, as a “Christian-Industrial complex”, for it was unpaid, child labour—at the expense of proper academic instruction—that buoyed systematic efforts to Christianize Indigenous peoples. This assessment seems fair, especially at certain institutions prior to the reforms of the 1950s, after which agricultural training ceased and barns and other farm buildings were converted for other purposes—often into gymnasiums or, in some cases, swimming pools.

Beyond easing budgetary problems, farming instruction and practice also advanced the Settler project of “civilization.” The DIA believed that agrarian training offered the best means to displace nomadic hunting practices, ensure confinement on reserves, and instil the virtue of “industriousness.” Thomas Inge notes that European cultures have for long believed that tilling the soil provides “a sense of identity, a sense of historical and religious tradition, a feeling of belonging to a concrete family, place, and region”.<sup>123</sup> Moreover, farming carries the connotation of honour, self-reliance, and moral integrity. Such idealized notions of agrarian life stand in sharp contrast to Settler perceptions of Indigenous hunting and gathering, as well as their perceived work ethic (or lack thereof). Early reports of Indian Affairs complain that the “naturally indolent character” of Indigenes pose a serious moral threat to the nation’s social fabric, and thus government needed to “break up the noxious system out of which so much evil grows, [as] no true civilization can prevail apart from labour” (Dominion, 1864,

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<sup>122</sup> The 1914 DIA Annual Report notes with a degree of pride that the female students in the Kootenay Agency that only made all of the clothing for the peoples of St. Eugene IRS but also churned all of the butter used by the institution. See: 199.

<sup>123</sup> M. Thomas Inge, *Agrarianism in American Literature* (New York, Odyssey Press, 1969), 388.

7). Though laziness was actively discouraged in Indigenous cultures, this deep-rooted Settler stereotype of Aboriginal people persisted.<sup>124</sup> As a consequence, the policies and institutions of Indian education sought to curtail ancient, Indigenous patterns of seasonal travel in favour of a static, agrarian lifestyle.

The “settling” of Indigenous peoples as farmers of reserve land comprises one of the more urgent features of the project of colonial governmentality. In the 1912 DIA Annual Report, Indian agent Thomas Deasy (Queen Charlotte Agency) notes that while the DIA endeavours to “wean the Indians from leaving their homes and to remain on their land and improve it, they are boatmen, and it is difficult to take them from the water”.<sup>125</sup> Deasy speculates that if a proposal to open canneries nearby proceeds, then the local day school could stay open during the summer, thus producing incentive for parents to stay put. In the interim, he recommends that the DIA open mobile schools to provide education to Indigenous children in remote locations while their parents work days in the canneries. Deasy had been informed by many parents that after working in the canneries, many in the community die, including children. Reflecting on the situation, he concludes that “this shiftless, nomadic life and the environment of the children will always keep them from advancing”.<sup>126</sup> This example again reveals the interconnectedness between on the one hand the ethical imperatives imposed by Settler society on Indigenes (agrarian life, industriousness, Christian education) and, on the other, defining a place for Indigenous peoples in a rapidly expanding modern economic network.

A further instance of the perceived importance of “settling” Indigenous life is evident in the report from Indian agent John F. Smith (Kamloops Agency). Smith pitched a

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<sup>124</sup> John S. Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 35.

<sup>125</sup> *DIA Annual Report*, 400.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

pilot project to the DIA on behalf of students from Kamloops IRS, to “judge their inclination to abandon the saddle and get on the land and cultivate the soil”.<sup>127</sup> Smith proposes that a number of married couples, ex-IRS students, should work special allotments purchased and outfitted by the DIA—“under the watchful eye of the Indian agent”—so that these students may inspire emulation from their various home communities. The difficulty for ex-students, according to Smith, is the lack of opportunity to implement the “methods of cleanliness and tidiness” learned at the IRS, leading inevitably to the resumption of the “careless and slovenly habits of their parents”.<sup>128</sup> Smith acknowledges that the shift from nomadism to agrarianism is an intergenerational effort, yet a necessary one to ensure that the work of the IRS is not in vain.

Foucault’s stress on the importance of “economy” to governmentality is particularly helpful here for discerning the flows of power that characterize the relations between religion, education, and economics. He uses the term economy to denote “the correct manner of managing individuals, goods and wealth within the family ... [and] how to introduce this ... into the management of the state”.<sup>129</sup> In place of traditional, Indigenous economies—based on nomadism, presumptions of spiritual interconnectedness, superabundance, practices of prodigality, and communal ownership—the state and church compelled participation in new economies based on European notions of agriculture, individualism, scarcity, accumulation, and private property. In this new economic structure, the individual becomes useful inasmuch as he or she competes for a limited pool of profit, and in doing so sustains the systems and structures governing colonial holdings. Anthropologist U. Kalpagam argues,

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<sup>127</sup> *DIA Annual Report*, 1914, 433-44.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> Foucault, *Governmentality*, 92

however, that the model of individuality appearing in nineteenth-century colonial states differed radically from that of Europe:

Making up ‘individuals’ was an important agenda of nineteenth-century liberalism, but liberalism in the colonial context did not seek to create the citizen-individual, i.e., the individual as bearer of rights, but an individual who by being forced into a new sphere of commercial exchange would become the *Homo economicus* of the market economy. The discursive practices of colonial governance, in particular the modalities of counting, classification, and accounting, enabled the constitution of the economy, even as colonial governmentality sought to effect a new relationship between resources, population, and discipline.<sup>130</sup>

As such, colonial governmentality enacted and authorized moral prescriptives informed by modern economic thought and practice, virtues meant to displace Indigenous modes of managing material wealth.

To elaborate upon this clash of economies, as well as on the role of the IRS in instituting the economic project of colonial governmentality, I briefly consider the economic thought of George Bataille. Bataille raises interesting questions of proximity between religious and economic activity in so-called archaic cultures. For Bataille this is a function of an altogether different view of the purpose of economic production, accumulation, and expenditure. Deeply influenced by Marcel Mauss, Bataille posits a new theory of “general economy”, based on a conception of a universe conditioned by superabundance rather than scarcity.<sup>131</sup> As such, when a group accumulates what is necessary for the functioning at all

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<sup>130</sup> U. Kalpagam, “Colonial Governmentality and the ‘Economy’,” *Economy and Society* 29, no. 3 (2000), 420.

<sup>131</sup> Georges Bataille et al., *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy* (New York: Zone, 1991), 39.

levels, physical, social, religious, etc., what remains in excess poses a threat to the groups equilibrium—what Bataille termed the *part maudite*, the “accursed share”. The menace of excess, thus, required a form of luxurious, non-productive expenditure (*dépense*) to negate its power, restore social balance, and avoid the alternative, catastrophic form of expenditure—war. Such radical processes of unproductive expenditure, open for Bataille a sovereign human condition, free from the demands of the “restrictive economy,” the classical economic law of scarcity governing capitalism. Bataille believed that many “primitive” cultures understood the general economy, and he, after Mauss, developed his theory of general economy by (problematically) examining a variety of gift economies, including the Potlatch as practiced by the Kwakwaka’wakw.

Unlike much Marxist thinking, Bataille’s focus is not as much on who controls the means of production but rather on how the practice of production is realized. He makes the distinction between limited consumption (*consommation*) and extravagant consumption (*consummation*). The former, *consommation*, denotes the model of classical economy—perceived lack of resources, ever-increasing vital needs, fundamental distrust in the sufficiency of means, and the consequent increase of production to satisfy this distrust. Conversely, *consummation* depends upon a limited and stable set of needs and desires, an inclination to prodigality in expenditure, and an established set of social practices of sacrifice (gifts) as a form of excessive consumption.<sup>132</sup>

Some of the more problematic features of Bataille’s thought regarding potlatch are worth recounting here before arguing for the serviceability of others. Significantly, Bataille’s understanding of the potlatch derived from late nineteenth-century accounts, after the ritual

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<sup>132</sup> Christopher M. Gemberchak, *The Sunday of the Negative: Reading Bataille, Reading Hegel* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 81.

had been impacted significantly by the development of colonial economies and the participation of *nouveau-riches-Indigenes*.<sup>133</sup> Prior to contact, traditional potlatch practices validated the passing of rank from a chief to his son or some other favoured member of the elite classes. However, after the influx of money from new, resource-based economies, potlatch took a competitive, individualistic turn, practiced by the newly rich who until this time had been excluded from such disbursement of material wealth.<sup>134</sup> Eric Wolf argues that the so-called “unreasonable” generosity typical of later nineteenth century Kwakwaka’wakw potlatch reflects contemporary, irrational demands of capitalist interventions into Indigenous lives.<sup>135</sup> Wanda Sykes further contends that the later, nineteenth-century potlatch can be regarded as “the efflorescence of gift exchange ... a kind of unusual activity that spreads as the shadow of the expansion of relationships shaped as commodity capital”.<sup>136</sup> Bataille also failed to account for the “inalienable possession”, those most prized coppers or cloaks kept hidden by Kwakwaka’wakw chiefs, concealed from rival Chiefs during potlatch.<sup>137</sup> As such, the power to meet the requirements of potlatch while keeping valuable objects hidden and in one’s possession served to demarcate elevated social status and difference—and aim quite apart from the utopian collectivism imagined by Bataille. A further critique has been levelled at Bataille for affording too much significance to the potlatch, as potlatch forms of gift exchange are somewhat rare compared to the vast majority of gift and counter-gift exchanges that form bonds between social actors.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Maurice Godelier, *The Enigma of the Gift* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 77.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Eric R. Wolf, *Envisioning Power: Ideologies of Dominance and Crisis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 339.

<sup>136</sup> Karen Margaret Sykes, *Arguing with Anthropology: An Introduction to Critical Theories of the Gift* (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), 161.

<sup>137</sup> Annette B. Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-while-Giving* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 42.

<sup>138</sup> Godelier, *The Enigma of the Gift*, 155

However, despite these shortcomings Bataille's motives for theorizing a general economy and the accursed share illuminate the stakes involved in the supplanting of Indigenous economic ontologies in the IRS. Quite simply, Bataille seeks to re-enchant and re-sanctify commodity exchange in industrialized societies.<sup>139</sup> He recognized that potlatch objects were powerful owing to their ambiguousness, in that i.e. they could be kept or destroyed. This ambiguity is utterly at odds with the instrumental rationality associated with capital exchange, in which money, labour, goods, and property can be unequivocally counted, valued, and sold.<sup>140</sup> Although capitalism (for the most part) displaces sacredness and compels obsessions with things, oddly its ultimate ideal is not material—profit. As such, profit appears as the reification of productive power that, on the one hand, liberates commodities (production/consumption, import/export, buying/selling) and, on the other, sustains human bondage.<sup>141</sup> It is the subversion of this accumulative process that Bataille has in mind in his study of the general economy, that is an economics that enslaves things instead of people. As John Hutnyk notes, “the curse of restricted economy can only be lifted by consciousness of the process”.<sup>142</sup>

Beyond highlighting broad issues of proximity between economics and sacredness, Bataille's thought on the potlatch—despite its short-sightedness—helps to demonstrate the radical particularity of colonial governmentality in the Kwawkwalth Agency. Many policies, such as the disruption to nomadic hunting practices, confinement to reserves, and farming instruction reflect truly national aims of the DIA. Yet, as noted earlier in W. M. Halliday's DIA report, the IRS at Alert Bay also performed the very specific job of producing a new

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<sup>139</sup> Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-while-Giving*, 41

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 41

<sup>141</sup> John Hutnyk, “Bataille's Wars,” *Critique of Anthropology* 23, no. 3 (2003), 17.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.* 279.

class of ex-students—the “link between barbarism and civilization”—who were meant to denounce local potlatch practice. Thus the IRS, though a template structure built in scores of locations, opened a flexible space, capable of exerting particular forms of disciplinary practice as need dictated. Such anti-potlatch policy policies enacted at Alert Bay demonstrate yet again the need to reject overarching equivalences between the IRS and other modern institutions. Moreover, Bataille’s notions of the potlatch, general economy, and the accursed share produce another parallax view on the institutions of Indian education at Alert Bay. Not only were these structures meant to support an attack on Indigenous culture (the potlatch ban) but also economic management of material wealth. Ironically, though it is evident such buildings were designed to cleave the Indigenous notions of economy from religion, the means to achieve this end was a close-set constellation of religious, economic, educational practices informing the manifestation of colonial rule.

The IRS comprised one component in a complex cluster of economic practices and institutions meant to institute the project of colonial governmentality. These structures helped displace an Indigenous economy founded on concepts of superabundance, prodigal expenditure, and communal ownership with a modern European model private property, wage labour, economic production and consumption. This alien economic system substituted communal ownership and belonging for individuality, competition, and accumulation. The role of the IRS in instituting new colonial economies, as well as in forwarding the economic project of colonial governmentality has received little scrutiny, and what has been forwarded here can it be considered only an initial gesture. What emerges from even this cursory examination is the manner in which the IRS produces a space apart from the life world of Indigenous peoples. This feature of the IRS, opening spaces that disrupt an emplaced



Indigeneity, compels the attempt to define this function against the backdrop of equivalent theses discussed in the previous chapter. Consequently, in the next chapter, I will frame a novel definition for the IRS, in light of its particular expression of colonial governmentality. Again, by focusing on certain design spaces and purposes of the IRS, I will argue that these structures and sites should be considered conceptually as non-places, as *atopoi* of the modern, meant to erase an Indigenous sense of home and place, while coincidentally authorizing the emergence of the territory of Canada as a place for civilization.

### Chapter 3: Revisiting the Place of the Indian Residential School

*If you're intimate with a place, a place with whose history you're familiar, and you establish an ethical conversation with it, the implication that follows is this: the place knows you're there. It feels you. You will not be forgotten, cut off, abandoned.*<sup>1</sup>

Barry Lopez, 1996

In this chapter, I argue that revisiting the role of the IRS in British Columbia—as an institution meant to sever the social, cultural, economic, and political roots of Indigeneity—affords a wider view on the deleterious displacements effected by colonialism. Cole Harris, on the contrary, contends that the “making” of Native space in British Columbia was chiefly contingent on forced dispossession of Indigenous lands and the subsequent creation of Indian Reserves—spaces of restraint supported by “clusters of permissions and inhibitions that affected most Native opportunities and movements”.<sup>2</sup> He further asserts that “Indian reserves were at the heart of colonialism in British Columbia, [and] if one seeks to understand how colonialism functioned in the province, there is no better place to look”.<sup>3</sup> Though he concedes that missions and IRS were significant institutional interventions into Indigenous life, he argues that a “more pervasive discipline” was realized by consigning Indigenes—innovative, adaptable people enjoying much mobility—to small, permanent reserves.<sup>4</sup> In what follows, I contend that Harris’s hierarchy—land and relevant legislation as the uncontested primary factor in producing “Native space”—does not recognize the full effect of the IRS on Indigenous spaces. I posit on the contrary that the reserves and the IRS operated in tandem: the former fixing a narrow sense of place (*topos*) enforced by colonial

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<sup>1</sup> Barry Lopez, “A Literature of Place,” [http://arts.envirolink.org/literary\\_arts/BarryLopez\\_LitofPlace.html](http://arts.envirolink.org/literary_arts/BarryLopez_LitofPlace.html) (accessed 2/16/2011, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Harris, xxi.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, xxv.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

rule and the latter eroding a wider sense of place rooted in ancestral knowledges—oral histories, cultural rituals, hereditary chiefdoms, traditional religions, regional languages, local diets, seasonal travel, and more.

In order to perform this shift and to intervene into the received nomenclature of this violent colonial past, I will develop novel terminology to describe the IRS. The principal reason for struggling for a new rubric stems from a sense that calling these carceral structures “schools” suggests places of salubrity and self-improvement, a misnomer damping the impact of this difficult history on non-Indigenous publics in Canada.<sup>5</sup> I posit that the IRS, alternatively, could be thought of as non-place—an *atopos*—designed to entrench colonial rule by subverting topographically-embedded Indigenous identities. These *atopoi* of the (colonial) modern—a play on Giorgio Agamben’s “*nomos* of the modern”—comprise places without place, places without memory, non-places both outside yet implicated in the juridical order of the state. In this chapter, I draw on Agamben’s examination of the means by which sovereign states exercise power: enacting legal “exceptions” that exceed the bounds of jurisprudence; intensifying biopolitical attention on the body; radically separating biological from political life; producing spaces in which the rights of the citizen vanish. I extend Agamben’s thought, applying it to colonial history and, more specifically, to the aforementioned problem of defining the nature of the IRS. In what follows, I argue that “settling” Canada required the production of a network of institutions that authorized near-limitless legal and biopolitical control of Indigenous children. Not mere containers in which the aims of Indian education were enacted, I contend that the designs and policies of the IRS

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<sup>5</sup> This is not to suggest, despite the implied salubrity of the term school, that educational institutions often produce meritocratic spaces of opportunity. Pierre Bourdieu has argued convincingly that the network of elite “cognitive machines” [i.e. schools]—in which boarding schools play a formative role in disciplining the minds of future academics, civil servants, physicians, and industrialists—share the common feature of sustaining networks of familial influence. See Pierre Bourdieu and Laretta C. Clough, *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1996), 32.

allowed for the opening—in certain instances—of non-places, *atopoi* producing spatialities that disrupted most Indigenous senses of place.

In Mark Rifkin's examination of the relation between US Indian Policy, reservations, and American sovereignty, he critiques Agamben's tendency to attend to biopolitics "at the expense of a discussion of geopolitics, [so that] the production of race supplant[s] the production of space as a way of envisioning sovereignty".<sup>6</sup> This chapter employs Rifkin's geopolitical critique of Agamben's model of sovereignty, to consider in particular how the IRS dislocated the ways in which Indigenous children belonged to their ancestral territories, local communities, and family homes. Before relating the concept of the non-place (*atopos*) to architectural features of the IRS and to testimony of survivors, I will clearly define the term *atopos*, outline my use of Agamben's theory, consider critiques of Agamben, as well as distinguish my use of colonial *atopos* from recent, postmodern conceptions of non-places.

### **Agamben and the Nature of Modern, Sovereign Power**

Giorgio Agamben's analyses of sovereignty, biopolitics, and citizenship have gained both currency and notoriety—referred to by some as the "Agamben phenomenon".<sup>7</sup> Agamben's scholarship is informed most prominently by Michel Foucault's work on biopolitics, Hannah Arendt's writing on human rights, and the German jurist Carl Schmitt's theorization of the "state of exception." Not surprisingly, Agamben departs in significant ways from each of these thinkers, and in what follows I will indicate how such distinctions adds nuance to my use of his theory to reframe the carceral spaces of the IRS .

In Agamben's view, sovereign power depends on the authority to proclaim a "state of exception" to the legal order, so that the sovereign can exceed the bounds of jurisprudence in

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<sup>6</sup> Mark Rifkin, "Indigenizing Agamben: Rethinking Sovereignty in Light of the "Peculiar" Status of Native Peoples," *Cultural Critique* 73 (2009), 90.

<sup>7</sup> Claudio Minca, "Agamben's Geographies of Modernity," *Political Geography* 26, no. 1 (1, 2007), 79.

instances of state emergency (such as economic collapse, civil war, terrorism). Such license to declare a state of exception implies that the sovereign may suspend legislation that it typically upholds, making populations truly vulnerable to leaders that at any time can “decide” to nullify the rule of law.<sup>8</sup> Agamben argues that the state of exception was deployed with increasing frequency in the twentieth century, citing at length the Nazi suspension of the Weimar Constitution, the unlawful detaining of immigrants in many countries, as well as, controversially, the USA PATRIOT Act (2001)—enabling the operation of Abu Ghraib, Guantánamo Bay, and other secret CIA prisons (“black sites”) built for extra-legal interrogations of detainees.<sup>9</sup>

Agamben’s state of exception depends explicitly on the notion of the “structure of exception” developed by Carl Schmitt in his book *Political Theology* (1922).<sup>10</sup> As Claudio Minca observes:

The Schmittian structure of exception is founded upon the existence of an order based within a fundamental relation between the juridical-political domain and territory. According to the German legal theorist, the ‘*nomos* of the Earth’ is the originary gesture, the founding spatial ontology that binds every juridical-political order to a concrete territory, to the ‘sense of the Earth’.<sup>11</sup>

This “sense of the Earth” reveals the extent to which Schmitt struggled to ground and make logical the structure of exception, evidenced by his paradoxical claim that “the state of emergency is always distinguished from anarchy and chaos and, in the legal sense, there is

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<sup>8</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

<sup>9</sup> Jason Vest, “Cia Veterans Condemn Torture,” *National Journal* 37, no. 47 (11/19, 2005), 3651.

<sup>10</sup> Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1985), 70.

<sup>11</sup> Minca, 83.

still order in it, even though it is not a legal order”.<sup>12</sup> It is precisely this sense of logical grounding that Agamben abandons. In place of Schmitt’s fleeting and justified extra-legal exception, Agamben posits the permanent state of exception as the foundation of liberal democracy. The effect of this all-pervasive emergency is a sovereign that always already stands outside and above the rule of law in a “zone of indistinction,” a buffer zone of unbridled authority that makes ambiguous the distinctions between the force of legitimate law and the power to override its dictates.

Agamben then examines at length the tenuous, fragile life of the human body in the state of exception. He agrees with Foucault that biopolitics, i.e. the management of the biological well-being of subjects by the state, remains a productive (yet disciplinary) means for modern states to encourage participation of their populations. In short, the state provides protection for the body of the subject—emergency services, hospitals, sanitation systems, etc.—in exchange for varying degrees of political loyalty and cooperation. However, he departs from Foucault’s central thesis, that biopolitical governmentality is manifest through a “Great Confinement”, the inclusion of all members of modern society into its discursive, legal, and institutional framework—a phenomenon Foucault traces to the 1656 founding of the *l’Hôpital General* in Paris.<sup>13</sup> Conversely, Agamben argues that biopolitical authority of the modern state relies on its ability to define which subjects are qualified life (*bios*)—empowered in society to enjoy the good life (*eu zen*) through inclusion in the political life of

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<sup>12</sup> Giorgio Agamben, “The State of Emergency,” <http://www.generation-online.org/p/fpagambenschmitt.htm> (accessed 2/16/2011, 2011).

<sup>13</sup> Foucault, *Madness and Civilization; A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. (New York: Pantheon, 1965), 39.

the state—from those subjects not qualified as citizens (*zoē*), who exist only as animals, as bodies, what Agamben refers to as “bare life”.<sup>14</sup>

Agamben’s conception of bare life depends heavily upon Hannah Arendt’s analysis of refugees and human rights in her *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1964). In this highly influential text, Arendt rejects the notion that human beings have any inalienable human rights, but that the “right to have rights” relies entirely upon a functioning community of political actors who provide to each other the guarantee of rights.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the chief aim of the state, protecting the bodies of its subjects, cannot be considered coterminous with the protection of political rights. Moreover, such state stewardship of the life of the human animal can at times be hostile to the realization of human rights. Despite the all-too-common marginalization of refugees and others from political life, Arendt still professed hope for a public, political arena in which the subaltern could struggle for liberation. Agamben, however, does not hold out such hope for political change in contemporary, liberal democracies. Noting the global upsurge of states of exception, he suggests that the line is thin indeed between liberal democracies and totalitarian regimes—and, worse, that the state of exception was developed first within the liberal, democratic tradition, rather than in absolutist or totalitarian regimes.<sup>16</sup> Defending his worldview against charges of pessimism, Agamben remarks that

I’ve often been reproached for (or at least attributed with) this pessimism that I am perhaps unaware of. But I don’t see it like that. There is a phrase from Marx, cited by Debord as well, that I like a lot: ‘the desperate situation of

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<sup>14</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer. Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 199.

<sup>15</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966), 296.

<sup>16</sup> Agamben, *State of Exception*, 5; for the British “invention” of the concentration camp during the Boer War, see: Andrew Marr, *The Making of Modern Britain* (London: Macmillan, 2009), 451.

society in which I live fills me with hope.’ I share this vision: hope is given to the hopeless.<sup>17</sup>

This unflinching outlook also colours Agamben’s theorization of subjects who he considers reduced to bare life by sovereign power.

Drawing upon a little-known figure in Roman law, Agamben develops his theory of bare life around *homo sacer* (alternatively the sacred or a cursed man). *Homines sacri* in ancient Rome were human beings banned from participating in public life, abandoned by law, and exposed to death. It was permitted to kill the *homo sacer* without penalty, though such death could not comprise a sacrifice (could not be incorporated into religious life). Not simply excluded from meaningful life, *homo sacer* or bare life constituted the core of sovereign power and civic life, an “inclusive exclusion” that defined the threshold of enclosure in citizenship and political society. Similarly, the politicization of bare life, i.e. the preservation and management of mere biological life, remains the central concern of the modern state, justifying its very constitution. In this way, the sovereign and *homo sacer* (bare life) produce a correlation that defines political-juridical order, for “the sovereign is the one with respect to whom all men are potentially *homines sacri*, and *homo sacer* is the one with respect to whom all men act as sovereigns”.<sup>18</sup>

In the modern state, this uncertain political situation, in which any person could potentially become *homo sacer*—again quite unlike Schmitt’s grounded theory (*nomos* of the Earth)—unfolds in an indeterminate space, what Agamben refers to as a “dislocating

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<sup>17</sup> Jason Smith, “‘I Am Sure that You are More Pessimistic than I Am...’: An Interview with Giorgio Agamben,” *Rethinking Marxism: A Journal of Economics, Culture & Society* 16, no. 2 (2004), 123.

<sup>18</sup> Agamben, 1998, 84.



localization”.<sup>19</sup> Agamben argues that “the political system no longer orders forms of life and juridical rules in a determinate place, but instead contains at its very center a dislocating localization that exceeds it and into which every form of life and every norm can be virtually taken”.<sup>20</sup> In his view, in the modern state there exists a dialectic between “juridical-political order without localization” (the state of exception) and “localization without order” (zones or spaces outside of sovereign power and law). In other words, the irresolvable ambiguity between the force of law and the force of the decision to supersede it opens uncertain “spaces of exception”, within which the subjects of the state are abandoned by law, zones where *everything* is truly possible.<sup>21</sup>

Agamben forwards the concentration camp as the most extreme instance of a space of exception, as the sign of the “most absolute *conditio inhumana*”, as the *nomos* of the modern.<sup>22</sup> He cautions, however, that the camp is not an anomalous mutation but rather the “hidden matrix ... of the political space in which we are still living”, a possibility that “decisively signals the political space of modernity itself”.<sup>23</sup> The camp in Agamben’s view becomes a requisite component of modernity and the state of exception, a space in which bodies that matter may become *homo sacer*, forsaken by law, and made vulnerable to the violence of unaccountable keepers. Agamben also categorizes other spaces as camps: the *zones d’attente*, holding areas in French airports where foreigners requesting immigrant status can be held for indefinite periods; a stadium in Bari, used in 1991 by Italian police to detain illegal Albanian immigrants for deportation; or the *Vélodrome d’Hiver*, the cycling

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<sup>19</sup> Giorgio Agamben, Vincenzo Binetti, and Cesare Casarino, *Means without End: Notes on Politics* (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 43.

<sup>20</sup> Agamben, 1998, 175.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 40

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 166, 174.

track in which the Vichy regime assembled French Jews prior to expulsion.<sup>24</sup> Thus, for Agamben, the appearance of the citizen in civil society requires the operation of such dislocating localizations, reducing others to a state of peril outside the protection of citizenship and political life—to bare life. In this way, such spaces of exception are not merely indicators of a state of exception; rather, the two are coterminous and mutually inclusive.

Curiously, however, Agamben appears to dismiss the importance of specific material and spatial configurations of the built environment in effecting the state of exception. He also overlooks the relation between the production of bare life and the severing of layered connections to a particular place, not only sociocultural but also territorial. Furthermore, Agamben's conception of the modern does not account for the colonial variant of modern governmentality discussed in the last chapter. Accordingly, in the following pages I outline how my analysis of the IRS extends Agamben's theory in light of such critical inattention.

### **The State of Colonial Exception**

Though Agamben fails to consider colonization, other scholars in recent years have done so in light of his theorization of the sovereign power and the state of exception. For example, Derek Gregory's text *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq* (2004) outlines how the rule of colonies often requires enacting laws contrary to the legislative norms by which the colony is governed.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, in his book *The Jurisprudence of Emergency: Colonialism and the Rule of Law* (2003), Nassar Hussain explores both how agents of colonial rule were often protected against prosecution for crimes done at the behest of the

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Derek Gregory, *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, and Iraq* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2004), 367.

sovereign and, further, that the state of exception is such a regular feature of colonial rule that its appearance appears almost the norm.<sup>26</sup>

Jennifer Beard elaborates further upon the connections between colonization and the structure and use of exception in the so-called New World:

New World narratives give logical and chronological priority to the notion of society as a kind of anarchical condition under which the territorial space emerges as a gradual locus of power based on a division between international and internal governments; between the unnamed as that which is ungovernable and the named, which is ... On this premise the Old World founds its own hegemony and sovereignty over the New. It is the Old World that claims the right to name its origin. It must therefore stand outside the order it names and remain still within it. In consequence, each act of colonisation arguably involves the naming of the New World (wherever it may be)—a taking of the outside—as well as the constitution of *nomos*, that is, the taking of land and the determination of a juridical and territorial ordering.<sup>27</sup>

As such, the very formation of colonized land in New World, as a recognizable state governed by the rule of law, requires the sovereign to occupy a position beyond the threshold of colonial rule, incorporating the force of law from without while relegating to a state of nature those Indigenous peoples who come into being by inclusive exclusion into the new political order.

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<sup>26</sup> Nasser Hussain, *The Jurisprudence of Emergency: Colonialism and the Rule of Law* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003). An apt example is the British atrocities used to combat Mau Mau resistance in Kenya. See: Rhodri Windsor-Liscombe, “Modernism, Multi-Racial Community and Mau Mau: Maragua 1953”, in *The Scaffolding of Empire*, ed. Peter Scriver (Adelaide, AUS: University of Adelaide Press, 2007), 17-41.

<sup>27</sup> Jennifer Beard, *The Political Economy of Desire: International Law, Development and the Nation State* (New York: Routledge-Cavendish, 2007), 99.

The state of exception has been formally enacted in Canada on three occasions under the provisions of the War Measures Act: in 1914, resulting in the deportment of foreign nationals and the internment of Ukrainian, German, and Italian Canadians; in 1939, bringing further deportations of foreign nationals and internment of Japanese and German Canadians; and, most notably, in 1970 during the October Crisis, to allow for the hurried arrest and detainment of suspected members of the Front de libération du Québec. However, the state of exception need not be either so general or formally declared. It is important to remember Agamben's insistence that the camp, the space in which law and bare life blur, is neither an "event" nor a fixed, external space; rather, such spaces of exception are the "hidden matrix", the concealed womb from which springs the *nomos* of contemporary sovereignty.<sup>28</sup> Though spaces of exception require concrete territory, they can open can open at any location, in any moment, to any person—citizen or not. I argue that this fluid model of a spatially and temporally contingent exception helps to explain the particular manner in which Indigenous individuals and communities have been abandoned by the rule of law in zones of extra-judicial violence.

An in-depth analysis of the history, scope, and a variety of such Canadian spaces of extra-legal violence—or, to use Agamben's language, spaces of exception—would require sustained attention, an undertaking that falls beyond the bounds of this study. Of course, owing to extensive media coverage, many Canadians know (at least by name) some of the more notorious instances: the Kanehsatake/Oka Crisis in 1990; Gufstasen Lake, 1995, Ipperwash, 1995; Burnt Church, 1999-2001; Grand River, 2006. In each of these crises, contestation—over (among other things) sacred land, land claims, and Indigenous fisheries, and, more generally, the marginalized position of Indigenous communities in Canadian

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<sup>28</sup> Minca, 92.

social, economic, and political life—provoked police and military actions that in certain instances violated constitutional rights and suspended the rule of law.

Agamben's notion of inclusive exclusion seems apt to think through such strained, inequitable relations between Indigenous people and colonial systems of rule in Canada. Agamben states that “our age is nothing but the implacable and methodological attempt to overcome the division dividing the people”.<sup>29</sup> Yet, as he makes clear, the ‘people’ are always already divided: people and People; bare life and citizen; *zoē* (minimal biological survival) and *bios* (political life). Thus, again, the very constitution of sovereign power depends on such inclusive exclusion, where those outside of “legitimate” life are held apart by their incorporation into the core of ethico-political concerns. Consequently, Canada comes into being through the paternalism of the Indian Act, the concern for the religious welfare of Indigenes, and the push for Indian education. Always there will be well-meaning actors, but for the colonial state to exist, this bifurcated unity must also exist. I broach this enormously complex history of protest to suggest that these conflicts comprise the most recognizable instances in which Indigenes encountered the state of exception, in a highly variegated field of camps, zones of indistinction, spaces of exception.

To extend Agamben's thought into the study of colonial history and place, I argue that the IRS should be considered within this field of spaces of exception. I contend that—at certain times and places—the IRS opened the possibility of the non-place, a “hidden matrix”, a zone of indistinction in which *everything* is possible—deprivation, despoliation, death. The IRS, thus, appear as much a negating potential as any positive form (i.e. a “school”)—a sort of latent evacuation meant to produce non-citizens, inclusively excluded through new religious beliefs, cultural and bodily practices, work habits, economic philosophies, political

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<sup>29</sup> Agamben, 1998, 179.

systems, medicines, languages, and architectures. In doing so, I argue for an expanded role for the IRS in “making Native space”, by demonstrating how these *atopoi* helped to disrupt Indigenous ontologies of place through a profound annulment of culturally and geographically-embedded knowledges.

### **Taking Exception: Some Notable Critiques of Agamben**

Not surprisingly, Agamben has his critics; before I extend my analysis of the architecture of the IRS in light of his theory and concepts, I will outline some of these dissenting views.

Some scholars object to Agamben’s seemingly easy equation between totalitarian spaces of oppression and less repressive instances. For example, Patricia Owens critiques Agamben’s close correlation—what he terms a “perfectly real affiliation”—between Nazi extermination camps and refugee camps or other zones of internment.<sup>30</sup> Reiterating a position articulated by Arendt, Owens contends that the form of radical evil and dehumanization apparent in the Lager were without precedent, that “they came as close as we have seen to transforming humans into mere things”.<sup>31</sup> This question of distinction between degrees of repression and evil—whether Auschwitz constitutes an inimitable case or a point at the radical edge of a continuum—continues to generate both critical reflection and the revisionist claims. The issue remains relevant to the study of the IRS, owing (as discussed in the introduction) to a range of competing claims about the nature of the misdeeds committed there: ranging from neglect and criminal abuse, to crimes against humanity, ethnocide, or even genocide. Clearly, there are numerous and significant differences between extermination camps and the IRS. This cannot reasonably be disputed. Yet, I contend (without pretending to settle the dispute over Auschwitz’s place in history) that the quarrel over how to categorize the harm done to

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<sup>30</sup> Patricia Owens, “Reclaiming ‘Bare Life’?: Against Agamben on Refugees,” *International Relations* 23, no. 4 (December 01, 2009), 575.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

Canada's Indigenous peoples remains very much an open question. As such, it seems rash to discard theoretical tools provided by Agamben before testing how serviceable they may be in problematizing our understanding of these institutions. Moreover, a field of scholarly inquiry looking at colonialism through Agamben's theory remains active, thus affording the opportunity to make valuable contributions through this sort of study.

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri also find serious fault with Agamben's thought on sovereign power, which they regard as a mystification of actual power rooted in capital and property. In their recent book *Commonwealth* (2009), Hardt and Negri claim that the theorization of the state of exception, bare life, etc. resembles "those medieval European renditions of hell: people burning in a river of fire, others being torn limb from limb, and in the center a great devil [sovereign power] engorging their bodies whole".<sup>32</sup> They argue further that the primary expressions of power that govern the globalized world remain ordered by the rule of law and institutions of government and, also, that any substantive change to global class inequities will only happen with the overthrow of the "republic of property". Interestingly, however, the authors concede without refutation that much evidence supports Agamben's claims—first strike capability now an accepted tactic in international relations, torture as a technique of liberal democracies, indifference to state-sanctioned slaughter of civilians in combat ("collateral damage"), and repeated abeyance of civil rights around the globe. Yet, the authors recoil from what they see as "theological pretences" in Agamben's thought—especially his transcendent understanding of sovereignty as outside or above social life—for it forecloses the possibility of meaningful resistance in the political realm.

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<sup>32</sup> Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 5.

Jacques Rancière also challenges Agamben's thought on sovereignty and the state of exception, which he likewise regards as a depoliticizing of the public sphere. In his influential essay "Who Is the Subject of the Rights of Man?" (2004), Rancière argues that Agamben's conception of bare life denies those subjects abandoned by the law the possibility to subject human rights discourse to political conflict—what Rancière calls "dissensus".<sup>33</sup> By bestowing upon sovereign power the agency either to afford citizens political life or to deny such rights in zones of indistinction, Agamben, in Rancière's view, falls into a pessimistic, "ontological trap" foreclosing any emancipatory political life.<sup>34</sup>

Both Rancière and Hardt and Negri seem unwilling to abandon the separation of political from biological life which they regard as the ontological ground for any possible just society—this is exactly what Agamben forsakes. Whereas Rancière, Hardt and Negri (and Arendt for that matter) fear the collapse of the political subject into biological life, Agamben regards this dismantling of the subject (i.e. desubjectivation) as the only liberatory possibility. He argues that:

desubjectivation does not only have a dark side. It is not simply the destruction of all subjectivity. There is also this other pole, more fecund and poetic, where the subject is only the subject of its own desubjectivation".<sup>35</sup>

He means by this that any assertion of identity whose integrity is predicated upon political order is also reliant upon "bloody forms of exclusion and to that capture of natural life that is the originary act of sovereign power".<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Jacques Rancière, "Who is the Subject of the Rights of Man?" *South Atlantic Quarterly* 103, no. 2 (2004), 302.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> qtd. in Jessica Whyte, "Particular Rights and Absolute Wrongs: Giorgio Agamben on Life and Politics," *Law and Critique* 20, no. 2 (2009), 158.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.



Thus, in order to escape the control of sovereign power, the subject must be no longer divided between animal life and political life, but instead brought together in an indistinct unity that he refers to as what he refers to as “form-of-life”. Jessica Whyte clarifies Agamben’s argument for desubjectivation as the key to freedom from the fundamentally violent structure of sovereign power:

If every relation of inclusion always implies an inclusive exclusion, or abandonment, then the only politics capable of overcoming this separation would be one that contests not merely specific exclusions, but the very constitution of the political sphere through the inclusive-exclusion of bare life. Such a challenge, in Agamben’s view, must also overcome the metaphysical determination of the human, which is the ontological basis of both the separation of life and politics and the abandonment of bare life.<sup>37</sup>

Though Agamben provides little in the way of practical advice on how to be subject is to become the subject of its own dismantling, his position on emancipatory action is mentioned here to demonstrate that, in fact, he does articulate such political aims, contrary to the claims of his detractors.

### **Space, Place, and the Non-Place in the Colonial State**

In addition to applying Agamben’s thought to the history and form of the IRS, this chapter attempts to integrate a basic insight provided by Edward Casey in his influential book *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (1997). Casey posits that one of the major consequences of modernity was the erosion of perceived place, in favour of a rationally and scientifically understood notion of space—open, mobile, gridded, measurable, filled with

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 159.

innumerable and seemingly exchangeable places.<sup>38</sup> Significantly, however, Casey ignores the particular spatialization of place in the colonial encounter. Thus, in a sense, he totalizes this modernizing process, as if such processes are uniform and universal. In the following pages, I will extend Casey's basic premise about the degradation of place in modernity, to include the colonial variant. This function of space will inform my attempt to provide a new definition for the nature of the IRS—as a non-place or *atopos*.

In many ways, Casey's position echoes that of Martin Heidegger, who, rejecting the increasing technological sophistication of modernity, proclaimed that “place is the locale of the truth of Being”.<sup>39</sup> Seemingly, both Heidegger and Casey wish to endow place with the power to sustain humanity's spiritual relationship to the object world, against the tide of globalizing time-space compression. The difficulty, however, with attributing place to specific geopolitical locales—beyond breeding blood and soil identity politics—is that places, especially in modernity, rarely assume stable form.<sup>40</sup> They are neither confined to singular identities or hermetic boundaries, nor reliant upon some internalized history for definition. On the contrary, their boundaries appear porous, ephemeral, and mobile, opening rather than occluding multivalent or hybrid meanings. As Doreen Massey suggests:

Instead of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings ... [Moreover] if places can be conceptualized in terms of the

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<sup>38</sup> Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 488.

<sup>39</sup> Karl Löwith and Richard Wolin, *Martin Heidegger and European Nihilism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 65.

<sup>40</sup> A further complication appears in the use of this sort of geopolitics by various Indigenous Nations and communities across the country, a move informed (to varying degrees) by the strategic essentialism empowering the term “Indigenous.”

social interactions which they tie together, then it is also the case that these places themselves are not static. They are processes.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, understanding a particular place requires explicating not its inherent qualities but the particular ways it links to—or is severed from—the social interactions of other locales.

At the nexus of subjectivity and the built environment, the production of place also depends upon a reciprocal sense of belonging, familiarity, and ease among users. As importantly, sensing place involves the encounter, bodily or psychologically, with its perceived absence, with a non-place or *atopos*. The urban wasteground, the uncharted wilderness, the refugee camp, or the IRS—each connotes for many a space without place and, as a consequence, helps to locate place. But of course this dialectic is too simplistic, since notions of place or non-place never operate consistently: any precinct can afford comfort and well-being for one, fear and alienation for another. Moreover, the imagined borderlines between places cannot be regarded as firm in any objective sense. Thus any conceptualizing of place or non-place—including that of the IRS here—must account both for its polysemy and its uncertain confines.

Casey rejects the notion of non-places, pointing to the same contradictions that trouble any attempt to construct actual, earthly utopias. In this chapter, I am not arguing that non-places exist in any stable, substantive, material way. Clearly this is absurd and contradictory. Rather, I contend that the IRS constitutes a non-place in that it localizes the modern spatialization of colonized places (*topos*), dissolving local, Indigenous understandings of topography, time, and narrative for more general, colonial notions of

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<sup>41</sup> Doreen Masey, “Power-Geometry and a Progressive Sense of Place,” in *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change*, ed. Jon Bird (London; New York: Routledge, 1993), 66.

geography, time, and discourse. Thus the term *atopos* as used here is more descriptive than prescriptive, evocative than denotative, gestural than indicative.

The equivocal definition of the word *topos* helps to elucidate these nuances. In the most literal sense, *topos* translates from the original Greek as “place,” but it is not merely a place in the most literal sense of the word. It also implies that sort of place used to anchor memory, as in the mnemonic techniques made famous by Simonides of Ceos. The term has also taken on an additional layer of meaning, that of a topic or motif providing a stable place within narratives, a point of return, a “commonplace,” as it were, for a community sharing knowledge. Taken this way, *topos* is material and figurative, earthly and abstract; and thus the reverse, the *atopos*, is neither. It is a cipher of sorts—the evacuation of mnemonic continuity and the suspension of narrative emplotment: topographical, social, cultural, linguistic, religious, economic, and familial. Though it shares some similarities to utopia, an *atopos* promises no threshold of perfection or eternity, no ideal image of unity, only a space of dissolution meant to unmoor social, cultural, and psychogeographical ties to place.

One of the more well-known, recent exposition on non-places, Marc Augé’s slim volume entitled *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology* (1995), warrants some discussion here, chiefly to challenge his assertion that the non-place emerges in the postmodern era. Augé suggests that postmodernity, what he terms “supermodernity”, is marked by an overabundance of (among other things) events, spaces, images, messages, signs, and identity checks—and that such excess is nowhere more fully evident than in non-places.<sup>42</sup> Airport lounges, motorways, malls, gas stations, hotel chains—for Augé these sorts of transitory spaces, through which subjects fleetingly pass, comprise the non-place.

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<sup>42</sup> Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London; New York: Verso, 1995), 109.

His supermodernity is populated both by places and non-places, not in discrete pockets but intertwined and knotted together; indeed, there is no place utterly immune to the appearance of a non-place.<sup>43</sup> What distinguishes places from non-places is that “people want them [places] to be— places of identity, of relations, and of history”.<sup>44</sup> He labels such locales “anthropological place”, the meaning of which is apparent to its inhabitants. The integrity of anthropological place is established by boundaries, delineated by strong points of defence, assured by maintenance, and enforced through surveillance—at times, by the presence of celestial or chthonian forces, the movements of ancestors or spirits—or, alternatively, in more urban settings, by social collectivities, such as that found at union halls or in city squares.<sup>45</sup> Thus, while anthropological places produce the “organically social”, non-places produce “solitary contractuality”.<sup>46</sup> In this way, the non-spaces of supermodernity inflict upon the subject new “ordeals of solitude”.<sup>47</sup>

Augé nuances his account of anthropological places by insisting that they cannot be fully realized, materially or phenomenologically—they are never completely “there.” Rather, he argues that a sense of place can only ever be:

an idea, partially materialized, that the inhabitants have of their relations with the territory, with their families, and with others. This idea may be partial or mythologized. It varies with individual’s point of view and position in society.<sup>48</sup>

He contends that the non-place must be thought of in the same way, i.e. it never exists as a “pure form”.<sup>49</sup> What is significant for Augé, and for my ensuing discussion of the IRS as

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 94.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid 93.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 78.

*atopos*, is the ways in which both place and non-place come into being through their relation with each other. Augé concludes that place and non-place exists as “opposed polarities”—while place is never completely eradicated, neither is non-place ever completed. Rather both are like “palimpsests on which the scrambled game of identity and relations is ceaselessly rewritten”.<sup>50</sup>

It is important to make clear here, following Augé, that I am not suggesting that all IRS, at all times, comprised a non-place, a “pure form.” Rather, the thresholds of both place and non-place are ambiguous, fleeting, and are formed as an idea contingent upon the positionality of the subject. It is more a question that—in these designed spaces—everything is possible, that these Indigenous children were abandoned—quite literally at times—from their place in the nation, culture, family, and home—subjected to spaces of exception where their protection was in the hands of staff not beholden to the law as they would be in places such as Upper Canada College. Thus, rather than attempting to impose a model where such conditions exist in all IRS at all times, I argue for the latent possibility, the “hidden matrix”, the potential opening of an *atopos* into which (to reiterate Agamben) “every form of [Indigenous] life and every [Indigenous] norm can be virtually taken”.

Despite the subtlety and acuity of some of Augé’s observations, his analysis of modernity and supermodernity, places and non-places, fails to consider—as Edward Casey failed—the complexities and particularities of colonial modernity that I have outlined in earlier chapters. I contend that this failure to discern the operation of non-places in colonial modernity links Augé, as well, to a totalizing vision of European modernity. He claims that the non-place appears *ex nihilo*, the unintended consequence of the excess of supermodernity. He overlooks important colonial antecedents, modern non-places that

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 79.

appeared with the effective entrenchment of governmentality, spaces of exception that allowed for the inclusive exclusions of the human animal into the biopolitical state. Clearly in certain ways Augé's supermodern non-places resemble the modern, colonial non-places of the IRS. For example, the *atopos* of the IRS and Augé's non-places contaminated in many ways an experienced, organic sociality while inflicting "ordeals of solitude".<sup>51</sup> However, radical differences exist between Augé's supermodern non-place and the *atopos* of the IRS, disparities that may explain why he pays no attention to the mid-to-late-modern colonial period. As was previously argued, understanding the nature of the IRS requires close attention to colonial particularities. What differentiates modern from supermodern non-places, as articulated here, is the formation of the former to intentionally eradicate the anthropological place of those deemed Other—in other words, its role in advancing a racially motivated program of social engineering.

### **The Non-Topic of Indian Residential School**

Indigenous communities, as a consequence of sustained inhabitation, derived a great deal of social cohesiveness and identity from a nested set of relations informed by topography, oral histories, seasonal travel, cultural practices, and religious ritual. The IRS disrupted such clusters of comprehension, both by the production of a physical space apart from ancestral communities but also by narrative disjunction. The IRS produced "opposed polarities" to numerous senses of Indigenous place, some evident in institutional design, others procedural and discursive. In light of Augé's suggestion that any notion of place or non-place depends on an idea that inhabitants have, survivor testimony will be considered (in addition to architectural plans and policies) to map the palimpsests of identity inscribed atop the material and phenomenological forms of the IRS.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

What, then, are some of the particular ways that these institutions produced *atopoi*? Some significant features and functions of the IRS mentioned in previous chapters doubtless served to erode a sense of place felt by Indigenous students. Certainly the construction of IRS in remote locations, catchment policies which broke up families, and the separation of genders in the dormitories effected such change. In ensuing pages, I add to this list of factors producing such dislocating localizations.

One of my more surprising discoveries made in interviews with survivors was the degree to which the topic of the IRS was suppressed by siblings and other family members who had already attended. Significantly, none of the interviewees knew anything about the IRS before their induction. They had neither seen, visited, nor been told about any IRS.

Charles Chapman recalls that:

My sisters would leave every September and I wouldn't see them for a long time. They would come back in the summer, but I didn't know where they were going ... I had five older sisters that all went to the residential school. They came home and they never talked about what they went through or experienced ... Even though I was curious about where they were going, they never told me about it.<sup>52</sup>

This same shroud of silence is recounted by Robert Joseph. He likewise remembers how unprepared he was for his arrival at St. Michael's, for no one in his village mentioned any details of the institution before he left to live there:

The first time I ever laid eyes on that red brick building in Alert Bay, it was very foreboding and scary for a little six-year-old. I'd never see one before. I

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<sup>52</sup> Personal Interview: 1 April 2010



didn't know I was going there. I had no idea why I was going there after that, having found myself there.<sup>53</sup>

Though such paucity of awareness could be seen as a consequence of the young age of these students (both six years old at the time of enrolment), other survivors who entered the system at a later age report the same lack of information.

Despite being older and better prepared, Alan Dixon also gleaned little knowledge on the subject of the IRS from siblings and friends before enrolling at the age of ten. He recalls that:

I knew that my older sisters went away somewhere but I didn't know anything about where they were at. There were lots of people in the village who went away ... I thought they went to school, but I didn't know anything about residential schools.

Similarly, Adeline Brown also received no news or advice before attending the IRS at fifteen, noting that “the only time I heard of it was because my brother and my two sisters went before I did, [yet] they never really talked about anything that happened at the residential school. I knew they were gone when they were gone”.<sup>54</sup> The experience of Gerald George also concurs, in that by the time of his enrolment at the age of fifteen he had neither seen, visited, nor been told any substantive details about the IRS.<sup>55</sup>

Admittedly, the number of respondents asked in this study about prior knowledge of the IRS is too small to make general conclusions. Yet, the tendency evident in the testimony—of family members, friends, and members of the wider community sharing no details about an institution where they spend ten months a year—seems exceedingly odd. In

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<sup>53</sup> Personal Interview: 25 March 2010

<sup>54</sup> Personal Interview: 25 March 2010

<sup>55</sup> Personal interview: 13 April 2010

my view, such refusals to share information about the IRS suggests a profound repression, especially as teaching traditions in most Indigenous cultures usually treat young children as capable and strong, not in need of excessive coddling. As such, before their first day of attendance, it appears that many Indigenous students had already experienced the IRS as an *atopos*—in this case, a non-topic, a non-commonplace, a point of narrative refusal.

### **Atopoi and the Sites of Corporeal, Temporal, and Curricular Discipline**

Upon entering the IRS, students encountered a number of material and conceptual tools meant to shape conduct, decisions, and thought. Corporeal discipline was often the first tactic that inflicted a sense of alienation from one's place in Indigenous culture. As has been well-documented, especially in the first decades of operation, student discipline at the IRS was in many institutions excessive. Letters of Indian agents and school officials provide accounts of students receiving whippings, beatings with sticks and straps, restraint in stocks and chains, solitary confinement in windowless rooms, as well as the death of runaways fleeing such extreme punishments.<sup>56</sup> In one outrageous account, a teacher handed a revolver to a suicidal female student, instructed her to pull the trigger, which she did—the gun was unloaded.<sup>57</sup> The figure of the *atopos* is apparent here also owing to the general refusal among Indigenes to mete out physical discipline to children. Adeline Brown remembers how odd she found this culture of punishment, noting that “I never ever saw my mom and dad fight, and I never got one spanking from them, so all this discipline was always alien to me”.<sup>58</sup>

Though the DIA was aware of such excessive punishments, and though they protested in official documents, they did little to enforce their dictates for more humane

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<sup>56</sup> Milloy, 129-156.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 155

<sup>58</sup> Personal Interview: 13 April 2010

punishments at the IRS.<sup>59</sup> John Milloy makes clear how the DIA's refusal to compel compliance among IRS staff and administrators produced a sense of lawlessness that resulted in a great deal of misery and death:

The Department ... could have insisted that its officials carry out inspections and that the churches follow regulations directed to the care of the children. It did not do so. The Departmental watch dog was far from vigilant; it rarely barked and, despite the conditions over which Bryce, Paget, Corbett, local doctors, and even senior Departmental officials had shaken their heads [high number of tubercular mortalities], it certainly did not bite. Grants were not withdrawn, schools were not forced to close or principals to resign ... The reality was that, from the moment the school system was launched in the 1880s and 1890s, it drifted without a firm hand, without concerted intervention. And this was despite the knowledge that many children were held in dangerous circumstances and that the death rate was not only of tragic proportions but was, in addition, undercutting the whole purpose and strategy of the system. Many, many children — perhaps as high as fifty percent according to Scott's estimate — would not “attain maturity and be able to exercise any civilizing influence” in their communities.<sup>60</sup>

Clearly, the scope of such corporeal discipline and tragic loss of life exceeds that described in Eric Bays's earlier account of discipline at Upper Canada College. It also suggests, again, the opening of the *atopos*, or to use Agamben's terminology, a *localization without order* (spaces of exception), wherein the bodies of Indigenous children were abandoned by law,

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<sup>59</sup> Milloy., 129-156.

<sup>60</sup> 122.

exposed to death, and consigned to the care of keepers not responsible to the sovereign for their actions.

However ineffective certain DIA directives proved to be, one policy regarding student discipline seems to have been generally consistently applied. In the early 1900s, Commissioner A. E. Forget recommended, to minimize the possibility of uprisings, that punishment was meant to be used sparingly and meted out in front of an assembly of students.<sup>61</sup> It seems reasonable to surmise that it was hoped by the DIA that the punitive excesses of school staff would be ameliorated if discipline were delivered in plain view.

Survivors interviewed recall the use of straps, belts, and pointers used for striking students and that such corrections were administered most often in front of others in gender-segregated playrooms in the basement (fig. 3.1). Alvin Dixon remembers how the recreation room served as the site for public disciplinary displays:

They would round us up if someone was going to be strapped for something that the principal deemed to be serious—to make sure that everybody saw it. Seldom would a girl or boy be punished in front of the whole school. Boys in front of boys—girls in front of girls.<sup>62</sup>

Charles Chapman concurs with Dixon that the recreation room was the preferred site for punishment, but he adds that “if you did something that they were really not happy about, they would take you to the front of the class and strap you in front of everybody”. Robert

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<sup>61</sup> Milloy, 138.

<sup>62</sup> Personal Interview: 25 March 2010

Joseph received, for underage smoking, a particularly humiliating public penalty—a strapping before the entire student body, naked from the waist down.<sup>63</sup>

This alien culture of punishment filled by the absence of parental love, comfort, and security, produced fear in the minds of many students. Alvin Dixon recalls how two brothers enrolled at Alborn IRS, owing to the close proximity of their parents' home, could see into their bedroom at night from their dormitory window. For nine years their parents kept the light burning in the bedroom to comfort them; and though the only boundary between the brothers and the care of their parents was a low wooden fence, for nine years neither dared, even once, to vault it. As Dixon explains, fear was the hidden material that made the fence insurmountable.<sup>64</sup> Charles Chapman, similarly, describes how his movement through the spaces of Kuper Island and St. Mary's IRS were constrained by "invisible boundaries" established by supervisors. "I was taught to respect invisible boundaries", explains Chapman, that "I wasn't allowed to cross over a certain line ... [rather] I was to stay on one side of the boundary line".<sup>65</sup> Such boundaries were drawn over the entire site of the IRS, interior and exterior, and the punishments for not obeying were severe. So ingrained were the fears of these boundaries that Chapman, giving a tour to friends decades after leaving St. Mary's, warned others—out of pure reflex—not to cross the threshold of one such invisible limit. Though intangible, fear and the absence of parental guidance seem to be necessary components for the appearance of the non-place, ushering in a sense of dislocation of the child's rightful place in their home and larger community.

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<sup>63</sup> Robert Joseph also recalls how he received so many blows to the head that his eardrums became perforated and, as a consequence, repeatedly infected, eventually resulting in permanent hearing damage—today he wears two hearing aids.

<sup>64</sup> Personal Interview: 25 March 2010

<sup>65</sup> Personal Interview: 1 April 2010

Interestingly, however, Charles Chapman explains how public discipline in the recreation room at Kuper Island IRS also opened the possibility of reversion, wherein the *atopos* became a place of solidarity:

They would call us all there and would get us all to line up. They would bring up something [a rule violation], and they would say “who is responsible”, or “could that person step forward”? And this is when we had the code of silence. You know, even if we knew who did something, we wouldn’t tell. When things like that would happen, instead of just punishing one person, they would punish all the boys, from the littlest ones to the oldest ones. So this is where I would say all of us learned how to take punishment together.<sup>66</sup>

Such fluctuations suggest the palimpsests mentioned above by Augé, the ceaseless overwriting of the game of identity that plays out in the shifting horizons between place and non-place.

Discipline took other forms as well, one of the more pervasive of which could be termed time discipline. Especially in the first decades of the IRS, students woke early each day, and throughout the day followed a rigorous, tight schedule until retiring to bed. A number of school inspectors took a dim view of the imposition of such oppressive timetables, including one who noted with disdain that “their whole life day in and day out is planned for them, [and that they] work under direction which doesn’t require, and indeed discourages, any individual acting or thinking on their part”.<sup>67</sup>

In the US, a 1909 report authored by the Bureau of American Ethnology and the Office of Indian Affairs similarly criticized the harried timetable in American Indian

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<sup>66</sup> Personal Interview: 1 April 2010

<sup>67</sup> Milloy, 138.

boarding schools, citing connections between such scheduling (and other issues) and the contraction of serious disease, especially tuberculosis:

A child taken from a reservation where it [sic] has become accustomed to almost unrestricted freedom of will and motion, is subjected to discipline for at least four-fifths of its waking hours. In addition, there are the exertion of studying in a strange language, the change of associations, the homesickness, the lack of sufficient diversified exercise out of doors, and unusual food. All these influences cannot but have a depressing and physically exhausting effect, which makes the pupil an easier prey to consumption.<sup>68</sup>

Similar complaints were lodged in 1920 against a number of British Columbia's Catholic IRS. W. Ditchburn, appointed to the post of Inspector of Indian Agencies, made clear the connection between school scheduling, exhausted children, and the onset of health problems. A combination of early-morning services, excessive manual labour, and inadequate diet led, in Ditchburn's opinion, to "children weaken[ing] shortly after admission and eventually becoming so sick that they had to be sent home".<sup>69</sup>

Though student schedules became more reasonable in the late-1940s, survivor testimony demonstrates the degree to which the timetable of the IRS still served as a means to produce a non-Indigenous sense of place. Robert Joseph remembers the sound of the bell, situated in a small bell tower at the back of the institution, which ordered life at St. Michael's IRS (fig. 3.2):

Sometimes I hated to hear it ring early in the morning, because I would have to get up and face my reality... because it would remind me of all the rules,

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<sup>68</sup> Ales Hrdlicka, *Tuberculosis among Certain Indian Tribes of the United States* (Washington, D.C: GPO, 1909), 10.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

regulations, and uncaring ... It would strike fear in you... for under your sheets you were free, you could daydream, think your own thoughts, be free to, go wherever you want... and that bell, at least in the first two or three years, would remind you that you are not free.<sup>70</sup>

Similarly, Isabelle Knockwood has wryly noted that “my institutionalized education began with bells”, her daily activities governed by a strict routine marked by nine separate peals.<sup>71</sup> Such implementation of institutional time cannot be considered consistent with that at any non-Indigenous school, however, considering the general, perceived importance of imposing colonial notions of time on Indigenous people who were largely believed, prior to contact, to have lived outside of time.

Colonial conceptions of Indigenous timelessness generally have taken two forms: the first accords with the image of the noble savage living in harmony with the eternal cycles of nature; the second supports the belief that Indigenous are not capable of understanding notions of modern time, progress, industry, and long-term future planning.<sup>72</sup> Thus, efforts to establish European-based concepts of time in colonial settings served to subsume local, Indigenous systems of recording time, to limit truancy from religious and educational institutions, and to control the output of Indigenous labour. Common to most colonial encounters was an overwhelming sense of cultural superiority by those keepers of modern time, and the coincident inclusive exclusion of local Indigenous into a rigid, highly politicized system of marking the passing of time.<sup>73</sup> Vine Deloria argues that what underwrites Euroamerican

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<sup>70</sup> Personal Interview: 25 March 2010

<sup>71</sup> Knockwood, 48

<sup>72</sup> Maureen Perkins, “Timeless Cultures,” *Time & Society* 7, no. 2-3 (1998), 335.

<sup>73</sup> For an account of the imposition of European-based time in Papua New Guinea, see: Bambi B Schieffelin, “Marking Time: The Dichotomizing Discourse of Multiple Temporalities,” *Current Anthropology* 43, no. S4, Special Issue Repertoires of Timekeeping in Anthropology (August/October, 2002), pp. S5.; for local Inuit time



conceptions of time is a belief in its linear nature, and that at a certain moment in time's "unraveling" the descendants of Western Europe became its master and keepers of much of the globe.<sup>74</sup>

The process of establishing global networks of clocks synchronized to local time zones took place over centuries, the outcome of many technological advances and political contestations. For long, scholars thought that the proliferation of clocks, especially during rapid capitalist expansion in the 18th and 19th centuries, answered a growing need to impose time disciplines on workers.<sup>75</sup> However, more recent research reveals that an intensified interest in implementing time disciplines appeared shortly after 1500, shared between state and religious institutions.<sup>76</sup> This is significant for it demonstrates the role of various religious orders in implementing precise measures of time as a means of exerting novel controls over human behaviour. Moreover, it helps to explain why the question of time usually was deemed significant in initial colonial encounters between missionaries and Indigenous peoples—and why it remained so in the administration of the IRS.

Interestingly, by the beginning of the nineteenth century clocks were no longer calibrated by the cycles of the sun but instead by the position of a certain star—knowledge no longer available to the average person. The ascendancy of astronomy wrested control of standard time from the general public (anybody with a sundial or sextant) to scientific academies controlled by nation-states. Moreover, the establishment of one universal standard of time (Greenwich Mean Time) came about through a political process that required the

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and recent efforts by the government of Nunavut to establish a single time zone, see: Pamela Stern, "Upside-Down and Backwards: Time Discipline in a Canadian Inuit Town," *Anthropologica* 45, no. 1 (2003), 0.

<sup>74</sup> Vine Deloria, *God is Red: A Native View of Religion* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Pub, 1994), 63.

<sup>75</sup> For one of the more influential articulations of this position see: E. P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *Past & Present* 38, no. 1 (December 01, 1967), 56.

<sup>76</sup> Michael J. Sauter, "Clockwatchers and Stargazers: Time Discipline in Early Modern Berlin," *The American Historical Review* 112, no. 3 (2007), 688.

installation of master clocks, first across cities in Europe and, eventually, around the globe.<sup>77</sup> With the shift towards a universal standard, time truly became the property of the sovereign. Furthermore, the development of universal time in Europe appeared as positive proof of cultural superiority, authorizing not only the programmatic subversion of localized, Indigenous time but also relations between local time and territory.

Marline Perkins has argued that consigning Indigenous people to a timeless space in the colonial imaginary both trivialized local conceptions of time and helped to buttress justifications for the appropriation of territory. “Time and space are intimately related”, argues Perkins, for “the absence of one is the precondition for the absence of the other”.<sup>78</sup> The perceived vacuity of Indigenous time and place allowed for the dismissal of both local systems of timekeeping and land title, in favour of universal time and the colonial mapping of space. As Bain Attwood remarks “aboriginal space was declared to be *terra nullius*, and was thus appropriated ... on the basis that its owners were conceived as belonging to a particular historic time or to no time at all”.<sup>79</sup> The imposition, thus, of colonial time and space marks the opening of spaces of exception or *atopos*, for the articulation of each also indicates the coming into being of the “Indian” or “Eskimo,” a subaltern subject divested of ancient nationhood to allow for inclusive exclusion in the sovereign state. With this in mind, the tolling of bells in the IRS announced not simply the dictates of institutional scheduling but, instead, the profound evacuating and reordering of Indigenous time and place.

In concert with the implementation of European-based time, curriculum in the IRS also served to produce a discursive non-place, in which Indigenous pasts were overwritten by

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 705. For the origins of GMT see also Gerhard Dohrn-van Rossum, *History of the Hour: Clocks and Modern Temporal Orders* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 348-349.

<sup>78</sup> Perkins, *Timeless Cultures*, 337

<sup>79</sup> Bain Attwood, *In the Age of Mabo: History, Aborigines, and Australia* (St Leonards, N.S.W: Allen & Unwin, 1996), 6.

studies of colonial history, the bible, ethics, English and French, geography, and so on. As such, the early curriculum of the IRS is surveyed to outline further instances in which the colonial episteme displaces an emplaced sense of Indigeneity. The 1896 DIA annual report outlines the initial “Programme of Studies for Indian Schools”, including the curriculum for studies in English, general knowledge, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, and ethics. The Programme also provided six “standards” of increasing difficulty and complexity, with lower standards applied to beginning grades and higher, to advanced grades. The curriculum of the rudimentary standards provided basic instruction in numbers, calendar time, as well as writing and pronouncing the alphabet and simple words. As students advanced into higher standards, they studied Canadian geography, global meridians and parallels, and the basics of the solar system. Lessons also outlined the structure of the government of Canada and systems of justice.<sup>80</sup> This may not seem too peculiar, as it is not radically different from the sort of curriculum provided to non-Indigenous children. Yet, in light of the absence of instruction in Indigenous culture or history, the Programme of Studies cannot be considered mere curricular guidelines. As Celia Haig-Brown argues “when a culture is being attacked in an effort to dominate it or replace it with an alternative way of life, an effective tactic includes lack of acknowledgment of the culture’s history”.<sup>81</sup>

Such instructive lacunae become more apparent when considering the Programme’s directives concerning the study of ethics and history. In Ethics Standards I through III, students were trained in “cleanliness”, “obedience”, “order”, “respect”, “self-respect”, and “right and wrong”. Standards IV through VI taught the virtues of “industry”, “honesty”, “thrift”, “citizenship of Indians”, “patriotism”, “pauperism”, “Indian and White life”, “evils

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<sup>80</sup> *DIA Annual Report*, 396.

<sup>81</sup> Haig-Brown, 61.

of Indian isolation”, “relations of the sexes to labour”, and “home and public duties”.<sup>82</sup> Similarly, History Standards III provided instruction in “Stories of Indians in Canada and their civilization”, followed by the history of the province in which the school is situated and Canadian history. It is telling that the historical life of Indigenous people are labelled “stories”, and, further, that the word “civilization” refers not to a state of social organization but rather to the process of colonial subjugation.

Pueblo author Leslie M. Silko offers a useful, contrasting account of Puebloan notions of time and history and that typically transplanted during colonization:

History was not distant, but all around. And so the sense of time that I learned from those old folks and the way they moved, is that time is an ocean. Something that happened five hundred years ago isn't way off over there. Time is an ocean. The fact that we're all sitting here now is very dependent on what happened five hundred years ago. You can't just say, “Oh, five hundred years ago, that's way far in the past.” No. That linearity, that emphasis on making time all strung out on a string, that's political. That's what colonialists do.<sup>83</sup>

In this way, the constellation of geography, math, languages, etc., ensconced in a historical envelope, intimates the operation of the non-place, the discursive emptying out of prior ways of understanding the world and one's place in it.

While the content of some of this curricula squares with that designed for non-Indigenous children, and, further, though more than a few Indigenous parents welcomed such training for their children, such coursework, in the Foucauldian sense discussed last chapter,

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<sup>82</sup> *DIA Annual Report*, 398.

<sup>83</sup> Qtd. in Joseph Bauerkemper, “Narrating Nationhood: Indian Time and Ideologies of Progress,” *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 19, no. 4 (2008), 43-44.

appears as a *rationality of government*—those regimes of rationalized truths, knowledges, and analytical frames that authorize biopolitical intervention. For example, Ethics study commenced at the level of the subject (corporeal and moral hygiene) and then shifted to sociopolitical concerns (enfranchisement, race relations, gender roles, public responsibility, and so on); in History, lessons first justify colonial usurpation as “civilization,” followed by the naturalizing, teleological narrative of provincial and national history. Survivor Agnes Grant clarifies the relationship between the curriculum of the IRS and the colonial project:

Curriculum was an integral component of the colonizing agenda, and when children did not succeed in the school system, that further supported stereotypes that mainstream society maintained of the “uncivilized” aboriginal population. This also fit the colonizing agenda which assumed that the aboriginals would occupy the lowest rungs of the social ladder, occupying those positions which the upwardly mobile immigrants did not want.<sup>84</sup>

Grant’s sense that abandoning Indigenous children to an alienating curriculum fueled the colonizing aims of the sovereign suggests, once more, the opening of the *atopos*, a dislocating localization in which students learned to forget their place in networks of ancient, situated knowledge and practices.

What made curriculum in the IRS a particularity potent a tool of colonial governmentality was its foundation in religious instruction. An analysis of a visual teaching aid used across the country—“Lacombe’s ladder”—intimates how the *topos* of historical biblical narrative produced, to use Augé’s phrase, “opposed polarities” between place and non-place. Lacombe’s ladder bears the name of its author, Oblate priest Albert Lacombe, who reconfigured a number of existing visual devices used to provide religious instruction to

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<sup>84</sup> Grant, 166-167.

Indigenous adherents. Before discussing the formal elements of Lacombe's ladder in detail, a brief account of its antecedents is provided.

Early missionaries to the west coast of North America quickly realized that visual aids were more effective than translated words for delivering the gospel. The first of these took the form of a stick similar in form to a totem pole. Known as the "sahale stick", the wooden aid was inscribed with horizontal hash marks to mark the centuries before and after Christ, thirty-three points to represent the years of Christ's life, as well as a combination of hash marks and points to situate contemporary life in relation to biblical history.<sup>85</sup> François Xavier Norbert Blanchet, the Catholic priest responsible for this innovation, was also the first to transfer the historical particulars of the sahale stick to paper, as documents allowed for more rapid reproduction and greater visual complexity.<sup>86</sup> Paper versions, usually included in catechism books, also allowed for wider disbursement, facilitating instruction in episodes from the Bible—the fall of Angels, the Flood, the Tower of Babel, as well as the birth, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ—by Indigenous catechists in their local communities.<sup>87</sup>

Lacombe's ladder—its definitive, coloured version completed in 1872—became the most popular paper version of all and was widely disseminated, not only to IRS across the Canadian West but to other countries as well.<sup>88</sup> Lacombe's version depicts both the path to heaven and hell, divided for the pious and the damned (fig. 3.3). This formal device reflects

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<sup>85</sup> Mark G. Thiel, "Catholic Ladders and Native American Evangelization," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 27, no. 1 (2009), 54.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 55. For Blanchet's autobiographical account see: Francis Norbert Blanchet, *The Key to the Catholic Ladder; Containing a Sketch of the Christian Religion and Universal History* (New York: T.W. Stong, 1960).; for general histories of the Catholic Ladder, see Philip M. Hanley and Edward J. Kowrach, *History of the Catholic Ladder* (Fairfield, Wash: Ye Galleon Press, 1993), 246.; Roy I. Wilson, *The Catholic Ladder and Native American Legends: A Comparative Study*, 1st ed. (Bremerton, Wash: R.I. Wilson, 1996), 58.

<sup>87</sup> Robert H. Ruby and John A. Brown, *Indians of the Pacific Northwest: A History* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981), 82.

<sup>88</sup> Huel, 94.

the metaphysic expressed in the *Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles*, which proclaims that “There are two Ways, one of life in one of death, and there is much difference between the two Ways”.<sup>89</sup> Lacombe also likely borrowed from Jesuit priest Pierre-Jean de Smet, whose earlier version of the Catholic ladder, entitled *Indian Symbolical Catechism* (1843), depicted a choice of good or evil roads.<sup>90</sup> Lacombe’s ladder placed a special emphasis on European contact, illustrating both the salvation of those Indigenous people who accepted conversion to Catholicism, as well as the road to perdition, populated by winged demons and a disproportionately high number of Indigenes (fig. 3.4). Interestingly, though the evil road stretches as far back in time as the Tower of Babel, Indigenous people only appear in history on the cusp of contact, suggesting that they only came into existence with the “discovery of America.” (fig. 3.5)

For many Indigenous students, the racialized and ethnocentric message of Lacombe’s ladder was unequivocal. Bill Whitehawk, who studied Lacombe’s image in the 1950s, observes that “if you participated in your [Indigenous] rituals and things like that, that’s where you’re going to end up ... [conversely] you were an angel if you followed the priest or nun walking with a cross ... you went to heaven if you were white”.<sup>91</sup> In a similar vein, an unnamed student who was enrolled at Blue Quills concluded from the catechism aid that “if you stay Indian you’ll end up in hell”.<sup>92</sup> J.R. Miller, in his argument for the value in close study of these sorts of materials (again, in the context of hidden or destroyed archival materials), states that “Lacombe’s ladder was simply the graphic expression of an ethos in

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<sup>89</sup> Thiel, 50.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>91</sup> J. R. Miller, 191.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

which all things Indian were pagan, evil, and unacceptable”.<sup>93</sup> Lacombe’s illustration provides a clear example of a colonial construction of the past that erodes a sense of Indigenous belonging, negating the *topos* (“commonplace”) of ancestral history—a place in one’s culture—for a state of fallenness ameliorated only through inclusive exclusion into an alien faith. Yet, as is evident throughout this study of the IRS, such clarity is not typical. As mentioned in previous chapters, the issue of the historical and present-day role of Christianity in Indigenous communities remains thoroughly equivocal—a problem made more apparent by examining both devotional spaces in the IRS and the testimony of survivors.

### **The Uncanny Sacred at the Indian Residential School**

The ubiquitous presence of a chapel in each school, regardless of its denomination, underscores the perceived importance of religious training to the moral uplift of Indigenous populations (fig. 3.6). As early as 1883, Prime Minister John A. MacDonald stated that “secular education is a good thing among white men but among Indians the first object is to make them better men, and, if possible, good Christian men by applying proper moral restraints”.<sup>94</sup> At the dedication ceremony for St Eugene in 1911, a Rev. Beck noted that “the true Christian made the best man” and further that Ktunaxa parents should “realize their responsibility to see that their children enjoyed the privilege of training” at the fledgling institution.<sup>95</sup> Such sentiments were echoed publicly by some church and government officials, citing the laxness, ineffectiveness, and even demonic dangers of Indigenous religions and philosophical thought. In reality, however, despite such sensationalistic

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Qtd. in Miller, 103.

<sup>95</sup> Qtd. in “Impressive Ceremony at St Eugene Mission,” *Cranbrook Herald*, November 2, 1911.



exclamations, the “relationship” between Indigenous peoples and Settler cultures was, and still is, enormously complex, with meaningful and lasting exchanges of many important ideas and beliefs.<sup>96</sup> Moreover, profound tension existed between certain government officials and church administrators regarding how much or little religious instruction should be delivered to children in the schools. For instance in 1912, Indian Agent A.W. Neill (West Coast Agency) claimed in his annual report to the DIA that “better results would be obtained were the department to separate the two branches [DIA and Church] and furnish a plain secular education entirely under its own authority”.<sup>97</sup> Yet despite these nuances and differences of opinion, a compromised and conflictual relationship between state and church persisted, and each school was fitted with a permanent facility for the Christian education of students.

In some institutions, the chapel was used for meting out discipline, as students regardless of age or gender were assembled together and could collectively witness humiliations visited on those who transgressed institutional rules. An anonymous Secwepemc informant (using the pseudonym Sophie) relates how, at the chapel at Kamloops IRS, a priest “interrogated us [daily] on what it was all about being an Indian,” promising that students “would go to hell and burn for eternity if we did not listen to their way of teaching”.<sup>98</sup> Also, students caught speaking or laughing would be forced to leave the pew to lie on the chapel floor until the end of service.<sup>99</sup> Survivor Ralph Sandy recounts how, in order to punish escape attempts, staff would “shave all the [student’s] hair and they gave you short pants and they make you kneel down in the church altar in front of everybody that’s in the

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<sup>96</sup> For a recent reconsideration of this relationship, see: John Ralston Saul, *A Fair Country: Telling Truths about Canada* (Toronto: Penguin, 2008).

<sup>97</sup> *DIA Annual Report*, 1912, 399.

<sup>98</sup> Haig-Brown, 59.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

church”.<sup>100</sup> In this way, the design of the chapel—gathering both genders, closely controlling comportment and gazes, policing silence, and housing the most sacred rituals—produced, in certain institutions at certain times, a ceremonial space of divinely authorized punishment, a theatre of corporeal discipline. Clearly, this correlation between sacred space and punishment is radically different from the longhouse described in an earlier chapter, in which religious practice, ancestral history, and practical instruction commingled, opening a place for children in their community free from the threat of corporeal reprimand.

Not surprisingly, the chapel generally was a space of surveillance, by supervisors but often also by the students themselves. In many institutions, students were repeatedly warned that either God or the devil was watching each action and thought.<sup>101</sup> Vivian Ignace describes her understanding of God:

I never knew a compassionate God. I knew there was a God, but I was always scared of the devil more than I was of God. Our spirituality, the thing that should have been our strength, was working against us. You know, they played with us that way. I didn't like that. I didn't have words for it then, but I can see it now. That was a way of control.<sup>102</sup>

This figure of a watchful, malevolent evil was alien to Indigenous cultures and produced for some profound cultural dissociation. An informant named “E.L.” relates how “I really want to get into Indian things but I can't because of them telling us it was of the devil ... everything was of the devil ... it still affects me, right to today”.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Jack, 129.

<sup>101</sup> The severity of religious instruction eased as schools went through reforms in the sixties. Many of the students from this era knew little of the suffering of their parents and grandparents, as few survivors were prepared to divulge their suffering in an era cloaked in secrecy.

<sup>102</sup> Jack, 161.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

Especially younger students experienced difficulty understanding the meaning of rituals in church services. Charles Chapman recalls how incomprehensible mass was during the early period of his induction at Kuper Island:

I was told to be quiet, not say anything, not move around. Just kneel still, sit still. Then when the praying came we were told to speak up. When the singing came we were told to sing out ... I was always told to sing louder. When we are in the church we were never allowed to turn around and look behind us ... sometimes it seemed like the service would go on for a long time, especially when you're a little child. And you didn't understand what it was all about, especially around Easter time ... They never explained why they did certain things a certain way.<sup>104</sup>

Robert Joseph relates a similar sense of incomprehension during his early years at St. Michael's IRS:

I remember that it was very regimental. It had little meaning for me as a little boy because I didn't understand it ... it was taught by rote, step by step, [so] that there was no way we were ever going to get that deep spiritual understanding they were talking about ... They simply wanted to, by mechanically indoctrinating us, turn us into civilized Christians. And nobody ever explained the value of love... obeying the commandments. They were strictly instructional about Spirit. So by the time we got through those schools many of us didn't give a hoot about religion. As a matter of fact many of us were very upset about religion.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Personal Interview: 1 April 2010

<sup>105</sup> Personal Interview: 25 March 2010

Thus, the manner of delivering religious instruction, in a space animated by watchfulness and the possibility of punishment—quite alien to the nurturing methods typical to most Indigenous cultures—produced, for many, a profound sense of alienation from traditional systems of sacred teaching.

Despite such depredations, however, more than a few survivors remain devout Christians and praise the religious training they received while attending the IRS. Such enduring faith seems counterintuitive, yet it would be profoundly insulting and simpleminded to label it mere false consciousness. This many-sided history gains further complexity from the fact that a number of principals, priests, ministers, nuns, teachers, and staff were well-intentioned, caring people, who were accepted in Indigenous communities and fought for better treatment of children at the schools.

Alvin Dixon remembers how important church activities were to him while at Alberni IRS:

For me it was a good experience, because it was spiritual. I never saw it as an onus. A lot of people hated it, but I grew up with very spiritual parents who taught me to appreciate worship, so I enjoyed participating, I enjoyed leading.<sup>106</sup>

Adeline Brown offers a similarly positive account of her experiences of worship while at Edmonton IRS:

Actually I didn't mind the chapel services, because I got to sing in the choir. I like singing, so it was something that I enjoyed. And it was the United

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<sup>106</sup> Personal Interview: 25 March 2010

Church, so we weren't forced to kneel and pray and all that stuff. We are able to interact more.<sup>107</sup>

For certain students, thus, the chapel provided a place that was not at odds with their values, that helped to provide a sense of belonging not only in the institution but, more generally, in daily life. For others, the reverse was true. Reconciling such conflicting accounts into a unitary position about the nature of the chapel space is neither possible nor desirable. I am arguing only that such spaces open the possibility of the *atopos*, owing to the fracturing of religious belief from everyday life, the assertion of an all-powerful evil force, and the use of corporeal punishment in a sacred space. That some students thrived despite these significant departures from Indigenous mores says a great deal about their resilience and also about the value of the lessons learned from their families and communities before their induction. It also suggests the close, intertwined proximity of the place and non-place, where the appearance of either for one student may be the condition of the appearance of its opposite for another.

### **An Unbearable Blandness: Food, the Dining Hall, and the Indian Residential School**

Perhaps the least equivocal issue among the opinions of IRS survivors pertains to food and its service in the dining hall. For the vast majority, induction into the institution brought dietary changes—food with little appeal and dubious nutritional value. Worse, for some, the IRS meant hunger and malnutrition. Basil Johnson explains how the experience of subsisting off substandard food relates, to many, to a wider set of deprivations:

Food was the one abiding complaint because the abiding condition was hunger, physical and emotional. Food, or lack of it, was something that the boys could point to as a cause of their suffering; the other was far too abstract

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<sup>107</sup> Personal Interview: 13 April 2010

and therefore much too elusive to grasp. But food was a reality that the boys could understand; it was a substance that could not only allay hunger but also bring some comfort to a desolate spirit and soul.<sup>108</sup>

In this way, being subjected to an unappetizing and, at times, insufficient diet reinforced in the students a sense of institutional neglect profoundly alien to their own cultures. The sharing of food is of tremendous cultural importance to Indigenous cultures, thus the denial of food underscores again a sense of abandonment.

Many students had no previous exposure to fare served at the IRS. Alan Dixon relates how starkly different this new food was from what he was accustomed to living on the west coast of British Columbia:

The food was awful ... food that I had never experienced ... I was so used to high-grade salmon [and] halibut ... our coastal community being salmon and seafood people. The fish that we were served was horrible. It was old, salty, mostly white fish, haddock, cod ... But in my recollection I was never hungry, so obviously I learned to eat what was given to us to keep full, even though it was not the best of food.<sup>109</sup>

Adeline Brown recalls a similar aversion to unfamiliar foods, in her case white bread and pork:

The first year I was there I was so appalled at the bread ... I was used to having home baked bread ... The food was really bad. We got pork in the morning with our oatmeal, and then they would give us canned pork and oatmeal ... Then at lunch ... it would be pork sandwiches and peanut butter

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<sup>108</sup> Basil Johnson, 137.

<sup>109</sup> Personal Interview: 25 March 2010

and jam. After dinner we would have pork, which would be baked or whatever. We had tons and tons of pork that was donated to the school from the Army ... To this day I cannot eat pork, never. Not even a hot dog. We had an abundance of food but always the same thing. Never went hungry ... [although] I'm sure there are some people who may have, because they couldn't eat the food.<sup>110</sup>

Adapting to such dietary changes is not merely a matter of learning to eat disagreeable food. The introduction of new diets comprised of refined sugars, flour, rice, salt, low density lipoprotein (bad cholesterol) has resulted in several widespread, serious, and ongoing health problems: obesity, dental caries, diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, and renal failure.<sup>111</sup> With this in mind, the introduction of harmful diets to children in the IRS displaced them from the most foundational relationship in their culture: the provision of adequate sustenance drawn from local stocks of unrefined food.

As can be expected, some institutions managed to provide better food than others. Gerald George recalls that “the food in the Annex [Kamloops] was really good compared to Mission. Things weren't as watered down there ... at Mission we would be served dry cereal, cream of wheat, mush”. Perhaps one of the worst instances of the obverse was the policy of staff at Saskatchewan's Ile-a-la-Crosse IRS, who insisted on baking bread with the blood of slaughtered animals, the taste of which continues to trouble survivors. Georgina Iron relates that “I can never get over it. I've gone to counselling, but it's no use. I'm too old and it's

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<sup>110</sup> Personal Interview: 13 April 2010

<sup>111</sup> For an excellent history of such Indigenous health concerns in Canada see: James B. WalDRAM, Ann Herring, and T. Kue Young, *Aboriginal Health in Canada: Historical, Cultural, and Epidemiological Perspectives* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

been part of me for so long”.<sup>112</sup> The indignity of being denied nourishing food, as intimated earlier by Basil Johnson, is symptomatic of a much larger displacement, the absence of parental care, nurturing, and sharing so characteristic of Indigenous cultures. Hunger, thus, was an analog for more than an empty stomach. It revealed the fluctuating and uncertain boundary of the *atopos*, whose threshold would appear or disappear depending on the availability of sufficient rations.

Meals in the IRS were served in the dining hall, located in most cases in the basement between the boys and girls recreation room (fig. 3.7). The dining hall usually comprised a single room and was segregated by gender. Like most other gendered spaces in these institutions, staff and student surveillance ensured integrity of such boundaries. However, certain institutions, such as Kuper Island IRS, were designed with entirely separate boys and girls dining areas (fig. 3.8). Others, for instance Kamloops IRS, installed partitions in the dining room after construction to discourage visual contact between the girls and boys.<sup>113</sup> Dining halls not partitioned in this way used either staff supervisors or student monitors to patrol the space between the girls and boys tables. Gerald George notes that at Mission IRS “there was always somebody on guard ... usually the nuns, but sometimes one of the boys’ supervisors as well as the nuns would be keeping an eye on all of us”.<sup>114</sup> Robert Joseph similarly remembers a “heavy monitoring presence” between the girls and boys side:

At the center of the dining hall there was a space between the girls and boys side, and we weren’t allowed to look that way ... We were simply to mind our own business and eat the food ... we could not interact with each other in any way physically or otherwise ... there were supervisors constantly moving

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<sup>112</sup> Gord Waldner. “Victims Haunted by Memories of Residential School,” *The Star Phoenix*, May8, 2008.

<sup>113</sup> Jack, 157.

<sup>114</sup> Personal Interview: 9 March 2010



about ... and if you so much as tried to wave [at a girl] you got in trouble. You lost privileges or you could be strapped.<sup>115</sup>

Generally, conduct at the dining table was also closely scrutinized, though there were opportunities for trading favours for food. Charles Chapman recalls, owing to the general distaste of cod liver oil, some students would broker deals, giving away favoured food items to anyone willing to consume their mandatory daily dose:

They used [to give us] cod liver oil into a paper cup. Not everyone liked that. If you were willing to put up with the cod liver oil, you were in a good bargaining position. You know, someone who did not like the cod liver oil would make a deal with someone [else] who would drink the oil [in exchange] for their dessert. Maybe someone else would tell them “okay, I’ll drink your cod liver oil for your bread” or “I’ll drink your cod liver oil for your potato”.<sup>116</sup>

Of course, such exchanges needed to be discreet, especially as older students were assigned to each table to observe the behaviour of younger students. Alan Dixon notes the heavy handedness of some of older boys, who were more likely to hurl cutlery at younger students than to offer verbal warnings.<sup>117</sup>

It is not surprising that the dining hall was one of the most oppressive and disliked spaces in the IRS. Not only did the institution have a stake in maintaining tight control over food supplies—and thus the need for intensive surveillance, student collaboration, and strict punishment—but also these rooms for many opened a dislocating localization—an *atopos*—in which the bodies of Indigenous children were subjected to substandard food, their ties to

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<sup>115</sup> Personal interview: 25 March 2010

<sup>116</sup> Personal Interview: 1 April 2010

<sup>117</sup> Personal interview: 25 March 2010

abundant supplies of traditional foods severed, and abandoned to the frugality of school administrators.

### **No Place Like Home**

Each of the survivors interviewed were asked if they at any time felt at home in the IRS; in typical fashion, the replies—even among a small number of respondents—demonstrates a wide range of responses: from decisively negative, to grudging acceptance out of necessity, to somewhat affirmative. This variety of experiences again suggests that any sense of place cannot but be accompanied by a non-place and vice versa. However, as the following testimony reveals the conditions for the opening of an *atopos*, however temporally and spatially contingent, cannot be divorced from the social engineering apparatus of both government and churches, spaces ordered by and through policy and architecture.

Robert Joseph remembers that, at no time during his long stay in the IRS, did it seem like he had a place in the institution:

I never felt at home the Indian Residential School. I could find no reasons to feel comfortable, to feel safe and secure and have real value for myself as a human being. I think where we live has real importance for our sense of integrity, that we belong there, that we are a part of it. The residential school was always an intrusion.<sup>118</sup>

Joseph then reflects at length what home meant to him before the IRS and how the institution disrupted that sense of belonging:

In the very early times, even as a little guy, I would go seal hunting with my grandfather... You could row out to the ocean in front of the village. Even at

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<sup>118</sup> Personal Interview: 25 March 2010

that early age I had some sort of connection ... with the environment [and] with my grandpa, learning a few things about what they needed to know to survive. Because I was in a residential school for all the formative years of my life, I never hunted or fished traditionally ... [Y]ou have to have a relationship with the land ... in our initiation ceremonies for the Potlatch, you need a spiritual place to go. I never had that opportunity because I was in that school. In any event there was also the Potlatch Law which prohibited my grandparents and other elders from continuing to mentor us in ways that gave the definition of home, which is a lot broader than just a roof over your head. Home [meant] the entire territory that spanned the breadth of the eons ... Every little kid in the beginning knew their first ancestor story, which went back 10, 12, 15,000 years. And this evolved over time in a rich culture, a way of life, a worldview that emanated from the connection to home, to the house, to the family, to the community, to the environment, to all of the resources around it. You know the residential school just trapped you into a meaningless sort of existence ... We got caught between worlds.<sup>119</sup>

Though, again, the number of respondents is too few in this study to draw general conclusions, students who were inducted into the IRS at a younger age appear to have felt more keenly the loss of a sense of place in the culture, their feeling of home.

Not surprisingly, Adeline Brown, who lived at home until her enrolment at Edmonton IRS at the age of fifteen, mentions that while she did not feel at home at the IRS, she looked forward to returning to the institution after her first year because she had made many friends.

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

Moreover, she even felt some resentment towards her parents for withdrawing her from the school without her knowledge.<sup>120</sup>

In certain instances, changes in institutional policy and practice produced a greater sense, for some, of home. Alan Dixon relates how, after the Alberni IRS allowed senior female and male students to live communally in a non-segregated building, (Peake Hall) he felt as if the students were a family.<sup>121</sup> It is instructive, however, that the namesake for this building was one of the institution's known sexual offenders. Thus, the very same building that provided a substantive sense of belonging also elicits a sense of dread for more than a few survivors from the Tseshaht First Nation (and elsewhere)—some of whom gathered in 2009 to ceremonially demolish the dormitory in an effort to bring some healing to those who attended. Here is another instance where the palimpsests of identity play out across the opposed polarity of the place and the non-place, where the articulation of one obscures but cannot completely negate the other.

For orphaned children, the IRS served both as a school and orphanage. Charles Chapman reflects on how he learned—after the premature deaths (by grade two) of his mother and father—to reconcile himself with his adoptive home:

[M]y mother died when I was in grade one and my father died when I was in grade two. For a brief time, I lived at the residential school year-round, and never went anywhere. So I had to accept it as my home. Whatever they were willing to give me ... I was willing to accept.<sup>122</sup>

Chapman also relates the difficulties experienced after graduating the IRS in feeling at home anywhere:

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<sup>120</sup> Personal Interview: 13 April 2010

<sup>121</sup> Personal Interview: 25 March 2010

<sup>122</sup> Personal Interview: 1 April 2010

After leaving the residential school it took me many years to go back to my home community. Because I never had parents, I never had anyone living there. I wandered. I stayed anywhere people were willing to put me up. When I was an adult and I went back to my own community, [but] I didn't feel welcome back at my own place because I'd been away for such a long time.<sup>123</sup>

This sense of dislocation from home communities is common after discharge from the IRS, and most respondents interviewed related how they did not feel as if they belonged there after returning from the IRS. As explicated in an earlier chapter, this schism between students and their families at home communities was entirely intentional, a feature of the design, policies, and practices of the IRS.

Gerald George notes feeling that he no longer belonged on the Reserve, for he had been away for many years, and much had changed in his absence. Eventually, ten years later he would return and would, over a number of years, re-establish his place there. Even Adeline Brown, who appears to have coped well in the IRS, reports experiencing a sense of awkwardness in the transition between the institution and home:

It was sort of strange going back home [in summers between school years], and getting into the home routine after school routine. So that part of it was a little more difficult. Not having to go to bed at a certain time, not having to wake up at a certain time, not having to line up to go to meals and stuff like that.<sup>124</sup>

Home is an idea that is at once abstract and substantive. Each of us knows when we are in its presence and when we are far from it. For the vast majority of students indoctrinated into the

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Personal Interview: 9 March 2010

IRS, home was never a possibility. Conversely, the IRS, to varying degrees, contained its counterpart, a space emptied of the horizon of home, a non-place emptied of the companionship, comfort, teachings, sustenance, and belonging typical to a place we call home.

The IRS as *atopos* is, thus, a foil to the sorts of defences offered by Bays, Glavin, and others who would draw apologist conclusions about the nature of the system based on personal experience or survivor testimony. Assertions such as “the staff treated the students well” or “not all students were mistreated” may be true in themselves, but they cannot be conflated as if they express a truth that can be applied generally to all spaces at all times. Such kindnesses and coping does not negate the savage treatment or abject suffering of children in other settings. These instances are well-documented and beyond refute. Also, attempts to tell the “whole story” or to provide “another picture” do not take into account that allegations of much worse crimes (discussed in the introduction to this dissertation)—disappearances, burial in unmarked graves, forced sterilizations, torture, murder—have yet to be definitively disproven.

Conversely, I am neither supporting nor denying these claims. Moreover, I am not attempting to refute that more than a few well-meaning actors did indeed pass through the IRS, helping as many children as they could. Nor am I denying that certain children did not benefit from their experience in the institution. In fact, such testimonial disparities indicate the dialectical appearance and negation of place and non-place that this chapter has developed; place, as such, is guaranteed by the *gift* of goodwill conferred upon students by a member of the staff, whereas the non-place emerges as an always already latent possibility, a consequence of the “hidden matrix”, the space is an exception produced by the abandonment

of law in which everything is possible. Neither place nor non-place, as such, eliminates the other—rather, each, as an expression of opposed polarity, each affirms the other in a moment of passing wherein the expression of one is the negation of the other.

The ensuing chapter will consider the contemporary state of former IRS to explore how these institutional remnants occupy a non-place within networks of historically valued sites of memory. The chapter takes as its focus issues of how to recognize the marginalized detritus of the IRS, especially in light of bureaucratic systems meant to manage the built heritage of Canadian history. Public controversies and court battles over the mistreatment of Indigenous children who attended the IRS have resulted in an official apology by the Government of Canada, a multibillion dollar reparations payment, and a program for commemorating this troubling history. There is yet no official policy nor any sustained response by government bureaucracies regarding how to address the hundreds of sites of former IRS across the country. The final chapter of this dissertation explores, through a series of case studies, the numerous challenges and contradictions that promise to trouble any attempts to recognize or preserve this difficult heritage.

## Chapter 4: The Indian Residential School: A Difficult Heritage

*One always finds one's burden again. But Sisyphus teaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises rocks. He too concludes that all is well. This universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night-filled mountain, in itself forms a world. The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy.<sup>1</sup>*

*Albert Camus, 1942*

This chapter extends my analysis of the IRS into the present day, to consider a number of conflicting views on how—or if at all—to commemorate the complex and, often, troubling history of this institutional system. Various repurposed, neglected, or demolished, the former IRS pose several problems, in terms of determining the historical value of these structures and their place among existing national, provincial, and regional sites of memory. In what follows, I analyse the official processes by which material and intangible traces of the past become bearers of heritage value. Following this, I investigate in depth the cluster of issues that trouble attempts to recognize and preserve the “difficult heritage” of the IRS.

From December 4 to 7, 2009, members of the Ahousat First Nation occupied the former site of Christie Indian Residential School, located on Meares Island off the west coast of Vancouver Island.<sup>2</sup> The aim of the occupation was to draw media attention to a dispute over the sale of the property with its current owners, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI). To date, the OMI have rejected purchase offers, a refusal hindering Ahousat plans to develop a multimillion dollar resort on the site.<sup>3</sup> Such strife harkens back to the 1970 sit-in at the Blue Quills residential school in Alberta discussed in a previous chapter. It also suggests that, some forty years after most of the schools ceased operation, these non-places still function as

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<sup>1</sup> Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus, and Other Essays.*, 1st American ed. ed. (New York: Knopf, 1955).

<sup>2</sup> Lloyd Mackey, “Ahousat/Oblate Dispute Not Yet Resolved,” <http://www.canadianchristianity.com/bc/bccn/0210/05dispute.html#articletop> (accessed 12/14/2010, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> For an account of the early mission history of the region and the establishment of the Christie school see: Brabant and Lillard, *Mission to Nootka, 1874-1900: Reminiscences of the West Coast of Vancouver Island*



nodes of social memory and as potential flashpoints for political conflict. In light of this enduring, agonistic power, it is interesting to note the wide variance of purposes that IRS sites currently serve in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. In British Columbia, former residential schools have been repurposed as (among other things) community colleges, band administrative offices, day cares, theatres, artist workshops, museums, pilgrimage sites, heritage parks, and, in one exceptional instance, a luxury resort including golf course and casino.

Such disparate contemporary reuse intimates the complex reception of these institutional remains, as well as the profound challenges facing any attempt to evaluate, protect, and commemorate such sites of memory. What follows is a investigation into the marginal status of these places in the extant network of officially valued historic places—not to apportion blame but to problematize the need to reconfigure this ongoing process of marginalization. Especially in instances of such painful and unreconciled pasts, determining how to strike an appropriate balance—between commemoration and demolition/forgetting—is a particularly problematic and uncertain process, especially as a wide variety of social actors (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) hold differing and often conflicting opinions. Moreover, paradoxical ethical issues pertaining to the representation of traumatic histories refuse equivocal solutions. What is clear, however, is that this architectural patrimony has received scant scholarly attention; moreover, for the most part, federal, provincial, and municipal government agencies responsible for commemoration and heritage preservation have yet to designate former schools or rewrite their policies in this regard.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> One notable exception, the former Portage la Prairie Indian Residential School (now the Rufus Prince building), was designated in 2005 by the Government of Manitoba as Provincial Heritage Site no. 119. See: “Explore our Heritage - Provincial Heritage Sites” <http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/hrb/prov/p119.html> (accessed 7/22/2010, 2010).; the site is meant to house the Indian Residential School Museum of Canada and

Owing to this dearth of scrutiny and to the prevailing mood of national introspection—informed by financial reparations, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the formal apology from the Government of Canada—this chapter considers the repurposing of the following sites in British Columbia: St Eugene (Cranbrook), St Paul’s IRS (North Vancouver), St Mary’s (Mission), concluding with a discussion of the efforts of the ‘Namgis First Nation in Alert Bay to save St Michael’s from demolition.<sup>5</sup> Through an examination of these case studies, the aim is both to problematize the commemorative outcomes of repurposing IRS and to open questions regarding how to represent sites of “difficult heritage.”

### **Heritage and the Importance of Being Difficult**

Before examining specific instances of IRS repurposing and questions of commemoration, I will define “difficult heritage,” a fraught cluster of issues, refusals, silences, and aporia that trouble pasts that are particularly painful, contradictory, and ambiguous. To do this, the notion of difficult heritage will be contrasted with two distinctly different approaches to marking the material and intangible remnants of the past. First, I will outline what Laurajane Smith has termed “authorized heritage discourse”—that is the international complex of expert spokespeople directing the legislative, bureaucratic, technical, and aesthetic components of heritage practice. Second, I will provide an account of various critical interventions into official heritage discourse, to provide a sense of the critical genealogy to which thinking on difficult heritage both belongs and departs from.

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has recently become a proposed “site of conscience”, by the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience; see: “Indian Boarding and Residential Schools Sites of Conscience Project,”

<http://www.sitesofconscience.org/resources/networks/indian-schools/en/> (accessed 2/16/2011, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> For recent reflections on subjective, social, and political dimensions of apology for and reconciliation of the history of the IRS in Canada see: Sophie Pierre, “Nee Eustace: The Little Girl Who would be Chief,” in *Response, Responsibility and Renewal: Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Journey*, ed. Gregory Younging, Jonathan Dewar, and Mike DeGagné (Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2009), 39-48-409.

Authorized heritage discourse, according to Smith, tends to concentrate on sites, buildings, and landscapes thought to possess aesthetic appeal.<sup>6</sup> Such perceived attractiveness compels a duty to save such material, so that it may be passed on to future generations.<sup>7</sup> This official discourse supports the notion that heritage is inherently precious and, further, that determinations of what to save and how to save it need to be regulated by heritage experts—archaeologists, architects, historians, government bureaucrats, and members of various historical and amenity societies. The making of such sanctioned in-groups of spokespersons and gatekeepers requires drawing certain boundaries. Smith argues that:

the power relations underlying [heritage] discourse identify those people who have the ability or authority to speak about or for heritage... and those who do not. The establishment of this boundary is facilitated by assumptions about the innate value of heritage, which works to obscure the multi-vocality of many heritage values and meanings. Discourse works to identify particular forms of expertise that may be called upon to make pronouncements about the meaning and nature of heritage, and to mediate and adjudicate over any competing heritage discourses. This is not to say that expert pronouncements and judgments are not contested—they are—but in the process the boundaries of any negotiations over heritage values and meanings become very tightly drawn indeed, as they become specific contests over the management and interpretation of specific heritage sites. This process works to limit broader

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<sup>6</sup> Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), 29.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

debate about, and subsequent challenges to, establish social and cultural values and meanings.<sup>8</sup>

In this way, authorized heritage discourse justifies its operation while shying away from metacritical investigations, a problem that will become clearer when examining cases of IRS repurposing.

Authorized heritage discourse also tends to exclude competing understandings of the past, as it is widely thought that users will not frequent sites or buildings that do not echo traditional heritage values. Such values include, among others, preserving ruins of antiquity, bolstering national or civic pride, protecting sites deemed (by some) sacred, or framing aesthetic agreeability. Diane Barthel provides an apt example in her consideration of the commemoration of industrial sites to the relative exclusion of gruelling working conditions, hypermasculine culture, and labour inequity. Bartell argues that “layers of dirt and grime violate tourist expectations, and serious questioning of industrialism’s costs run counter to the ideology of many political and economic interests involved in preservation”.<sup>9</sup> Authorized heritage discourse often avoids such frank, troubling representations, producing instead a passive experience of sites, buildings, and landscapes; however, despite this tendency, not all visitors are compliant and find ways to reinterpret or dissent from official heritage programs. As will be explicated later this chapter, such an official aversion appears to inform the approach of heritage bureaucracies to the IRS.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>9</sup> Diane L. Barthel, *Historic Preservation: Collective Memory and Historical Identity* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 68-69.

For certain academics, the highly regulated and exclusionary nature of much official heritage practice has provoked what Regina Bendix terms “ivory-towered outrage”.<sup>10</sup> Bendix argues that this scholarly enmity does little to contribute to our understanding of “heritagization”, i.e. the complex set of processes by which material and intangible traces of the past are assessed, recorded, restored, or preserved. She notes that heritagization itself has a history, in that “organizations and institutions have been created to legitimate this practice and to contribute to turning ever more diversified notions of heritage into a self-understood, habitual aspect of culture”.<sup>11</sup> For Bendix, though it is difficult to map out the contours of either heritagization or scholarship on the subject, neither phenomena appear to be losing steam in late modernity. Indeed, so interdisciplinary is critical discourse on heritage that “heritage concerns everyone, from the tourism expert to the philosopher of late modernity”.<sup>12</sup> Throughout this chapter, I adopt this measured perspective to avoid the snare of “outrage” while working through the problems posed in Canada by the “difficult heritage” of the IRS. This is not to ignore valuable critical interventions made in recent years on the question of heritagization—some of these will be considered—but only to affirm the futility of outright dismissal of social practices so deeply rooted in the present. The questions then remain: whose heritage will be recognized and by what means?

A summary of the history of heritagization is forwarded here in order to better frame the genealogy of authorized heritage discourse. Contemporary conceptions of heritage have their origins in nineteenth century Europe, in particular Germany, France, and Britain.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Regina Bendix, “Heritage between Economy and Politics: An Assessment from the Perspective of Cultural Anthropology,” in *Intangible Heritage*, ed. Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), 254.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 253

<sup>13</sup> For summaries of this history see: Barthel, *Historic Preservation: Collective Memory and Historical Identity*, 182; Jukka Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation* (Oxford, England; Boston: Butterworth-

Rapid industrialization, intensive urbanization, and new national identities produced conditions in which the search for heritage took root. Eric Hobsbawm has observed that such societal flux demanded “new devices to insure or express social cohesion and identity and to structure social relations”.<sup>14</sup> For example, Charles Dellheim explores this “paradox of progress” in the construction of modern rail stations in Victorian England—expressions of contemporary technological advancement clothed in neo-Gothic cladding—a Janus-faced affectation deemed necessary to situate British modernity.<sup>15</sup> Not only national but also racial identities informed the production of sites believed to be imbued with heritage value, as markers of technical achievement, social evolution, cultural sophistication, and taste. The move to establish what Pierre Nora terms “sites of memory” can only be understood against modernity and its attendant sense of rootlessness, of flux, of alienation from tradition, creating a general anxiety that history itself could be swept away.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, traces of the past were transformed into official memories and made permanent in various ways: through public monuments, unofficial annual celebrations, museums, archives—all of which materially marked history, anchoring events in a network of sites of memory.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, new laws emerged in Europe, such as the British *Ancient Monuments Protection Act* of 1882, to ensure the conservation of monuments of perceived historical, architectural, or religious value.<sup>17</sup> The United States

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Heinemann, 1999), 354.; Kevin Walsh, *The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Postmodern World* (London: New York: Routledge, 1992), 204.

<sup>14</sup> E. J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge Cambridgeshire]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 263.

<sup>15</sup> Charles Dellheim, *The Face of the Past: The Preservation of the Medieval Inheritance in Victorian England* (Cambridge Cambridgeshire]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 214.

<sup>16</sup> Pierre Nora and Lawrence D. Kritzman, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996-1997), 4.

<sup>17</sup> See: Françoise Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

followed suit soon after, passing the *Antiquities Act* of 1906.<sup>18</sup> The interventions of architects and archaeologists during these formative decades help bolster the development of such legislation and, more generally, emerging conservation efforts. Interestingly, archaeology as an academic field cemented its reputation in assigning to itself the role of steward and pedagogue, overseeing historic sites in danger of destruction.<sup>19</sup> In addition to this new conservation ethos centered on the monument, the French concept of *patrimoine* (inheritance) provided an expanded sense of duty to preserve and protect cultural inheritance drawn potentially from any point in the entirety of human history.<sup>20</sup> The establishment of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in 1877 by William Morris and others provided a prototype for future organizations who sought to lobby and educate both government and society about conservation and the establishment of demonstrable heritage values. The efforts of the Society eventually led, in the first decade of the twentieth century, to the establishment of the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England.

In the twentieth century, the legislative, bureaucratic, and procedural precedents established in the previous century were expanded and refined. The *Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments* (1931) followed by *the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites* (1964)—also known as the Venice Charter—demonstrate the continued efforts to professionalize and regulate heritage practices. With the UNESCO adoption of the *Convention Concerning the Protection of World Culture and Natural Heritage* (1972), the conservation ethos of the nineteenth century crystallized

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<sup>18</sup> See: William J. Murtagh, *Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America* (Pittstown, N.J.: Main Street Press, 1988), 237.

<sup>19</sup> For a detailed discussion of controversies plaguing archaeology and conservation practices see: Laurajane Smith, *Archaeological Theory and the Politics of Cultural Heritage* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), 260.

<sup>20</sup> Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

into a legible, sophisticated system of procedures, supported by international charters and national legislation.

Not surprisingly, Canada also implemented heritage policies meant to both preserve historic sites and monuments and to commemorate past events. The first official bureaucracy charged with this mandate, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC), formed in 1919. The HSMBC drew its inspiration not only from British preservation organizations and legislation but also engaged the objectives of disparate national societies, such as the Royal Society of Canada, as well as regional patriotic societies including the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire and the St Jean Baptiste Society.<sup>21</sup> Significant challenges faced the HSMBC in its early years, owing to the absence of robust heritage legislation and to an unwieldy bureaucratic marriage of architectural and park preservation. The Dominion Parks Branch, established in 1911, had earlier promoted its aim of forming a national network of parks by including in its mandate the preservation of historic sites—most often battlefields and forts. Soon after the creation of the HSMBC, it was understood that parks and historic sites need different management. Yet despite this new autonomy, the fledgling HSMBC received inadequate funding from the federal government and failed for decades to develop comprehensive heritage policies.<sup>22</sup>

Preservation practice in Canada would intensify and accelerate during the Depression, as the federal government allocated millions of dollars for public works projects, including the restoration of certain historic sites such as Sir Wilfrid Laurier House in St Lin, Quebec, and Fort Malden in Amherstburg Ontario.<sup>23</sup> It is telling that in this prewar period

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<sup>21</sup> C. J. Taylor, *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Canada's National Historic Parks and Sites* (Montreal; Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 3.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.



selections for commemoration and preservation explicitly championed Anglo-British or, less frequently, Franco-Canadian narratives. For example, Board member Arthur Surveyer routinely rejected efforts to recognize Jewish history in Québec. He also refused requests for a monument in British Columbia to mark the pre-1858 immigration of four hundred African-Americans to Vancouver Island, noting that “I do not think the immigration of Negroes is a fact to rejoice upon”.<sup>24</sup> Similar objections were raised in these years to commemorating other marginalized pasts, including the extinction of the buffalo, Mennonite immigration, and Ukrainian settlement. As will become evident in my later discussion of the commemoration of the IRS, vestiges of such conservative, ethnocentric commemorative policies still appear to haunt the HSMBC.

In the postwar period, the bureaucratic management of historic sites became increasingly complex, as new types of structures were deemed historically valuable in the face of rapid urbanization of Canadian cities. The *Historic Sites and Monuments Act* was passed in 1953, providing the requisite funding and legislative power for the HSMBC. This enviable position was made better two years later with an amendment that authorized the Board to recommend the national designation of architecture based on the significance of its design. The widening of the idea of Canadian heritage came to include streetscapes, rural landscapes, gardens, and railway stations.<sup>25</sup> More recently, with the interventions of identity politics into commemorative practice, the HSMBC has acknowledged its failure to adequately represent women, immigrant cultures, and especially the experiences of Indigenous people. Some essays published in a book celebrating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the HSMBC explicitly reference this absence, though in the sixteen years

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 128.

<sup>25</sup> T. H. B. Symons, *The Place of History: Commemorating Canada's Past* (Ottawa: Royal Society of Canada, 1997), 333.

since its publication, the Board still openly confesses this shortcoming. Recently, Sheila Copps, the Minister of Canadian Heritage, “charged” the HSMBC to “do more to mark the historic achievements of Canada’s aboriginal peoples”.<sup>26</sup> Of course recognizing “historic achievements” is vastly different from recognizing historic injustices, and it is this distinction that lies at the crux of issues of difficult heritage. Difficult heritage conservation no longer implies saving what can be easily accommodated in heritage registers. Rather, it demands novel approaches, despite dangers posed to conventional national narratives or to existing representations of history in heritage discourse.<sup>27</sup>

Before examining the question of difficult heritage in the Canadian context, I will briefly outline the critical genealogy from which it developed. The earliest critiques of heritage practice tended to focus upon its elitist, classist underpinnings. For example, Patrick Wright argued that heritage preservation sought to bolster conservative values in the face of postwar social and economic change. Wright noted that “in a world where the social hierarchy has lost its settled nature, it is not so surprising that the old forms of security become alluring”.<sup>28</sup> Connections between preservation projects and the sociopolitical interests of elites prompted some critics to describe official heritage practice as a “heritage industry”, implying the intentional manipulation, revision, and explication of the past for political and commercial ends.<sup>29</sup> Class-based issues inhering in heritage practice were for some compounded by the relations between heritage and tourism, an especially thorny

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<sup>26</sup> Shiela Copps, “Parks Canada - National Historic Sites of Canada System Plan - National Historic Sites of Canada System Plan - Labour,” <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/docs/r/system-reseau/sites-lieux4.aspx> (accessed 12/15/2010, 2010).

<sup>27</sup> Marta Anico and Elsa Peralta, *Heritage and Identity: Engagement and Demission in the Contemporary World* (London; New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2009), 196.

<sup>28</sup> Patrick Wright, *On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain* (London: Verso, 1985), 22.

<sup>29</sup> For a critique of the heritage industry heritage, see: Robert Hewison, *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (London: Methuen London, 1987), 160; see also: Nick Merriman, *Beyond the Glass Case: The Past, the Heritage, and the Public in Britain* (New York: Leicester University Press, 1991), 8..

problem in places marked by mass social trauma, such as slave quarters, prisons, assassination sites, or death camps. Again, at such sites of “thanatourism” or “dark tourism”, visitors tend to be well-to-do, underscoring the privileged nature of heritage practice.<sup>30</sup>

Questions of authenticity (or lack thereof) have also long troubled heritage practice, as historical reenactments have created a consumable experience of history quite apart from evidence derived from historical texts or archaeology. Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett argues that:

heritage is not lost and found, stolen and reclaimed. Despite a discourse of conservation, preservation, restoration, reclamation, recovery, recreation, recuperation, revitalization, and regeneration, heritage produces something new in the present that has recourse to the past”.<sup>31</sup>

In other words, heritage is socially constructed and produces something entirely novel, something not native to the material remnants of the past. Put another way, political, social, or cultural shifts in attitude, competencies, or ambitions will produce new targets for heritagization, and often these new targets are framed nostalgically, forgetting the grimmer historical truths of the past. This use of the past implies that heritage practice does not convey authentic historical truth or narrative in a disinterested fashion. Rather, contemporary needs of discrete groups are met by reframing material and intangible traces of the past. In this way, heritage contains at its core seeds of contestation, for determining whose heritage will or will not be recognized is never impartial.

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<sup>30</sup> Robert Hewison, *Heritage: An Interpretation*, ed. David L. Uzzell (London; New York: Belhaven Press, 1989), 15-23; J. John Lennon and Malcolm Foley, *Dark Tourism* (Australia; U.S: Thomson, 2004), 184; Yorke M. Rowan and Uzi Baram, *Marketing Heritage: Archaeology and the Consumption of the Past* (Walnut Creek, CA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 315; A. V. Seaton, “War and Thanatourism: Waterloo 1815–1914,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 26, no. 1 (1/1, 1999), 130; Carolyn Strange and Michael Kempa, “Shades of Dark Tourism: Alcatraz and Robben Island,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 30, no. 2 (2003), 386.

<sup>31</sup> Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “Theorizing Heritage,” *Ethnomusicology* 39, no. 3 (Autumn, 1995), 370.

Heritage, thus, is understood—at least in critical circles—as always already political and contested. It is at once an object of consumption, an educational resource, a locus of collective identity, a political and public relations tool, and a flashpoint of social conflict. It is “multi-sold” and “multi-consumed”.<sup>32</sup> Even within relatively cohesive social or cultural groups, conflicting opinions and interpretations will exist, making it unthinkable to conceive of one memory, a unified vision of the past shared collectively.<sup>33</sup> Therefore dissonance between competing and conflicting claims to heritage appears to be its most general quality. In the seminal text *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict* (1996), J. E. Tunbridge and G. J. Ashworth establish an enduring series of criteria for thinking through dissonance in a variety of heritage scenarios:

At its simplest, all heritage is someone’s heritage and therefore logically not someone else’s: the original meaning of an inheritance implies the existence of disinheritance and by extension any creation of heritage from the past disinherits someone completely or partially, actively or potentially. This disinheritance may be unintentional, temporary, of trivial importance, limited in its effects and concealed; or may be long-term, widespread, intentional, important and obvious.<sup>34</sup>

Obvious instances of such dissonance include the various attempts to retread the past, such as Christian reclamation of “pagan” sites in late-Classical or early-Medieval Rome, or, more recently, the reconstruction of churches on sites destroyed in Soviet Russia. In addition to

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<sup>32</sup> B. J. Graham, G. J. Ashworth, and J. E. Tunbridge, *A Geography of Heritage: Power, Culture, and Economy* (London; New York: Arnold; Oxford University Press, 2000), 23..

<sup>33</sup> Elizabeth Jelin, “Public Memorialization in Perspective: Truth, Justice and Memory of Past Repression in the Southern Cone of South America,” *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 1, no. 1 (March 1, 2007), 140.

<sup>34</sup> J. E. Tunbridge and G. J. Ashworth. *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict* (New York: J. Wiley, 1996), 21.

questions of ownership, the authors also elaborate upon dissonances raised by commodification, politicization, place making, and narrativization.

As outlined in Ashworth and Tunbridge, what heritage is often depends for definition upon a series of contested values, a clash inevitably producing dissonance. Interestingly, the authors argue for a principle of heritage equilibrium, in which dissonant heritage first produces “cognitive dissonance” in users, an anxious state of mind compelling the adjustment of behaviours and attitudes to allow for a shift toward consonance.<sup>35</sup> The problem in this approach, however, is the privileging of consonance over dissonance. This desire for consonance—however understandable and appealing—threatens to foreclose sustained engagement with difficult heritage. This tendency noted earlier has surfaced in the Canadian media, where the talk of reconciliation for the IRS appears as a sort of hoarding, covering over a vast series of iniquitous disharmonies—not only the centuries-old history of brutality and betrayal, but also present day indifference and racial hatred. In this way, the smoothness of promised consonance could be seen as the convulsive forestalling of self reflection. I argue that it is neither defeatist nor cynical to suggest the need to defer consonance; rather, in light of the almost inconceivable length and degree of iniquity wrought by the IRS, it seems the only plausible ethical response.

This refusal of consonance opens the conundrum of, on the one hand, elevating the need to represent human suffering while, on the other, giving full recognition to the inevitability of irresolution. As Judith Butler observes, “for representation to convey the human, then, representation must not only fail, but it must *show* its failure. There is something unrepresentable that we nevertheless seek to represent, and that paradox must be

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 20.

retained in the representation we give”.<sup>36</sup> Thomas Dumm goes further, suggesting this “paradox of representation” demands “retaining the paradox as the core ethical task”.<sup>37</sup> Such Sisyphean currents—markedly different from Tunbridge and Ashworth’s dissonance—flow through articulations of difficult heritage. Difficult heritage departs from the model of dissonance in that it “threatens to trouble collective identities and open up social differences”.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, it is not an analytical category of heritage management like that established by Tunbridge and Ashworth, but more of a “historical and ethnographic phenomenon”, its study exposing the fault lines of much heritage practice.<sup>39</sup> This is not to negate the possibility of some measure of amelioration, that the mnemonic wounds of mass social trauma must forever remain open. Rather, at issue here are questions of a properly ethical position on the past and best methodologies. I am arguing for the need to endure contestation without seeking resolution.

Sharon McDonald, in her analysis of Nazi commemoration in Germany, uses the term “unsettling” to describe the uneven and unpredictable effects of incorporating difficult heritage into existing heritage networks. Germany, as has been exhaustively documented, has played host to a variety of high-profile apologies, scholarly disputes, memorial competitions, formal experiments, and neoconservative refusals.<sup>40</sup> Emerging from this lengthy, agonistic,

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<sup>36</sup> Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London; New York: Verso, 2003), 144.

<sup>37</sup> Thomas L. Dumm, *Loneliness as a Way of Life* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2008), 149.

<sup>38</sup> Sharon Macdonald, *Difficult Heritage: Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 4.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> The literature on this subject is vast; thus, what follows, is included as much for its citations as its content. See Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* (New York: Zone Books, 2002).; Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche, *The Work of Memory: New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002).; Friedländer, *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the “Final Solution”* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Saul Friedländer, *Reflections of Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984); Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York: Routledge, 1995); James Edward Young, *At Memory’s Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven:

and ongoing self-reflexive process is a better understanding of the value of unsettling and difficult heritage. Not simply a question of making space for new, disturbing memories, unsettling tends to raise questions about the nature of heritage representation itself, suggesting that it is not settled—i.e. commonly accepted, sedimented, and seemingly permanent—but rather is contestable, ambiguous, and contingent. Such outcomes tend, as well, to unsettle existing policies, procedures, and aims.<sup>41</sup>

Controversies, for better and worse, comprise a key component of difficult heritage. Controversies not only force people to take sides, to rethink their position in relation to representations of the past, but also they create “new alignments of people and interests, and even change the parameters in which future actions and judgments are made”.<sup>42</sup> At times, controversy compels conservative backlash and backpedalling. For example, in reaction to protests by the Royal Canadian Legion and other veterans groups, the Canada War Museum changed an exhibit panel that questioned the moral and strategic value of the RAF Bomber Command’s decision (several thousand Canadians flew in RAF aircrews) to bomb many German cities in the closing months of WWII, attacks that killed 600,000 and left over 5 million homeless.<sup>43</sup>

Conversely, however, controversies may also open a view on the raw, unsettled remains of the past in a manner demanding continual rethinking and sustained dissent. Struggles over archaeological heritage, for instance, have been especially bitter—one particularly notable case, the 1996 discovery of ancient skeletal remains near Kennewick,

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Yale University Press, 2000).; James Edward Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

<sup>41</sup> Sharon McDonald, “Unsettling Memories: Intervention and Controversy Over Difficult Public Heritage,” in *Heritage and Identity: Engagement and Demission in the Contemporary World*, ed. Marta Anico and Elsa Peralta (London; New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2009), 93.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>43</sup> “War Museum to Reword Controversial WWII Display - CTV News,” [http://www.ctv.ca/CTVNews/CTVNewsAt11/20070828/war\\_museum\\_070828/](http://www.ctv.ca/CTVNews/CTVNewsAt11/20070828/war_museum_070828/) (accessed 12/29/2010, 2010).

Washington. A protracted legal battle (Bonnichsen et al., v. U.S., District of Oregon Civil No. 96-1481 JE) erupted over control of the skeleton.<sup>44</sup> The lawsuit initiated by a group of scientists, led by anthropologist Robson Bonnichsen, claimed that the bones of Kennewick Man—a name coined by this group—comprised an atemporal, universal form of public heritage demanding further scientific study.<sup>45</sup> Four separate Northwest American Indian tribes, the Umatilla, Colville, Yakama, Nez Perce, countered the suit, each fighting for repatriation of the Ancient One, the Indigenous name for the disinterred remains. In 2004, the United States Court Of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit determined, on the basis of genetic evidence, that no clear cultural links existed between the Indian claimants and the Ancient One, a decision allowing scientific study to continue. Despite losing the case, Larry Zimmerman argues that the struggle over this difficult heritage exposes the continued operation of “scientific colonialism”, as well as how specious claims to public heritage generally speak for a dominant group’s idea of heritage.<sup>46</sup> In this way, the difficult heritage of the Ancient One produces the conditions required for metacritical thought capable of disturbing the very epistemic foundations for understanding how to preserve, disseminate, and receive knowledge about the material and intangible vestiges of the past

The case of the Kennewick Man/Ancient One appears particularly instructive for the ensuing discussion of difficult heritage and the IRS. At stake is a better understanding of the problematic relations between the IRS and existing systems of heritage management in

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<sup>44</sup> For a fuller account of the controversy see: Roger Downey, *Riddle of the Bones: Politics, Science, Race, and the Story of the Kennewick Man* (New York, NY: Copernicus, 2000), 202.

<sup>45</sup> An extensive collections of texts outlining the perspective of scientists defending public heritage can be found on the Friends of America’s Past website. See: “Friend’s of America’s Past: The Kennewick Man Case,” <http://www.friendsofpast.org/kennewick-man/> (accessed 2/16/2011, 2011).

<sup>46</sup> Larry Zimmerman, “Public Heritage: A Desire for a “White” History for America, and Some Impacts of the Kennewick Man/ Ancient One Decision,” *International Journal of Cultural Property* 12, no. 2 (May, 2005), 267. See also: Smith, *Archaeological Theory and the Politics of Cultural Heritage*, 260; Larry Zimmermann, “When Data Become People: Archaeological Ethics, Reburial, and the Past as Public Heritage,” *International Journal of Cultural Property* 7, no. 1 (1998), 69.



Canada—an awkward fit that may yet unsettle established bureaucracies and methods of upholding authorized heritage discourse. At the present moment, a gulf exists between those professionals charged with bureaucratic management of heritage resources and those actors interested in any sort of critical intervention into heritage practices. The chief preoccupation of many of the architects and professors working in heritage-related fields generally centers on the preservation of structures and not any substantive query about the value of this goal. In my view, this is unfortunate, for it precludes any serious discussion of the overarching worth of authorized heritage discourse and, in the case of the IRS, discourages confrontation of difficult heritage that exists at the margins of this discourse. In a very real sense, heritage preservation in Canada is a self-referential system, wherein those participating publish for and confer with each other under the assumption that their practices are beyond critique. No doubt, this has something to do with the necessity for pragmatic attitudes shared by scholars and bureaucrats who work with great difficulty to save much worthy heritage in danger of destruction. Consequently, official heritage practices in Canada exhibit a form of myopia, unable to see the full extent of ethical concerns which should guide thinking through relations between mainstream heritage and that difficult heritage at its margins.

### **The Sublime Luxury of Heritage: St Eugene Resort**

As part of the multibillion dollar Indian Residential School Settlement finalized in the fall of 2007, the Canadian government—in cooperation with the TRC and the Indian Residential Schools Survivor Committee (significant Indigenous participation in both organizations)—established the Commemoration Initiative, a \$20 million fund for the production of

memorials and other commemorative activities.<sup>47</sup> Interestingly, no specific provisions have been made in the Initiative guidelines for any sort of commemoration of the 132 sites of former residential schools across Canada.<sup>48</sup> This is in part a consequence of the paucity of funds. Clearly each site should not necessarily be designated as historic sites or heritage properties. It is important, however, to state again that no residential school has received federal designation and only one, provincial designation (mechanisms of federal designation will be discussed in greater detail later this chapter). This seems to be an outcome of the same heritage conditions mentioned before: that these properties—by virtue of their raw and contested state—exist at the margin of the complex of places perceived to be of national, regional, or local importance.

What, then, comprises such mnemonic blind spots? Further, what possible unsettling outcomes might the difficult heritage of the IRS visit upon government agencies responsible for managing representations of social memory? I will begin to consider these questions in relation to St Eugene Indian Residential School—now known as St Eugene Golf Resort & Casino—a high-profile, adaptive reuse project located near the St Mary’s reserve in the ancestral territory of the Ktunaxa Nation outside of Cranbrook, BC. (fig. 4.1).

The reasons for the relative fame and, at times, notoriety of St Eugene spring from a number of divisive and obfuscating issues. St Eugene Resort is obviously an exceptional instance of repurposing an Indian Residential School; indeed, the resort’s promotional website, operated by the Ktunaxa Nation, describes the renovated site as “the only project in Canada where a First Nation decided to turn the icon of an often sad period of its history into

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<sup>47</sup> The official court website detailing the Indian Residential School Settlement can be accessed here: “Indian Residential Schools Settlement - Official Court Website,” <http://www.residentialschoolsettlement.ca/English.html> (accessed 2/16/2011, 2011).

<sup>48</sup> The Commemoration Initiative can be accessed here: “Commemoration Initiative,” <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ai/rqpi/rcomm/index-eng.asp> (accessed 2/16/2011, 2011).

a powerful economic engine by restoring an old Indian Residential school into an international destination resort”.<sup>49</sup> The luxury resort, golf course, and casino opened in 2003, after undergoing extensive renovations to the derelict building and the surrounding property.<sup>50</sup> The \$40 million project has received federal funding, in excess of \$3 million dollars, and in some rather sanguine projections is expected to generate \$13-\$15,000,000 a year in revenue for a consortium of bands across the country. After entering bankruptcy protection in December 2003, the Ktuxaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Council (KKTC) secured investments from two other First Nations to stay afloat, the Samson Cree in Alberta and the Mnjikaning in Ontario.<sup>51</sup>

In 1996, the KKTC sought to designate the school first as a site of national architectural significance and then national historic significance, under the guidelines specified by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC).<sup>52</sup> They did so in the belief that designation would help attract outside investment and also to receive government funding from the National Historic Sites of Canada Cost-Sharing Program.<sup>53</sup> This federally funded program disburses monies through Parks Canada to not-for-profit organizations, Indigenous groups, and provincial or municipal governments to, among other things, preserve the commemorative integrity of a site.<sup>54</sup> Eventually the Board rejected the Ktunaxa application for three reasons. First, the developers intended to alter the site too

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<sup>49</sup> St. Eugene - Heritage: “ <http://www.steugene.ca/resort/interpretive-centre/heritage> (accessed 11/30/2010, 2010).

<sup>50</sup> See Sophie Pierre, 39-48.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>52</sup> HSMBC policy for designating schools can be found here: “Parks Canada - Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada - the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada,” <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/clmhc-hsmbc/index.aspx#schools> (accessed 2/16/2011, 2011).

<sup>53</sup> Dana Johnson, “Issue Analysis: St Eugene Indian Residential School, Cranbrook, British Columbia,” (Gatineau, QC: Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, 1996), 575.

<sup>54</sup> The particulars of Parks Canada’s National Historic Sites of Canada Cost-Sharing Program can be accessed here: “Parks Canada - Parks Canada’s National Historic Sites Cost-Sharing Program,” [http://www.pc.gc.ca/progs/lhn-nhs/ppf-csp/index\\_e.asp](http://www.pc.gc.ca/progs/lhn-nhs/ppf-csp/index_e.asp) (accessed 2/16/2011, 2011).

radically; second, the Board appeared leery of commemorating a place that posed too many possible embarrassments for government; and third, the site did not satisfy any of the other criteria established in 1988 by the Board to be declared a “school of national significance”.

The first reason stated above for rejecting the Ktunaxa application—loss of commemorative integrity—cannot reasonably be contested, as the plans for redevelopment of St Eugene and subsequent construction came at a significant cost to its mnemonic program.<sup>55</sup> Today, very little of the original structure remains intact. Notable exceptions include the entrance gate to the grounds and the beam work and rosette window inside the old chapel, now the “Chief David Meeting Room” (fig. 4.2). Ironically, the exclusion of this site from the register of national historic sites may have been beneficial in terms of attracting investment and sustaining a viable business. Without the official plaque and gravitas that attends such designation, the relationship between the luxury resort and its deeply troubled past remains less than obvious.

To be fair—and to digress slightly—an interpretive centre does operate in the basement of the resort for the purpose of informing guests of Ktunaxa history and the intergenerational impact of the residential school. Staff were happy to screen for me a profoundly disturbing documentary, *Survivors of the Red Brick School* (2004), chronicling the abuse of members of the Baptiste family at St Eugene. The interpretive centre, however, received few guests during my various visits there, an outcome not helped by its relegation to the resort’s basement. Moreover, the centre’s modest confines do not allow for the display of full-sized artefacts, including a sturgeon-nosed canoe waiting to be repatriated from the

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<sup>55</sup> Significantly the initial erosion of the building’s commemorative integrity happened in 1973, when BC’s provincial government removed much of the interior fittings in anticipation of converting the school into a psychiatric institution, a plan eventually abandoned. See: “St. Eugene - Heritage,” <http://www.steugene.ca/resort/interpretive-centre/heritage> (accessed 2/16/2011, 2011).

museum at Fort Steele. Indeed, it was clear to me that many of the guests at the resort had either little awareness of, or interest in, the building's history or in the larger questions of social memory implicated at the site.<sup>56</sup> The Ktunaxa have applied for two million dollars in federal funding to design and build a museum in what once was the school barn (now the golf course's pro shop), and it is hoped by some Ktunaxa staff that the inclusion of the museum will draw sufficient attention to a history that is often overlooked and downplayed.

The second cause for refusal stemmed from a sense of INAC caution and reticence. Not only were revelations of abuse at the schools continuing to surface, but also it remained unclear how the impending report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples would characterize the history and social memory of the IRS. Indeed the HSMBC Issue Analysis report makes clear the care the Board took to avoid controversy under advisement of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (INAC). The report states that:

INAC officials strongly urged that any initiatives regarding the possible commemoration of Aboriginal residential schools be delayed until the research studies and report of the RCAP [Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples] have been released to the public, as official contact on this issue at this point in time could be misconstrued as forming part of the federal government's response to the royal commission.<sup>57</sup>

It is hardly surprising that, in part, the decision for the denial of the Ktunaxa application rests on a move of discretion and caution, of interdepartmental cooperation to avoid controversy.

But what of the third reason?

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<sup>56</sup> This I can personally attest to, as my parents have dined at the resort and were surprised when I informed them of its previous use.

<sup>57</sup> Dana Johnson, "Issue Analysis", 577.

The third explanation offered by the HSMBC for denying the Ktunaxa application—St Eugene does not possess requisite historic significance—does raise interesting questions about the criteria for determining such significance. Only one standard listed by the Board, that of a school’s contribution to “important and innovative educational practices”, presents possible grounds for designation.<sup>58</sup> While it could be contended that the educational practices employed at St Eugene were “important” or even “innovative”, this is an argument, for obvious reasons (the spectre of child abuse), that few would relish making. The revelations of such abuses constitute what Alexander Wilde has called an “irruption of memory”, public events that break in upon the national consciousness, unbidden and often suddenly, to evoke a political past that is still present in the lived experience.<sup>59</sup> Taken this way, the incapacity to accommodate such painful histories issues from a policy shortfall, from a structural deficit. Paul Ricoeur notes that in such irruptive moments an uncanny past may intrude not as “the object of labour”, but as an “absence without a presence”.<sup>60</sup>

Interestingly, as this example suggests, commemorative practices are defined as much by those sites and clusters of social memory that they refuse as those that they accommodate. As such, the failure to recognize St Eugene as a site of national historical significance does not suggest mere suppression of a difficult past. Rather omissions, lacunae, and silences mark out the edges of zones of inarticulation, of muteness, of ineffability, of the failure of representation to describe the traumatic. Moreover, the sets of discursive exclusions that govern such erasures are, at the same time, those that allow for the appearance of positive

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<sup>58</sup> Significantly, the 1988 guidelines drafted by the HSMBC precede the eventual awareness of mass social trauma inflicted at many of these institutions.

<sup>59</sup> Alexander Wilde, “Irruptions of Memory: Expressive Politics in Chile’s Transition to Democracy,” in *Genocide, Collective Violence, and Popular Memory: The Politics of Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. David E. Lorey and William H. Beezley (Wilmington, Del: SR Books, 2002), 1-30.

<sup>60</sup> Paul Ricoeur, qtd. in Elizabeth Jelin, Judy Rein, and Marcial Godoy-Anatívia, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 163.

forms rendered by various enshrined values. Denis Byrne argues that “the selectivity of heritage discourse can serve to bury or efface certain places at the same time as it reveals and celebrates certain others”.<sup>61</sup> In other words, such omissions are not relegated outside of systems that assign historic value; rather, they are included into a dismissed category, a function that establishes the conditions for figuring cherished places.

In practical terms, this process explains how the incapacity to designate the form of the Indian Residential School, one of undeniable historic significance, allows for the designation of other historically significant forms, each in their own way instantiating and sustaining the production of consonant, often patriotic, forms of social commemoration or heritage. As Judith Butler notes, effacement can be the effect of occlusion, as was the case when the Bush Administration censored war footage from Iraq. However, effacement can also be effected by representation itself, where the imagistic frame is crowded solely with that which can be represented, to the exclusion of any struggle with the unrepresentability of traumatic realities. She concludes that “reality is not conveyed by what is represented within the image, but through the challenge to representation that reality delivers”.<sup>62</sup> As such, the work of “critical images”, as mentioned before, is both to self-consciously fail in representing reality and to demonstrate this failure.

Another compelling and complex instance of this dialectic—the appearance of celebrated sites of national memory predicated on the deletion of difficult heritage—is evident at the Canadian Tribute to Human Rights, a monument built in 1989 and designed by the Canadian artist Melvin Charney (figs. 4.3 and 4.4). Charney’s monument was the brainchild of George Wilkes, a World War II veteran who realized, after the imposition of

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<sup>61</sup> Denis Byrne, “A Critique of Unfeeling Heritage,” in *Intangible Heritage*, ed. Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), 230.

<sup>62</sup> Butler, 146.

martial law by Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau in 1970 to fight radical separatists Front de libération du Québec, the fragility of human rights worldwide, even in Canada.<sup>63</sup> In 1985, at the dedication ceremony for the monument, Secretary Of State Walter McLean noted that the Tribute “will be a visual presentation of Canada’s commitment to rights and freedom ... [and] it will emphasize by its presence that rights are part of the day-to-day life of Canadians”.<sup>64</sup>

The three-story structure made of reinforced concrete and granite sits at the south end of the National Capital Ceremonial Route on Elgin Street, forming a north-south axis with the National War Memorial six hundred meters away in Confederation Square. The Tribute is comprised of a frontal arch whose form alludes directly to the triumphal arch of the National War Memorial, suggesting the Biblical passage “they shall beat their swords into ploughshares”.<sup>65</sup> The façade of the archway bears an inscription of the opening sentence of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948): “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” (fig. 4.5). The Tribute’s arch opens into a processional path leading through the interior of the monument, supported by a row of anthropomorphic columns. The walls of this passage are covered with plaques inscribed with keywords taken from the Universal Declaration—equality, dignity, rights—written in Braille, English, French, and forty-seven Indigenous languages (fig. 4.6). Notable human-rights luminaries who participated in the initial planning in celebration of the Tribute include Polish Solidarity leader Lech Walesa, Nobel Prize winner Andrei Sakharov, and the Dalai Lama.

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<sup>63</sup> Ron Eade, “Just Struggle: Rights Worker Driving Force behind Monument”, *Ottawa Citizen*, section C1, May 16, 1989.

<sup>64</sup> Qtd. in “Notes for an Address by Secretary Of State the Hon. William Maclean”, Canadian Center for Architecture (CCA) Archive, vertical file, 94-A435.

<sup>65</sup> Melvin Charney, *The Canadian Tribute to Human Rights* (Ottawa: Canadian Tribute to Human Rights, 1990), 9.



Indeed the Dalai Lama unveiled the monument in 1990—this moment helps instantiate the dialectic between appearance and erasure—during the Kanehsatake/Oka Crisis. Moreover, in addition to this ironic celebration of human rights coinciding with a state of exception in Québec, articulating the tenets of the Declaration in forty-seven Indigenous languages directs public attention away from the difficult heritage of the IRS. After all, these institutions, designed, built and funded by the federal government of Canada, purposefully sought to eradicate Indigenous language, the ontological foundation of Indigeneity. Though George Wilkes originally sought to produce a space of vigilance, in which citizens and leaders would resolve to protect human rights in Canada and around the world, the Tribute provides no indication of Canada’s own human rights abuses against (among others) the Japanese, Chinese, Ukrainians, Sikhs, Italians, and Indigenous peoples. The absence of acknowledgment of the violation of human rights in precisely the same space that celebrates Canada’s protection of human rights—and, by association, Canada’s historic role in two world wars—demonstrates how consonant forms of national memory come into being through the erasure of difficult pasts.

What possible benefit, then, can be derived from examining the relations between networks of valued, historic places and difficult heritage? Moreover, if this problematic inheritance is brought into extant systems of management, is it possible to avoid the most undesirable form of mnemonic sublimation, wherein the burden of a troubled past is transformed into a barely perceptible—or worse—palatable memory? It is contended here this relation between historically valued pasts and difficult pasts (representation/ occlusion) finds its corollary in the relation between beauty (heritage possessing “aesthetic value”) and its opposite, sublimity. Significantly, just as those heritage values labelled historical seem

both to manifest a past and bracket its exception (i.e. difficult heritage), so too heritage values labelled aesthetic seem to manifest beauty while masking its other, the sublime. The sublime in this sense should not be confused with the various, transcendent models of Longinus, Burke, Kant, but instead thought of as the (near)contemporary sublime of Lyotard, Lacan, and Zizek. I draw on this idea of the sublime that describes a moment of immanence wherein the contingent, the absurd, the abject, and the traumatic are manifest through encounters with everyday materiality. Unlike the object of beauty, which—on its surface—implies a unity of experience and the absence of dissonance, the contemporary sublime object indexes the limit of harmonizing theory and practice, past and present, limit and the unlimited, delineating an impossibility, an emptiness haunting the core of figuration.<sup>66</sup>

The contemporary sublime is suggested at St Eugene in the only non-commercial space at the resort, a small, active cemetery located at the side of the golf course. There rest the remains of former students, staff, and others of Ktunaxa descent (including Indian Pete, discoverer of the Moyie Mine). At the request of Ktunaxa elders, I have neither visited nor photographed the cemetery, but its marginal presence—unmarked on resort maps, lacking signage, and having restricted access—intimates a dialectic between that which can and that which cannot be presented and framed. This tension between sublimity and beauty is especially taut in this spectacular setting, in light of planned forensic investigations at this and other IRS graveyards by a research group with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, owing to allegations of children interred in unmarked graves. There is a sense in which this dialectic of articulation and occlusion serves the interests of Indigenous

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<sup>66</sup> Beauty, of course, has served and continues to serve the political interests of ruling elites, a state of affairs prompting Frederic Jameson to exclaim that the “underside of culture is blood, torture, death, and terror”. See: Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durhaj: Duke University Press, 1991), 5. For a fuller explication of the contemporary sublime, see: Slavoj Zizek, *The Art of the Ridiculous Sublime: On David Lynch’s Lost Highway* (Seattle: University of Washington, 2000), 48.

stakeholders, reluctant to expose to tourists the lurking horror of mass social trauma, an abject absence that representation can never fill.

A further instance of tension—between authorized heritage values (aesthetic, historic, scientific, educational) and those sites and buildings whose absences mark the threshold of sublimity—appears in the interest in preserving and designating Indian mission churches, while nearby IRS remain undesignated and, in some instances, unmarked. Currently, in the shadow of the unsuccessful attempt to designate St Eugene IRS, the Ktunaxa are rallying to restore St Eugene Mission Church, the wooden Gothic Revival structure built in 1897 by Father Coccola (fig. 4.7). This restoration appears better positioned to receive some funding from Heritage Canada, as well as consideration from other heritage agencies, owing to the previous trend to value such places.<sup>67</sup> It seems reasonable to suggest that the Ktunaxa, more savvy after the failed application for St Eugene, seek to play the heritage game for their advantage.

A number of mission churches built to serve Indigenous populations have already received designation as heritage properties or national historic sites. The values listed in heritage assessments for such mission churches highlight aesthetic and architectural details, as well as cursory historical information about missionary activity. For example, the heritage evaluation for St Bernard Mission (1873) in Grouard, Alberta—designated in 1977 by the province of Alberta as a provincial historical resource—lists several significant architectural features, such as a tall belfry, arches with wooden keystones, pattern of fenestration, as well as its stock of original artworks.<sup>68</sup> Interestingly, what receives the briefest mention is the late

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<sup>67</sup> See: “ChurchRestoration.Pdf (application/pdf Object) ,” <http://www.ktunaxa.org/news/documents/ChurchRestoration.pdf> (accessed 2/16/2011, 2011).

<sup>68</sup> Designed by architect Augustin Dumas.

1890s construction of a boarding school on the property for Indigenous children.<sup>69</sup> Granted, at the time of designation in 1977, little was known among non-Indigenous Canadians about the impact of the IRS. Yet, as this example demonstrates, there is a need to rethink heritage discourse in such places, owing to recent (and continuing) irruptions of memory that have upset the reception of narratives of colonial missionary activity, especially those associated with an IRS. The case of designating churches—of any denomination that operated an IRS—is especially instructive, as these structures were crucial to the administrative apparatus that initiated and maintained the IRS, though today, all vestiges of this network of authority are masked by the veil of aesthetic and historical representations.

### **Paving a Difficult Way: Heritage and St Paul's IRS**

St Paul's Roman Catholic Church in North Vancouver demonstrates a similar form of mnemonic sublimation. The church, built in the Gothic Revival style, sits on reserve land (Mission Indian Reserve No. 6) in an inconspicuous yet central precinct. The original chapel was constructed in the mid-1860s, enlarged in 1884, and in 1909, twin spires were added (fig.4.8). After an extensive structural and decorative restoration—including the syncretic incorporation of Coast Salish spiritual motifs into the programme of the building's ritual spaces—St Paul's was designated in 1980 as a National Historic Site (fig. 4.9). A description of St Paul's penned by OMI priest Thomas Lascelles after the renovations indicates the degree to which this humble structure was regarded as an aesthetic object, both by members of the OMI and by some of the Squamish Nation:

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<sup>69</sup> See: "HistoricPlaces.Ca - HistoricPlaces.Ca," <http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=9089&pid=0> (accessed 2/16/2011, 2011).; for an extensive list of Indigenous mission churches, see: "HistoricPlaces.Ca - Search Results," <http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/results-resultats.aspx?m=2&Keyword='mission+churches'> (accessed 2/16/2011, 2011).

Like the patriarch it stands serenely on the North Shore of Burrard Inlet. Loftily spires stretch up to the snowcapped peaks. Immune to a hundred winters it has weathered sun and wind and rain in the heart of the Squamish village. Decades of believers have fashioned more than a landmark, or a monument of national stature. St Paul's, for many villagers, has become a vital part of their lives. Oblate missionaries were welcomed by Squamish elders to this area before Vancouver yet existed. Soon converts were baptized and married and buried here, then their children and descendants in turn. This site has become holy ground, a meeting place with the Great Spirit.<sup>70</sup>

As is typical to the designation of national historic sites, a commemorative plaque was installed at St Paul's Church. Yet this plaque does not provide any information about the sister organization, St Paul's Indian School (1899) (fig. 4.10). Built further up the mountain slope on land owned by the OMI, St Paul's IRS operated under the supervision of the parish and the Sisters of the Child Jesus from 1899 to 1959, when it was demolished to make room for the extant St Thomas Aquinas High School.<sup>71</sup> Significantly, St Paul's Indian School has been named in the Indian Residential Schools Settlement (2007), along with 131 others across Canada, to order recompense for Indigenous children who boarded there.<sup>72</sup>

At present, the site that housed the IRS conveys nothing of its operation—school authorities at St Thomas Aquinas believe its foundations lie buried beneath the school's

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<sup>70</sup> Thomas A. Lascelles, Oblates of Mary Immaculate, and St. Paul's Vice Province, *Mission on the Inlet: St. Paul's Indian Catholic Church, North Vancouver, B.C., 1863-1984* (Vancouver: St. Paul's Province, Order of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, 1984), 1.

<sup>71</sup> *The B.C. Catholic*, August 13, 1959. Vol XXVIII, No. 40. Pg 1.

<sup>72</sup> The total number of IRS is a matter of debate, and various Indigenous communities around the country continue to struggle to have local schools formally recognized as such, without which they are entitled neither to apology nor compensation.

parking lot—nor is any mention of the school found at the nearby church site, either upon Parks Canada plaques or in heritage literature. To their credit, administrators at St Thomas Aquinas have included a section on IRS history in social studies classes. Yet, a profound disjunction exists between the celebrated recuperation of suppressed culture at St Paul’s Roman Catholic Church and the uncanny erasure of the social memory and material vestiges of St Paul’s Indian School. What is made plain by this example is the tendency for official historic places to promote ideas in keeping with a positive national image, in this case official policies of multiculturalism and the enduring legacy of Christianity in Indigenous communities. Again, this is not to deny the value of Christian teaching and worship to Indigenous peoples (a point made earlier) but rather to illustrate the process of making certain historical places visible by effacing other more difficult sorts of heritage. Tellingly, under the heading “related places”, the heritage assessment of St Paul’s Roman Catholic Church reads “n/a”.<sup>73</sup>

Disclosing the contours of difficult heritage, thus, requires paying careful attention to the tensions between forms of mnemonic presence and absence, framing and suppressing, value and abjection. Significantly, this is also the way in which beauty is defined by the sublime and the reverse. Moreover, as Jean-Luc Nancy argues, this correlation between beauty and sublimity prevents beauty from slipping into mere agreeability, preserving its place in a gravitational field with the sublime, the ugly, the disagreeable.<sup>74</sup> Applying the same logic to the question of historical value and difficult heritage, the inexplicable, indescribable core of social life that cannot be rendered in positive form by commemoration,

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<sup>73</sup> See: “HistoricPlaces.Ca - St Paul’s,” <http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=12683&pid=0> (accessed 2/16/2011, 2011).

<sup>74</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, “The Sublime Offering,” in *Of the Sublime: Presence in Question*, ed. Jean-François Courtine (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 25-54.

becomes discernible through a process of negation, through a “labour of the negative”—a dialectic that bars the historical object from devolving into consumable entertainment. Clearly, there are profound political implications to both aesthetic and historical values, for if either are cleaved from their respective, disruptive other (the sublime or the difficult), they may function merely to sustain the status quo, while diverting attention away from unreconciled pasts and presents.

This question of difficult heritage has received some attention in Canada and likely will continue to do so with a growing sense of the need to preserve sites that could tarnish the nation’s image. For example in 2004, Parks Canada’s “Healing Broken Connections” initiative was launched to restore relations with members of the Kluane, Aishihik, and Champagne First Nations who had been prohibited from hunting in traditional territories after creation of the Kluane Game Sanctuary (since 1974, the Kluane National Park and Reserve of Canada).<sup>75</sup> Representatives from each First Nation have been invited to participate in a number of cultural camps and traditional knowledge workshops held in the park. Moreover, to make clear the effaced history and presence of Indigenous people in the region, visitors to the park have access to materials that “communicate the history and values of the land ... through stories of the people, the land, and the trails.”<sup>76</sup> In a similar vein, Parks Canada partnered in 2001 with the Carry the Kettle and Nakoda First Nations to initiate commemoration of the 1873 Cypress Hills Massacre, a history previously overlooked by the HSMBC.<sup>77</sup> Earlier commemoration at the site focused instead on the development of nearby Fort Walsh, an RCMP stronghold built as a consequence of the slaughter of twenty-three

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<sup>75</sup> “Parks Canada Agency, Words to Action,” [http://www.pc.gc.ca/docs/pc/rpts/trm-mrt/2008/wta-dpa2008\\_e.pdf](http://www.pc.gc.ca/docs/pc/rpts/trm-mrt/2008/wta-dpa2008_e.pdf).

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 30.

Nakoda by marauding Americans and Métis. In 2006, the HSMBC amended this oversight designating Cypress Hills as a national historic site.

The issue of addressing difficult subjects was also taken up by the Canadian War Museum, which in 2008 hosted a conference that asked “Is Difficult Important?” The conference sought to investigate how:

Canadian museums and cultural agencies can deal with contested and challenging subjects and methodologies while fulfilling their mandates and serving their attentive publics. The conference will build upon existing scholarly and professional investigations of difficult subject matters to explore the development of best practices in a Canadian context. It will thereby address broader critical issues, including the role of cultural institutions in civil society, community life, and the creation of knowledge.<sup>78</sup>

More pointedly, the question was asked if “Canadian institutions are doing this well or, indeed, at all?” This last self-reflexive query seems most apt when considering the problem of the difficult patrimony of the IRS. The legacy of this national network of carceral spaces operated for over a century, affecting the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. It is not sensationalistic to suggest that this past dwarfs the injustices at Kluane or Fire Hills. Clearly restoring some sort of commemorative balance—between authorized heritage discourse, difficult remembrance, and forgetting—in these places will require concerted efforts for many years from members of Indigenous communities, government agencies, NGOs, and

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<sup>78</sup> See the conference invitation here: “WarMuseum.Ca - Canadian War Museum Hosts Conference: Is Difficult Important?” <http://www.civilization.ca/cwm/media/press-releases/2009/canadian-war-museum-hosts-conference-is-difficult-important-the-canadian-museum-and-the-search-for-social-value> (accessed 2/16/2011, 2011).



concerned citizens. But how to begin negotiating such a balance? Indeed at this time is balance possible?

### **A Thorny Mission of Remembrance**

The development of a quasi-private heritage park on the grounds of St Mary's Indian Residential School in Mission, British Columbia, presents another apt case to consider the complexities of commemorating Indian Residential Schools. In the early 1980s, in the midst of a crushing recession, the Mission Heritage Association (MHA)—a group of local, non-Indigenous business people and concerned citizens—believed that the development of a heritage attraction would bolster sagging civic pride in the region.<sup>79</sup> Failure to secure and restore the Sampson V, the last steam-driven stern-wheeler boat operated by the federal government on the Fraser River, prompted the fledgling Association to turn its attention to St Mary's—a logical choice owing to its historical significance. Not only was St Mary's the site of a prominent, 19th century mission founded by the OMI, but it also was one of the first colonial settlements established in the Fraser Valley.<sup>80</sup>

In 1861 a young, French theologian, Father Leon Fouquet, initiated St Mary's mission in the territory of the Stó:lō Nation, some sixty kilometres upstream of the capital at New Westminster.<sup>81</sup> A boarding school for boys was constructed at the mission in 1863, and in 1867 a similar structure was built to house girls. In 1883-1884 these buildings were demolished and rebuilt atop a bluff overlooking the Fraser River, to allow for laying rail line along the river's edge. These new, largely identical accommodations were designed without

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<sup>79</sup> For a detailed account of the formation of the Mission Heritage Association see Antonson, Brian, 1990, "The Mission Heritage Association: Catalyst for a Community," *The Philanthropist*, vol. 9, no. 4, p. 48-54.

<sup>80</sup> Indeed this same pattern repeated itself at many of the sites of residential schools, including St Eugene, wherein a Christian mission preceded schools (usually day schools), which would in some cases be supplanted or supplemented by an industrial school, and later residential schools.

<sup>81</sup> Lascelles, 69. For a general history of the missionary activities of the OMI in western Canada, see Huel.

input from the Department of Indian Affairs, though federal funding was provided for their operation<sup>82</sup> (fig. 4.11). By the early 1900s, the site spanned over 300 acres on which were situated a series of outbuildings—a church, sawmill, laundry, classrooms, barns, laundry facilities, and others.<sup>83</sup> (fig. 4.12).

Interestingly the grounds of the school had long been a major pilgrimage site for Indigenous and settlers. The construction of the province's first Marian shrine in 1892 attracted as many as seven thousand pilgrims each Easter.<sup>84</sup> An annual Passion Play performed by a cast of Indigenous performers drew audiences from far afield to witness an elaborate, ceremonial reenactment of Christ's crucifixion.<sup>85</sup> At other times of year, Stó:lō would be married, baptized, and confirmed at the shrine (fig. 4.13). Gradually the shrine fell into disrepair, and, though renovated in 1954, it was demolished in 1965 along with all other buildings on the site. Four years prior a new educational facility had been built nearby, providing, in place of the aging institutional complex, improved accommodation and teaching facilities. This history of Indigenous Christianity at this site adds a further layer of difficulty: how to represent this past without minimizing (or avoiding altogether) the hurt brought by missionization, while, at the same time, recognizing the enduring value of religious practice to many Stó:lō.

One of the first proposals for the renovation of the historic mission recommended the reconstruction of the Marian Shrine. In addition, to effect civic engagement with the region's past, the MHA planned to construct an interpretive center and to reconstruct some of the demolished buildings on their original foundations. These rebuilt structures would serve new

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<sup>82</sup> Milloy: 56.

<sup>83</sup> Lascelles: 69.

<sup>84</sup> See Mission Heritage Association website: "Fraser Valley Heritage Park - Grotto," <http://www.heritagepark-mission.ca/grotto.html> (accessed 2/16/2011, 2011).

<sup>85</sup> Glavin, 83.

purposes, including a heritage library, a theatre, galleries, while surrounding lands would be landscaped to aid viewing of pleasing river vistas.<sup>86</sup> Significantly, the Association originally envisioned re-creating a vast historical tableau for visitors. The site, now the Fraser Valley Heritage Park, was meant to provide

a centre for the study of the powerful Fraser that flowed at their feet; a centre for learning and teaching and celebrating the town's heritage; a centre for the cultural, visual, performing arts and sciences; centre that would honour the traditions of ecclesiastical learning and solitude; a centre which would celebrate the history of the land and the river—a history some 12,000 years long.<sup>87</sup>

As is often the case with such grand schemes, most of its aims remained unrealized, though significantly, the Marian Shrine was rebuilt (fig. 4.14). In addition, the Memorial Garden and Heritage Garden were planted, marking respectively former staff residences and the site of a chapel burned in 1930.<sup>88</sup> Also the Association generated funding for the construction of Norma Kenney House (eating facilities named after the founder of the MHA), a bell tower that houses the original school bell, a bandstand that hosts musical performances and ceremonies, and the Flag Plaza, where (for a fee) members of the public may affix a commemorative plaque for whomever they wish.

Of special interest here in this formative schema is the presumption of the possibility of historical continuity, especially difficult now in the shadow of the IRS. As has been granted, in 1979 at the time of its formation members of the MHA would have had little idea

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<sup>86</sup> Antonson: 50.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>88</sup> A current map of the grounds can be accessed on the MHA website: "Fraser Valley Heritage Park- Map," <http://www.heritagepark-mission.ca/stmary-map.html> (accessed 2/16/2011, 2011).

of the more problematic aspects of this education system, so folding this institutional history into a 12,000 year continuum would not have seemed especially troubling. However, much has changed since the early 1980s about how we perceive the history of the IRS. It would be inconceivable to undertake such a project today. Yet despite this new awareness and, more pointedly, despite the Supreme Court's decision that implicated St Mary's in long-term systematic abuse of Indigenous children, the site bears no substantive programmatic change since its refiguring in the 1980s.

One oblique mention of this unsettling history is made on the "Indian Residential School Memorial", a diminutive sign located on a post at the Stó:lō Nation Pavilion (fig. 4.15). It simply states that "this memorial is in recognition of those aboriginal children who attended St Mary's" (fig. 4.16). Built by members of the Stó:lō Nation, in cooperation with the Mission Indian Friendship Centre Society, this pavilion/memorial (also known as the Totem Picnic area) instantiates the vagaries of representing such difficult heritage. Certain Christian survivors from the Stó:lō Nation, as outlined in Terry Glavin's book *Amongst God's Own: The Enduring Legacy of St Mary's Mission*, testify to the benefits gained from attending this institution. Others in this text relate contrary, traumatic experiences. Owing to such equivocal testimony, Glavin cautions against reaching easy conclusions about St Mary's legacy. As he poignantly states, "It was an evil place. It was a beautiful place".<sup>89</sup> Other critics are less certain that the system's legacy should be as nuanced. For example Stó:lō administrator and political activist Ernie Crey relates his more certain conclusions of his family's encounter with Indian education at St Mary's and elsewhere

My grandparents were proud, independent people who had lived through the deliberate dismantling of Stó:lō culture by priests who probed and pried into

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<sup>89</sup> 11.

every corner of our lives. I had seen my father's spirit dimmed by the residential school where his culture was choked out of him, so that all his life he held his Halq'emeylem language and spiritual knowledge in check, depriving us, his children, of our most precious birthright".<sup>90</sup>

To be clear, this is not an argument favouring an unequivocal position on this history. On the contrary, even the question of how nuanced historical interpretation should be, as this example shows, is itself complex and nuanced. The point is, as this instance also reveals, that the muted representation of social trauma at St Mary's articulates a lack of fraught contention—over what these pasts mean to whom. In the wake of September 11, 2001, James Young has argued that it remains crucial for commemoration to convey

a worldview that allows for competing, even conflicting agendas—and make this too part of our process. Rather than fretting about the appearance of disunity (all memorial processes are exercises in disunity, even as they strive to unify memory), we should make questions in the public debate itself part of our memory work... for just as memory is a negotiation between past and present, it is also an ongoing negotiation among all the groups of people whose lives were affected by this event and whose lives will be shaped by what is built there.<sup>91</sup>

From a certain perspective the Fraser Valley Heritage Park could be regarded as a success in that it realized the early vision of its founders. Albeit in a more modest form than originally planned, the site has become the civic center originally conceived by the MHA. Throughout the year music festivals, outdoor theatre, auto shows, and even Canada Day

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<sup>90</sup> Ernie Crey, "The Perpetual Stranger: Four Generations in My Stó:Lo Family," in Fournier, 20.

<sup>91</sup> James Young, "Remembering Life with Life: The New World Trade Center," in *Trauma at Home: After 9/11*, ed. Judith Greenberg (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 216.

celebrations are held on the grounds of the demolished institution. Moreover, the annual pilgrimage continues to meet at the Marian Shrine. Yet alongside this largely unexamined—and at times kitschy—repurposing, alongside this unmarked carceral past, flows a tacit apologist message. Without articulating a struggle to reckon with difficult colonial histories, this space conveys an image of an untroubled past, free from dissonance and the spectre of intergenerational trauma. The profoundly conflicted responses to St Mary’s recorded by Glavin (and elsewhere) suggest the need to admit contrary perspectives, so that commemorative practices found at former IRS are duly complicated and deeply introspective. In a recent speech to the Faculty of Law at the University of Toronto, Justice Murray Sinclair, chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, reminded his audience that “it took 150 years to reach this point in time. It will take many generations to restore relationships and balance”.<sup>92</sup> In many places across this country, we are confronted by the need to do something with the material detritus of this troubling past, yet as Justice Sinclair points out, easy moves to harmonize and reconcile this difficult history should be avoided, however an uncomfortable and anxious a process that is.

### **St Michael’s IRS: A Trying Rescue**

Efforts by the ‘Namgis First Nation in Alert Bay to preserve St Michael’s Indian Residential School reveal further complexities in commemorating and preserving sites of difficult heritage (fig. 4.17). The late Andrea Sanborn, formerly the executive director of the U’mista Cultural Society, spearheaded the latest project to save this structure. She unsuccessfully sought help from all levels of government and other interested parties to convert the school into a multi-purpose public institution that would likely have included a museum and band

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<sup>92</sup> The full address can be heard here: “University of Toronto - Faculty of Law,” [http://www.law.utoronto.ca/visitors\\_content.asp?itempath=5/5/0/0/0&specNews=766&cType=NewsEvents](http://www.law.utoronto.ca/visitors_content.asp?itempath=5/5/0/0/0&specNews=766&cType=NewsEvents) (accessed 2/17/2011, 2011).

offices. This was another in a series of ill-fated initiatives to keep the building operational, coming on the heels of a frustrated bid to convert the school into an Indigenous language centre.

Sanborn's resolve to preserve St Michael's as a site of memory crystallized during a presentation on the history of the IRS at a 2008 UNESCO conference in Athens. In a personal conversation, she shared with me her surprise at the general reaction of the assembly, most expressing disbelief that Canada could be ever implicated in such a gross violation of human rights. For Sanborn and others in the 'Namgis nation, the retention of St Michael's would have provided a crucial, material reminder of the coordinated effort on the part of government and various churches to assimilate (and then segregate) Indigenous communities—not only in Alert Bay but across the entire nation.

For a number of reasons the fate of this notorious institution still hangs in the balance. With each foiled plan and each passing year, the 'Namgis must spend approximately sixty thousand dollars to heat, illuminate, patrol, and clean the vacated school. Then there is the prohibitive cost to renovate, which hovers between fifteen and twenty million dollars. Though the foundation remains intact, the building needs extensive structural repair, as well as the removal of asbestos and other toxic building materials. Further, the social and historical value that these institutions hold remains contested within the Indigenous populations of the region, as some would prefer to remove all material reminders of the residential schools. The 'Namgis are but one of seventeen communities that belong to the Kwakwaka'wakw Nation. Significantly most 'Namgis children did not attend St Michael's,

whereas children from those communities that did send children there, such as the Kwagu<sup>1</sup>, would prefer to have the school demolished.<sup>93</sup>

The move by members of the ‘Namgis to preserve and commemorate St Michael’s is informed by an aspect of liberal humanist thought—to memorialize painful pasts is to inoculate the future against convulsive reoccurrence. Critiques of this stance are neither new nor few. Andreas Huyssen describes the global proliferation of memorial structures as a “hypertrophy of memory,” akin to an abnormal and sudden growth of unneeded tissue.<sup>94</sup> Still others have analyzed the ways in which suffering becomes a commodity consumed by the touristic gaze.<sup>95</sup> John Torpey has even suggested that contemporary fixation with social memory indicate the loss of common, progressive goals associated with liberal, democratic states.<sup>96</sup> While each of these critiques adds valuable insight, there is also peril at the opposite extreme, namely in complete oblivion. Bernard Henri Lévy has noted with shock the extent to which the memory of the disappeared in Darfur does not exist, even in the minds of survivors.<sup>97</sup> The antipode of hypertrophic memory, it seems, is an utter, dehumanized void, suggesting that some degree of memorialization is needed in a just society.

At the moment it is unclear if sufficient funds will be raised in the future to preserve this site of difficult heritage; to date, funding has been unsuccessfully sought from all levels of government, private interests, and even foreign organizations. What also remains unclear is how to effect such a costly venture without a commercially viable tourist business, which

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<sup>93</sup> Chief Robert Joseph, personal interview: 6 February 2009.

<sup>94</sup> Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 177.

<sup>95</sup> Lennon; Dana A. Heller, *The Selling of 9/11: How a National Tragedy Became a Commodity*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 296.; Strange and Kempa, *Shades of Dark Tourism: Alcatraz and Robben Island*, 386-405

<sup>96</sup> John C. Torpey, *Making Whole what has been Smashed: On Reparation Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 214.

<sup>97</sup> Bernard Henri Levy, 2008, “Genocide and the Games,” *The Georgia Straight*, August 7-14, 35.



effaces, as at St Eugene, most historical traces of the school. The majority of residential schools have been demolished, and those that do remain standing have been renovated. St Michael's is no exception, yet some features remain intact and warrant consideration. For example, the basement holds a number of appliances used for food preparation that could be preserved for display. Also, certain architectural features remain undisturbed and could convey visceral aspects of the IRS experience for visitors. A crowded row of washing sinks found in a boys' dormitory, for instance, relate the deprivations of overcrowding, as well as the threat of tubercular infection owing to close contact (fig. 4.18).

Issues of how to represent this difficult past are further complicated by the close proximity of St Michael's to the U'mista Cultural Centre, the structure housing, among other objects, the repatriated collection of world-famous masks seized and sold by Indian Agents in the 1920s.<sup>98</sup> The U'mista museum remains not only a symbol of cultural revival to the Kwakwaka'wakw Nation but also a noteworthy example of successful repatriation. The gravitas of this place adds further scrutiny and expectations on the manner in which St Michael's could possibly be restored.

It seems likely, owing to a number of socioeconomic factors, that neither St Michael's nor any other second-generation IRS will be preserved without significant alterations, such as that seen at St Eugene. This arguably could help sustain the function of existing heritage practice in Canada, typically more concerned with values enshrined in authorized heritage discourse than undertaking any self-reflexive examination. Significantly, the original logic of the IRS dictated their construction far from public view. They operated in a near-vacuum, apart not only from Settlers but also often from the communities of

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<sup>98</sup> The mask collection can be viewed here: "U'Mista Cultural Society - Alert Bay, British Columbia, Canada," <http://umista.ca/collections/collection.php> (accessed 2/17/2011, 2011).

Indigenous peoples. Not surprisingly, even in instances where the development of cities and towns has encircled these once isolated structures, most living in their vicinity know little or nothing of them. In a sense, then, refusing to spend adequate funds, denying applications for designation as heritage or national historic sites, and excluding these material remnants from educational curricula K-12 and up is to extend the foundational logic of silence and exclusion upon which these places were erected.

However, government should not be held solely accountable for enacting such a mnemonic shift. What of those belonging to Settler culture who visit such places as tourists, as celebrants, as students of heritage? What of new Canadians entrusted by Citizenship and Immigration Canada with the responsibility of “protecting Canada’s natural, cultural, and architectural heritage for future generations”<sup>99</sup> At present, understanding how to acknowledge difficult heritage of the residential school appears to be a struggle without an unequivocal resolution. Yet, I argue it is a necessary struggle if non-Indigenous Canadians are to reckon with their colonial inheritance and to better relations with neighbouring Indigenous peoples.

### **Some Indigenous Perspectives on Heritage and the IRS**

Before proceeding to the concluding section of this chapter—concerning the recent, global trend toward commemoration as a means to foster social reconciliation and, further, what this means for the difficult heritage of the IRS—I will introduce a sampling of Indigenous perspectives on commemoration and heritage preservation gathered during interviews. They are presented at this point in the chapter for the sake of clarity, as survivors reference certain IRS that by now have been discussed at length. Each interviewee responded to the following

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<sup>99</sup> The “rights and responsibilities of the Citizen” are found here: “Rights and Responsibilities of the Citizen,” [http://www.canada.com/pdf/discover\\_canada\\_eng\\_37.pdf](http://www.canada.com/pdf/discover_canada_eng_37.pdf) (accessed 2/17/2011, 2011).

question: “Do you think that former school buildings and sites should be preserved and have memorials built on site to remind all Canadians of this difficult past?” The wide variety of positions on this question, even among six respondents, suggests a Gordian knot of irksome complexity.

Musqueam elder Larry Grant believes that there should be some national network of memorials, marking each institution, providing the names of all victims, and even listing key legislation enacted to control Indigenous social life:

There should be a monument wherever the schools are. There should be a cairn and a plaque, and possibly all the names of the children who didn't come home... who didn't survive the boarding schools ... In every capital there should be a monument, much like [those for] the Unknown Soldier. In Ottawa, there should be one right beside the Unknown Soldier memorial. This is Canada's heritage, what Canada did and what Canada is capable of ... The irony of it is right there. This is absolute history as it happened. It is not romanticized. It doesn't need romanticizing.<sup>100</sup>

Grant also cautioned against the ceremonial burning of IRS—the latest instances at Sechelt and Alberni IRS—for “as soon as you burn the school down, it is gone from the history of Canada”.<sup>101</sup>

Conversely, Gerald George argues that the destruction of material reminders of the IRS benefit survivors who may still suffer psychological trauma from their encounter with such places:

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<sup>100</sup> Personal Interview: 9 Feb 2010

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

I think it is quite a trigger, and when people renew their hurts, it takes a while for some of them to recover from that. So, if the buildings weren't there, they would still have some recollection of that site, but the complete reminder would not be there.<sup>102</sup>

While George emphasizes the need for non-Indigenous Canadians to know more about the IRS, the preservation of this troubled social memory could be achieved on site by plaques or other small markers.

Discussing the fate of his former school, St Michael's IRS, Robert Joseph takes a middle position:

I think St Michael's school should have been preserved to some degree... But I don't think that it is to be. I think we should have a monument that speaks to that legacy. Failing that, I think that what we ought to do is save some grounds there after the building is demolished. And save all the bricks we can, and build a monument of some kind. And have a reconciliation garden around it that will be a center point, a focal point of the village down the road, so we can commemorate the resiliency and the courage of the people who went there.<sup>103</sup>

Joseph concludes by noting that without such commemoration, new Canadians will not be as likely to gain an understanding of this troubling history that, in some ways, has benefitted newcomers who today enjoy a more equitable society because of the suffering of those who went before.

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<sup>102</sup> Personal Interview: 9 March 2010

<sup>103</sup> Personal Interview: 25 March 2010

Adeline Brown offers the following nuanced view on the issue of commemorating the former IRS:

The residential schools are so far removed from cities that are populated by white people and people of different nationalities. Who is going to take the time to visit these places? The whole history is so complex that I think the normal Canadian would wonder what the big deal is ... they may learn a little bit from a memorial, but they won't understand the whole picture.<sup>104</sup>

Brown elaborates on this incapacity of the memorial, by pointing out that only a very small portion of the history of the IRS is made available in the media and in scholarly sources, and what is discussed is fairly mild compared to the horrific testimony that she and other support workers hear in court. Owing to this disparity, she believes that memorials will likely reinforce this ineffective communication of historical reality.

Alan Dixon thinks that certain sites should be saved, if doing so would provide substantive benefit to nearby Indigenous communities:

I don't think every school should be preserved, but I think certain ones in key situations should be preserved as symbols ... But the structures are only structures. I don't care if they are kept or removed. Of course not everybody thinks like I do. There a lot of people who see the symbolism of evil in those buildings. Personally I like what's happened at St Eugene with Sophie Pierre and her gang, that they've turned something negative into something positive.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Personal Interview: 13 April 2010

<sup>105</sup> Personal Interview: 25 March 2010

When asked about the suppression of memory at certain IRS sites, such as at St Mary's in Mission, and what could be done to raise consciousness of these places in the minds of non-Indigenous people, Dixon replied that:

I think the only way we can get to non-Indigenous people is by rewriting the school curriculum. It needs to be included as part of social studies, part of history classes. That's how all kids learn, in school. Buildings won't do it. Memorials won't do it. Look at Victory Square. How many kids learn there about their ancestors who served to keep this country free? The Cenotaph at Skid Row—how many people go down there just because it is there? But in the classroom they learn why they get November 11th off. So I think rewriting the school curriculum to include all of the stuff that faces First Nations, not just the residential schools. It's also about losing our lands, losing our resources ... All of these lessons need to be taught.<sup>106</sup>

Dixon adds that Indigenous groups should march on each former site to perform cleansing ceremonies, to “free up those spirits that might exist there”. This sort of public ceremony, in Dixon's view, is especially important at the moment, owing to the publicized activities of the TRC. This final comment on memorialization, as a means to intervene in the spirit world, reveals a further aspect of this difficult heritage—that of profound cultural disparities in purpose.

Charles Chapman also discussed the connection between commemoration, built heritage, and reconciling relations between the living and the dead—how to “settle the spirits”:

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

At Kuper and Mission [IRS], I would go back and talk to people, and they would say “Oh yeah, we still hear the crying.” And we would talk about what we can do to settle the crying down ... from the spirits. It was something that we talked about over a great deal of time, talk about different things that were done to try to settle the place down. And the belief we came up with was that we don’t think the spirits ever want us to forget what they went through. That’s why they’re still there. And no matter what kind of traditional work we do, it continues to stay there ... We realized that we are not allowed to put an end to it. We need to keep remembering where we came from, what we went through, what we experienced. That’s why the crying of the kids is always there, the opening and slamming of doors, the kids laughing and hollering.<sup>107</sup>

Chapman also discusses the question of repurposing sites and structures that are in close proximity to former IRS. He notes that such reuse requires great sensitivity and sustained spiritual practice, for essentially it is not much different than building a house over a cemetery. For Chapman and many others, it is crucial to continually recognize the loss of life that occurred in the spaces, as well as to speak to the spirits of the departed children with respect and kindness.<sup>108</sup>

Of course, such cultural differences have been made evident in the generally problematic efforts to commemorate people and events from colonial history. The Columbus Quincentenary stands as the most notorious instance, where multinational celebrations of the “discovery of America” and the attendant invisibility of Indigenous peoples produced protest

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<sup>107</sup> Personal Interview: 1 April 2010

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

in many places throughout the Atlantic sphere.<sup>109</sup> The competition to design a national memorial for Little Bighorn Battlefield, won by two non-Indigenous architects—John R. Collins and Alison J. Towers—similarly exposed the disjuncture of cultural practice that address tragic pasts.<sup>110</sup> Darrell Tso, a Navajo designer whose application was eventually unsuccessful, explained his participation in the competition:

We have never built a memorial. It's foreign. If we have a sacred place, we don't disrupt it. But it's important for us to get involved, because if we don't, other people will tell our story for us ... These are our people, and that's who we are doing this for.<sup>111</sup>

Artist Sam Durant similarly has brought attention to the tensions still evident in the commemoration of colonial history in America. His mock proposal for a national monument to commemorate the formation of America—"Proposal for White and Indian Dead Monument Transpositions, Washington, DC"—calls for relocating the number of actual monuments built for soldiers killed and Indians massacred during the Indian Wars. Durant seizes upon the monument as a device for projecting historical narratives of Settler victories that justify social inequity and continuing violence.<sup>112</sup> By making clear the culturally specific

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<sup>109</sup> See Carole M. Gentry et al., *The Unheard Voices: American Indian Responses to the Columbian Quincentenary, 1492-1992* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California, 1994), 221; Henry A. Giroux and Peter McLaren, *Between Borders: Pedagogy and the Politics of Cultural Studies* (New York; London: Routledge, 1994), 280; Jeremy Smith, "Outside and Against the Quincentenary: Modern Indigenous Representations at the Time of the Colombian Celebrations," *Atlantic Studies: Literary, Cultural and Historical Perspectives* 6, no. 1 (2009), 63; Stephen J. Summerhill, *Sinking Columbus: Contested History, Cultural Politics, and Mythmaking during the Quincentenary* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2000), 219.

<sup>110</sup> In 1991, President George Bush passed a law that changed the name of what was known as Custer Battlefield, the site of the infamous Custer's Last Stand, to Little Bighorn Battlefield. The new law, Public Law 102 - 201, also required the design, construction, and upkeep of a new memorial to commemorate those American Indians who fought defending their land and way of life in the Battle of Little Bighorn on June 25-26, 1876.

<sup>111</sup> Qtd. in Alison Schneider, "American Indian Students Design Memorial for Dead and Living," *Chronicle Of Higher Education* 42, no. 8 (1992): 2-12.

<sup>112</sup> Sam Durant and Paula Cooper Gallery, *Proposal for White and Indian Dead Monuments Transpositions, Washington, D.C.* (New York: Paula Cooper Gallery, 2005), 91; Sam Durant, Jeffrey Keough, and Stephen D.



nature of the monument, the artist draws out into the open the “Indian question”, a query dangerous to pose in that its very articulation calls into question the legitimacy of the Republic itself. Interestingly, it is this same anxious intersection— between commemoration, heritage, colonial reckoning, and human rights—that the difficult heritage IRS and the nation of Canada approach. In this concluding section, I will examine the recent, global trend of commemorating painful pasts to support social reconciliation initiatives, followed by, in light of this trend, an examination of possible outcomes for the preservation of difficult heritage in Canada.

### **Being Most Difficult: Heritage and Social Reconciliation**

Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s official apology in 2008 to the Indigenous peoples of Canada stands as the most overt expression of official contrition in the nation’s history. Increasingly, governments across the globe likewise are partaking in the politics of regret, and as a consequence more scrutiny has fallen upon the form and content of what are now called *symbolic* reparations: offering public apologies; expunging offensive names attached to institutions, buildings, and streets; constructing commemorative museums; and commissioning memorials.

One of the more persistent critiques of such symbolic reparations is the way in which they sublimate and compartmentalize mass social trauma.<sup>113</sup> This tendency appears, as discussed earlier, in post-apology soundbites circulating in the Canadian media, encouraging the nation to “turn the page” on this painful history. In this way, the official politics of regret

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Paine Gallery, *Sam Durant: Scenes from the Pilgrim Story: Myths, Massacres, and Monuments* (Boston, Mass: Massachusetts College of Art, 2007), 76; Ralph Rugoff and CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, *Monuments for the USA* (San Francisco: CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, 2005).

<sup>113</sup> For the scope and implications of symbolic reparations see: Ana Cutter Patel, Pablo De Greiff, and Lars Waldorf, *Disarming the Past: Transitional Justice and Ex-Combatants* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 2009). For critiques see: Huyssen, *Present Pasts*.

in Canada produces a disquieting sense that the teleological ends of the democratic nation-state may yet be realized. Official reconciliation narratives suggest that although founded on colonial violence, the nation is at last moving to its logical conclusion—a fair, open, and tolerant society. To date, however, most talk of reconciliation, from church and state, has shied away from the more burning questions raised by the spectre of the schools: how to prosecute offenders, determine if crimes against humanity have occurred, or reassess how this history impacts the legitimacy of Canadian sovereignty. This general silence stands in sharp contrast to the objections raised by critics, many of them Indigenous, who ask these same difficult questions.<sup>114</sup> In this way, the narrative structure of “turning the page” threatens to foreclose an unflinching struggle with our colonial past and present.

Two new programs funding commemoration of Canada’s darker history indicate the incorporation of reconciliation discourse into official heritage practice. As part of the multiparty 2007 Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement, 20 million dollars has been allocated to create the Commemoration Initiative—a fund meant to, among other things, memorialize in a “tangible and permanent way” the enduring suffering of Indigenous children attending Indian Residential Schools. The second program implemented in 2006 by the federal government, the Community Historical Recognition Program, provides money for plaques, monuments, exhibits, and ceremonies to mark wartime internments and restrictive immigration policies.<sup>115</sup> These programs are novel for Canada in that they are designed to

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<sup>114</sup> See: Chrisjohn and Wasacase, 219-229; Marlene Brant Castellano et al., *From Truth to Reconciliation: Transforming the Legacy of Residential Schools* (Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation=Fondation autochtone de guérison, 2008), 425.; Sophie Pierre, 39-48.

<sup>115</sup> For the history of Ukrainian internment, see Bohdan S. Kordan and Craig Mahovsky, *A Bare and Impolitic Right: Internment and Ukrainian-Canadian Redress* (Montreal; Ithaca: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004), 96; Bohdan S. Kordan, *Enemy Aliens, Prisoners of War: Internment in Canada during the Great War* (Montreal; Ithaca: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002), 202.; for Italian internment, see: Bruno Ramirez, *The Italians in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1989), 27.

foster social reconciliation by acknowledging the heritage of suppressed, painful, and difficult pasts.

Many countries across the globe similarly are contending with the burden of past human rights abuses, compelling new approaches to promote social reconciliation.<sup>116</sup> Increasingly, commemoration initiatives—whether memorials, monuments, civic spaces, public art, healing ceremonies—are used in tandem with restorative or transitional justice efforts—public apologies, reparations, truth commissions—to promote reconciliation.<sup>117</sup> In this way, “difficult heritage” is becoming a component of official heritage policy.<sup>118</sup> This novel, reconciliatory use of difficult heritage is evident around the globe, with significant projects in Europe, Asia, South America, Africa, Australia, and North America.<sup>119</sup>

The assumption that commemoration does enhance human rights and promote social reconciliation has sustained considerable critique.<sup>120</sup> Many critics charge that heritage preservation belongs to a cluster of practices and discourses that they label “social-movement multiculturalism”, a complex public-relations play to divert the equitable redistribution of

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<sup>116</sup> The question of national guilt and reparations is examined in Elazar Barkan, *The Guilt of Nations: Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices* (New York: Norton, 2000), 414.. For reconciliation in multicultural states, see: W. Kymlicka and Bashir Bashir, *The Politics of Reconciliation in Multicultural Societies* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 245.

<sup>117</sup> See Naomi Roht-Arriaza and Javier Mariezcurrena, *Transitional Justice in the Twenty-First Century: Beyond Truth Versus Justice* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 346.; Colin Long and Keir Reeves, “‘Dig a Hole and Bury the Past in it’: Reconciliation and the Heritage of Genocide in Cambodia,” in *Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with ‘Difficult Heritage’*, ed. William Stewart Logan and Keir Reeves (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), 68-81.

<sup>118</sup> A variety of contexts can be surveyed in the following sources: Marta Anico and Elsa Peralta, *Heritage and Identity: Engagement and Demission in the Contemporary World*; James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (New York: New Press: Distributed by Norton, 2006), 272.; Macdonald, *Difficult Heritage: Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond*, 231; McDonald, *Unsettling Memories: Intervention and Controversy Over Difficult Public Heritage*, 93-104

<sup>119</sup> Lisa DiCaprio, “The Betrayal of Srebrenica: The Ten-Year Commemoration,” *The Public Historian* 31, no. 3 (2009), 73; Catriona Elder, *Being Australian: Narratives of National Identity* (Crows Nest, N.S.W: Allen & Unwin, 2007).; Jelin, 2007, 138-156; Gary B. Nash, “For Whom Will the Liberty Bell Toll? from Controversy to Cooperation,” in *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory*, ed. James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton (New York: New Press: Distributed by Norton, 2006), 75-102.

<sup>120</sup> For the most recent and persuasive salvo, see: Jennifer M. Lind, *Sorry States: Apologies in International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 242.

wealth.<sup>121</sup> Significantly, in 2004 the Conservative government coined and used the phrase “heritage redress”, perhaps to appear more centrist, and this phrase has been put to use both in dealing with disputes over the Chinese Head Tax and the internment of Ukrainians from 1914 to 1920.<sup>122</sup> Matt James argues that the Conservative’s model of heritage redress—amelioration of social ills through commemoration—appears little more than “multiculturalism in the service of neoliberalism”, sapping momentum from social movements seeking more substantive change.<sup>123</sup>

James and others concede that symbolic reparations can provide necessary momentum to recognition politics provided they accompany, rather than replace, a number of other ameliorative efforts concerned with economics, education, and social justice. This sentiment is echoed by some advocacy groups, such as the International Center for Transitional Justice as well as the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, who maintain that commemoration serves an especially critical purpose in instituting transitional or restorative justice. Yet despite a preponderance of such memorial projects around the planet, the desired effect of fostering healing and social reconciliation remains unrealized. Some detractors point out that the current “age of apology” comprises a form of “witnessing fever”, which turns public spaces of civil society into “machines for the production of testimonial discourses and evidence”.<sup>124</sup> Paradoxically, the intensification in many countries of

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<sup>121</sup> Torpey, 2006; Charles S. Maier, “A Surfeit of Memory? Reflections on History, Melancholy and Denial,” *History and Memory* 5, no. 2 (1993), 136.

<sup>122</sup> Heritage redress does not apply to the issue of Japanese internment, as the federal government apologized and made reparations in 1988. For a fuller discussion of heritage redress see: Matt James, “Do Campaigns for Historical Redress Erode the Canadian Welfare State?” in *Multiculturalism and the Welfare State: Recognition and Redistribution in Contemporary Democracies*, eds. W. Kymlicka and Keith G. Banting (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 232.

<sup>123</sup> James, 233.

<sup>124</sup> Mark Gibney, *The Age of Apology: Facing Up to the Past* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 333.

commemorative structures and practices coincides with pervasive denial, bystander apathy, bureaucratic indifference, and “compassion fatigue”.<sup>125</sup>

The bureaucratic management of difficult pasts, thus, often performs a postpolitical, nation-building function, seeking consensus while foreclosing more vibrant, agonistic, and ultimately democratic debates over the meaning of painful pasts.<sup>126</sup> In her critique of Australia’s state-sanctioned forgiveness and reconciliation, Elizabeth Povinelli invokes the darker potential of national contrition for colonial violence:

In short, in this liberal imaginary, the now recognized subaltern subjects would slough off their traumatic histories, ambivalences, incoherencies, and angst like so much outgrown skin rather than remain for themselves or for others the wounded testament to the nation’s past bad faith. The nation would then be able to come out from under the pall of its failed history, betrayed best intentions, and discursive impasses. And normative citizens would be freed to pursue their profits and enjoy their families without guilty glances over their shoulders into history or at the slum across the block.<sup>127</sup>

Significantly, both of the Canadian programs mentioned above use the language of acknowledgment, healing, and reconciliation while avoiding the more intractable questions inherent to difficult heritage, racist policy, and the enduring consequences of colonialism. Neither, in addition, makes any mention of or provisions for hundreds of former institutions and sites scattered across the country. And yet, as Andrea Sanborn observed in personal

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<sup>125</sup> Stanley Cohen, *States of Denial: Knowing about Atrocities and Suffering* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 344; Susan D. Moeller, *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Misery, War, and Death* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

<sup>126</sup> For recent debates on liberal democracies in the role of postpolitical consensus building, see: Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London; New York: Verso, 1999).; Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political* (London; New York: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>127</sup> Elizabeth A. Povinelli, “The State of Shame: Australian Multiculturalism and the Crisis of Indigenous Citizenship,” *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 2 (01/01, 1998), 581.

conversation—despite such systemic shortfalls, personal denial, apathy, and fatigue—  
”educating non-Indigenous peoples is as important to true reconciliation as the healing of  
Indigenous peoples in Canada”. This raises questions as to future policy: who is responsible  
for implementing such educational change, and will the national network of IRS sites help to  
articulate the difficult content of Canada’s colonial past?

I will conclude here by briefly examining St Eugene and the equivocal meaning,  
especially in government parlance, of the term reconciliation. The redevelopment of St  
Eugene has been touted by the federal government as a beacon signalling a new, more  
equitable relationship between Ottawa and the nation’s Indigenous peoples. Lacking  
substantial and sustained government investment to develop a more-typical site of memory,  
the Ktunaxa were left with few options. Like the ‘Namgis at Alert Bay, they faced untenable  
maintenance bills to preserve an empty building. Moreover, there was a widespread wish to  
convert this site of misery to benefit the economic health of the local community. The long-  
term Ktunaxa plan, providing the resort manages to weather the current economic downturn,  
is to buy out their partners and again retain sole possession of the property. It remains to be  
seen if this plan will bear fruit in the long term, however, as the resort has already once been  
forced to enter bankruptcy protection<sup>128</sup>

Although this question of economic cooperation is of vital importance, it cannot be  
overlooked that, at St Eugene, the articulation of such economic issues becomes the  
condition for the exclusion of social memory. This *atopos*—this (non)place—only became a  
“place to be” when folded back into the economic system that initially produced the  
institution as a space of “dislocating localization.” It becomes recognizable and of use value  
only by a radical repurposing, by a profound mnemonic reconfiguration, altering its function

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<sup>128</sup> Pierre, 44.

from a carceral institution charged with divesting culture and sovereignty to a luxury resort that aims to offer leisure pleasures to a largely uninformed public. Perhaps nowhere more than at the “Casino of the Rockies” is it evident the extent to which economics prevailed over the content and form of the past. If, as the resort website claims, the renovation of St Eugene converted an “icon of an often sad period of history into a powerful economic engine,” the casino provides the necessary fuel for the continued operation of the entire complex. In interview, Director of Sales and Marketing, Wendy Van Puymbroeck, confirmed that, despite the substantial cut taken by the BC Lottery Corporation, the casino generated more profits than the resort and golf course combined. Without this revenue stream, however controversial, the resort likely would not have survived restructuring.<sup>129</sup>

This exceptional repurposing of St Eugene—it remains the only resort conversion of an IRS in Canada—appears to validate the politics of reconciliation but at the expense of economic and political cooperation with a settler culture that broadly sustains an inequitable status quo. Some Indigenous scholars, such as Taiaiake Alfred, are outspoken in their criticism of this sort of economic cooperation, as “it is senseless to advocate for an accord with imperialism while there is a steady and intense ongoing attack by the Settler society on everything meaningful to us”.<sup>130</sup> The view counter to Alfred’s, one widely held in band councils across the country, regards this sort of radicalism as a failed project and conversely that economic integration is essential for survival. In this way, St Eugene’s bears both the imprint of national contrition and the grotesque, enduring features of colonial violence. This

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<sup>129</sup>For opposing views on the Indigenous casino debate see Alfred (2005) and Eve Darian-Smith, *New Capitalists: Law, Politics, and Identity Surrounding Casino Gaming on Native American Land* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2004), 129.

<sup>130</sup> Alfred (2005), 37.

is not to reject the possibility of reconciliation, but to assert that spaces of reconciliation, like those of repression, can never be without fissures, failures, and ambiguity.

The recuperation at St Eugene of notions of social reconciliation into systems of economic exchange signals what Slavoj Žižek terms *post-political bio-politics*, the “depoliticized, socially objective, expert administration and coordination of interests at the zero level of politics”.<sup>131</sup> In British Columbia, this process is also evident in the provincial government’s frequent use of the term “reconciliation” when promoting the ethical thrust of its programs meant to ameliorate its “relationship” with the province’s Indigenous population. Indeed, the current BC government has a Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, its mandate to settle land claims, stimulate business ventures, and manage public opinion. Interestingly, in 2010 Premier Gordon Campbell installed a “Leadership Desk,” carved by Arthur Vickers in the form of a bentwood box, which the former Premier described as symbolic of a common desire to build bridges and reconciliation between cultures. Such an aesthetic sublimation of colonial patrimony—from inflicting intergenerational trauma to contrite reconciliation—suggests the operation of what John Milbank calls the “unparalleled reign of kitsch”, wherein the abjection of social relations in liberal democracies becomes masked by a “virtual circus designed to entertain the middle-classes of the privileged world”.<sup>132</sup> Milbank’s castigation seems especially apt considering the BC Liberals’ penchant for brokering deals with corporations at the expense of the ecological and cultural integrity of Indigenous territories: some recent examples include Shell Oil’s plan to drill in the Klabona region, foreign fish farms at Ocean Falls, and the

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<sup>131</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*, 1st Picador ed. (New York: Picador, 2008), 40.

<sup>132</sup> John Milbank, *Being Reconciled: Ontology and Pardon* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 5.



destruction of the SPAET cave by developers at Bear Mountain Resort.<sup>133</sup> This accords with Taiaiake Alfred's earlier point about the consequences of economic cooperation and reconciliation.

This is not to suggest, however, that the Ktunaxa people are somehow made victims or dupes through such collaboration. Many employed at the resort express pleasure in the fact that the school has been converted in this way. Former Chief and survivor Sophie Pierre feels great pride that the site of her traumatized childhood now yields the potential for long-term community benefit.<sup>134</sup> In addition, management has made changes to call greater attention to Ktunaxa culture—prominently displaying poignant historical photographs, plant species important in Ktunaxa life, and as well staging a “Legends Night,” where guests and locals gather to hear legends shared by elders. As the Ktunaxa wrestled with the decision to renovate the bleak, deserted institution, they were guided by the words of Elder Mary Paul who reminded them that “if you think you lost so much in that building, it's not lost ... You only really lose something if you refuse to pick it up again”.<sup>135</sup> In this way, it is apparent that these ambiguous, reconciliatory spaces are profoundly complicated, tangled with hope and despair, growth and blight, accomplishment and atrocity. And yet it remains difficult to separate the act of “picking up” lost cultures and identities from a market system sustained through this same series of deprivations.

Many aspects of the history of the Indian Residential School system remain untold, suppressed, dismissed. With some sympathy, I question if the sheer geographic and temporal scope of this traumatic social memory could ever be managed by official bodies, such as the

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<sup>133</sup> A useful source for information on environmental struggles between BC First Nations and the provincial government that are not adequately covered in the mainstream press can be accessed here: “First Nations - Land Rights and Environmentalism in British Columbia,” <http://www.firstnations.de/development.htm> (accessed 7/22/2010, 2010).

<sup>134</sup> Pierre, 39-48.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 42.

Monument Board or Parks Canada. For now, I argue, attempts to harmonize and reconcile this dissonant past should be avoided, however uncomfortable and anxious a process that it is. Such profoundly complicated historical outcomes undercut the plausibility of simple, linear, and interpersonal concepts of apology and reconciliation. As a consequence of the inherent optimism of much public reconciliation talk, it would seem more fitting to resist what David Scott has referred to as the romantic narrative of modernity, where “history rides a triumphant and seamlessly progressive rhythm.” In its place, Scott posits the “strategy of tragedy”:

not to dismiss out of hand the claims of reason, but to honour the contingent, the ambiguous, the paradoxical, and the unyielding in human affairs in such a way as to complicate our most cherished notions about the relation between identity and difference, reason and unreason, blindness and insight, action and responsibility, guilt and innocence.<sup>136</sup>

In other words, methodologically it makes most sense not to struggle for resolution of this past or reconciliation with it, but to try and unearth and struggle with complications and difficulties arising from the commodification and interpretation of such sites of difficult heritage.

By thinking about sites such St Eugene, St Paul’s , or St Mary’s (and many others) in this way, in their historical and present-day condition, new questions have emerged regarding the confrontation of ambivalent and conflicted social memory, with the material fabric of brutal pasts, and with compromised solutions to unequivocal problems. Moreover in each of their contemporary guises, each of these IRS compel a rethinking of discourses of

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<sup>136</sup> David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 13.

reconciliation, to preclude the use of these spaces as mere playgrounds or instruments of public relations, in favour of sites of self-reflexive uncertainty and introspection. To do so, it remains crucial to fashion self-reflexive representations of this difficult heritage that confess the inherent incapacity of such representations, for, as Judith Butler argues, “the human cannot be captured through the representation ... [yet] some loss of the human takes place when it is “captured” by the image.”<sup>137</sup>

The concluding chapter will include a scrutiny of the strengths and limitations of my research into questions of institutional typologies, colonial governmentality, non-places, or difficult heritage. The chapter also will comment on possible applications of research findings in the dissertation, and analyse possible future research directions in the field of IRS studies as a consequence of the contribution made by this text.

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<sup>137</sup> Butler, 145.

### **Conclusion: Toward an Uncertain Horizon**

In the dissertation, I have argued that the Indian Residential School is a highly significant, if overlooked, subject for analysis by architectural historians—not only to better understand the processes of colonial subjugation in British Columbia but also to grasp more precisely the scope of mass social trauma to Indigenous peoples. This study has also examined the enormous complexity of the history of the IRS—equivocal survivor testimony, well-intentioned actors staffing carceral spaces, ambiguous official intent, and the uncertain historical value of the remnants of the system. Such factors challenge facile or uncontested conclusions about these structures. I have aimed, with this in mind, to develop more nuanced approaches to this complicated past, by insisting on the need to attend to the particularities of the forms, aims, functions of the IRS, as well as the various ways these structures have been reused.

This emphasis on distinctions—between the IRS and other modern institutions—was explored through a comparison of architectural topologies, meant to reveal to what extent the IRS belonged to any particular unity of discourse. The coincident dismantling of affinity arguments found support in the subsequent rethinking of the IRS through the lens of colonial systems of control, i.e. colonial governmentality. In this way, the precise function of these institutions became more evident, as a means to target certain colonized Indigenous subjects, to entrench particular rationalities of colonial rule, and to produce distinct spaces within which to enact new behavioural norms. These IRS spaces, as was shown, served as places without place where Indigenous children, by design, were meant to no longer feel at home in their own societies, cultures, communities, and families—or within the institution. The burden of this often troubled past, as addressed in the final chapter, haunts the sites and

structures of former Indian Residential Schools, as it remains uncertain if these notorious institutional remnants can (or should) coexist with other celebrated sites of memory redolent with popular aesthetic or historical appeal. Conclusions about the memory of this institutional system seem inappropriate for this moment. Rather, it seems reasonable and, more pointedly, ethical to argue that Settlers need—as did Camus’s Sisyphus—to engage in a labourious undertaking without foreseeable end. This is not an argument for a cul-de-sac of guilt and futility but instead to suggest the need for patience, humility, and self reflexivity.

In these final pages, I comment on the significance of the research findings, reflect on the strengths and limitations of the dissertation, and suggest possible future research directions in the field that may draw on the arguments advanced in the dissertation.

As mentioned in the introduction, attempting to contribute to a field so fraught as that of the history of the Indian Residential Schools is profoundly challenging, requiring a continual and anxious interrogation of scholarly and personal interests. With this in mind, I stated from the outset that a tacit goal of this study was to join a wider critical intervention geared to the decolonization of the Settler mind. This is no small feat, and progress is slow and faltering. On a personal level, it remains for me the most important task to fulfill, yet one that resists completion. Decolonization of the mind, apparently, remains more a process than a destination, a course marked by doubt, ambivalence, and uneasiness.

A second contention in the study—the importance of paying careful attention to the particular structure and function of the IRS—was advanced to avoid problematic architectural genealogies formed on the basis of unities and affinities, logic typical of apologist arguments. In this regard, I believe that the dissertation has made a more substantive contribution. By demonstrating the specific nature of the design and operation of

various IRS, and how these formal and discursive elements informed colonial governmentality, the study revealed the intricacy of such historical consideration, detail necessarily flattened by more general comparative schema. In my view, this remains one of the more important issues addressed in the dissertation, owing to the need to find ways to counter the apologist trend of diminishing the impact of these institutions on Indigenous peoples.

A third aim of the study, seeking new terms to describe the IRS, connects closely to this same need, to gain the language required to refute those who would profess “get over it” objections. However, this terminological investigation also seeks to contribute to an emerging project: namely, exploring topics related to the histories of colonization through the theoretical insights of Giorgio Agamben. The theorization in this text of the colonial non-place (*atopos*) not only develops an alternate taxonomy to recategorize the IRS but also applies Agamben’s thought in the Canadian context, to better understand how spaces of exception have and continue to impinge upon Indigenous life. Moreover, this inquiry contributes to our understanding of the establishment of sovereignty in colonial settings, in a manner quite different from that seen in the seat of empire.

The final major research question, regarding the “difficult” heritage of IRS sites and structures, is the first scholarly investigation into this important and timely subject. The study examines issues of recognizing and preserving the remnants of these institutions in light of new scholarship on difficult heritage, enquiry produced in an emerging and active field of heritage studies. Significantly, the question of difficult heritage has been taken up in many other countries, but in this regard, Canada lags far behind, despite (or perhaps because of) the profusion of relevant cases. This critique of Canadian heritage policy makes a needed

contribution by drawing into focus the importance of certain types of aesthetic and historical worth, heritage values often projecting an agreeable image of the state. The value of the Indian Residential School, thus, threatens to “unsettle” these established ways of preserving and imaging the past, by bestowing to Canada a different set of unfamiliar and discordant values rooted in a contemporary sublimity.

The interviews of survivors recalling their experiences of the architecture of the Indian Residential Schools—testimony not recorded elsewhere—comprise one of the most significant contributions made by this text. Specific details of the use of these structures, disparities between architectural plans and actual construction in buildings now demolished, as well as many-sided accounts of the experience of the institution have helped nuance a study that would have been derivative and, worse, unethical if it had been written solely from archival sources, architectural plans, and secondary sources. Moreover, the decision of each of these people to offer this testimony publicly, by accompanying their words with their biographies, effects a crucial move: heading off the victimization of anonymous voices. The potential problem with recording such experiences anonymously (especially the more difficult ones) is that readers will not get a fuller sense of the person’s identity. Each of the interviewees is a public figure, who, through strength, resiliency, and compassion, not only survived the IRS but also is making important contributions to Indigenous healing, justice, education, and reconciliation. By associating testimonies with identities, readers will not regard these people as victims of their history, but instead will recognize their numerous accomplishments and public service.

I will now consider the strengths and limitations of the dissertation—both qualities mostly an effect of exploring a nearly untouched scholarly field. To date, other than those

written by the author, no scholarly texts have been published on the architecture of the IRS. As such, the study cannot help but make significant contributions but also errors, owing to the limits of being first to break the intellectual ground. Obviously this is both an opportunity and a challenge: an opportunity, for any dissertation exploring such an open and important field will in all probability make some valuable contribution; and a challenge, for such a radically open area of inquiry often requires working in (near) isolation, without the benefit of discursive support. The only historian to write on the architecture of the system, Dana Johnston, produced most of his very useful historical analyses for government reports (see bibliography), save for a very brief entry in the book *Building the West: The Early Architects of British Columbia* (2003).<sup>569</sup> His work did provide valuable information in the early stages of research, but much effort could have been spared if the publications of other historians were available.

Consequently, the underdeveloped state of the study of the IRS has limited the scope of the dissertation. One of the more profound questions around these institutions is their role as vectors for the transmission of tuberculosis. Owing to a lack of documentary material or other histories that elaborate on the architectural implications of this question, I was unable to explore this critical part of IRS history in a responsible and thorough fashion. It is my hope that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will unearth serviceable documents and testimony that will support this research. The dissertation also would have been strengthened by the inclusion of testimony from staff who worked at Indian Residential Schools.

Unfortunately, though such contacts were sought, I was unable to secure these sorts of interviews. Additionally, intensive research into how relationships formed between

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<sup>569</sup> Donald Luxton, *Building the West: The Early Architects of British Columbia* (Vancouver, B.C., Canada: Talonbooks, 2003).



students—both conflictual and collaborative—and how these social relations played out in institutional space, would have added another valuable layer of analysis. The same could be said about the gendering of the IRS and the variety of ways in which such designations were both enforced and disrupted. The study was also limited by its focus on IRS in British Columbia. A more comprehensive survey of institutions in other provinces and territories clearly would have augmented research findings.

This limited scope, however, coincidentally presents one of the strengths of the dissertation research. By confining analysis to fewer case studies and by travelling to each site in question, I was able to develop a fuller picture of the particular complexities of each instance, the importance of which is central to the aim of the project. By spending more time on each IRS surveyed, a greater number of documentary sources were located that will be of value to future researchers, such as illustrations of IRS architectural plans held in Library and Archives Canada, many of which are, for the first time, published in this dissertation.

Another strength of the dissertation, again a consequence of survivor testimony, is the aim of producing a synchronic history of the IRS. The purpose of such a model is to call attention to this institution as part of the history that has not passed. This theme was articulated through the study of both Canadian heritage policy and the problems of commemorating IRS sites. The purpose of this was to enact an ethical move, to suggest that Settler cultures need to be much more aware of this past (that is present), so that Settler subjects may position themselves in relation to this history. A further asset of the dissertation is the manner in which it focused upon a new object of study, i.e. the architecture of the IRS. The analysis of architectural plans, materials, use, and contemporary reuse opened new points of view on this historical subject. This shift in scholarly attention exposes a parallax

view, in that a different perspective on the past produces different knowledges. This is significant for the continued need to generate discourse that nuances equivocal testimony about the IRS, which, though inevitable, benefits from alternate standpoints emerging from new research fields.

In closing, I will consider the potential application of research findings, as well as possible future research directions that may draw upon the research of the dissertation. Clearly the scope of a heretofore unexamined subject—an architectural system that cost very probably hundreds of millions of dollars, operated for over a century, and helped to subjugate scores of Indigenous nations—cannot be adequately addressed in one dissertation. Indeed, this document has only scratched the surface of a very deep and complex set of questions, both historical and ethical. Yet, the very act of calling attention to this scholarly lacuna presents the potential for future application of the dissertation’s research findings. This is especially so, in light of the fact that producing a dissertation that scrutinizes, for the first time, an overlooked area in a larger, active field has the consequence of raising the profile of that study. The history of the IRS continues to be a subject of sustained examination, and, as such, earlier dissertations continue to cross-pollinate subsequent scholarly publications addressing a wide range of topics related to the IRS. Hopefully this text will provide similar benefit for future researchers.

A number of possible future research directions may draw upon their findings of the dissertation. For example, researchers investigating the nature of the offense committed by and within the Indian Residential Schools may augment their analysis with the consideration of the architecture of the system. A closer study of the design of the structures may provide supplementary evidence for those struggling with issues of government and church intent.

This is especially so with possible inquiries into the criminality of the system: was the IRS simply “neglect” or “abuse”, as described by PM Harper’s apology, or was it more a crime against humanity or a form of genocide? Admittedly, at the moment, documentation that would help illuminate this debate has yet to come to light, but if the figure of IRS architecture is more prominently considered by researchers, the possibility of seeking and finding such archival materials will be much greater.

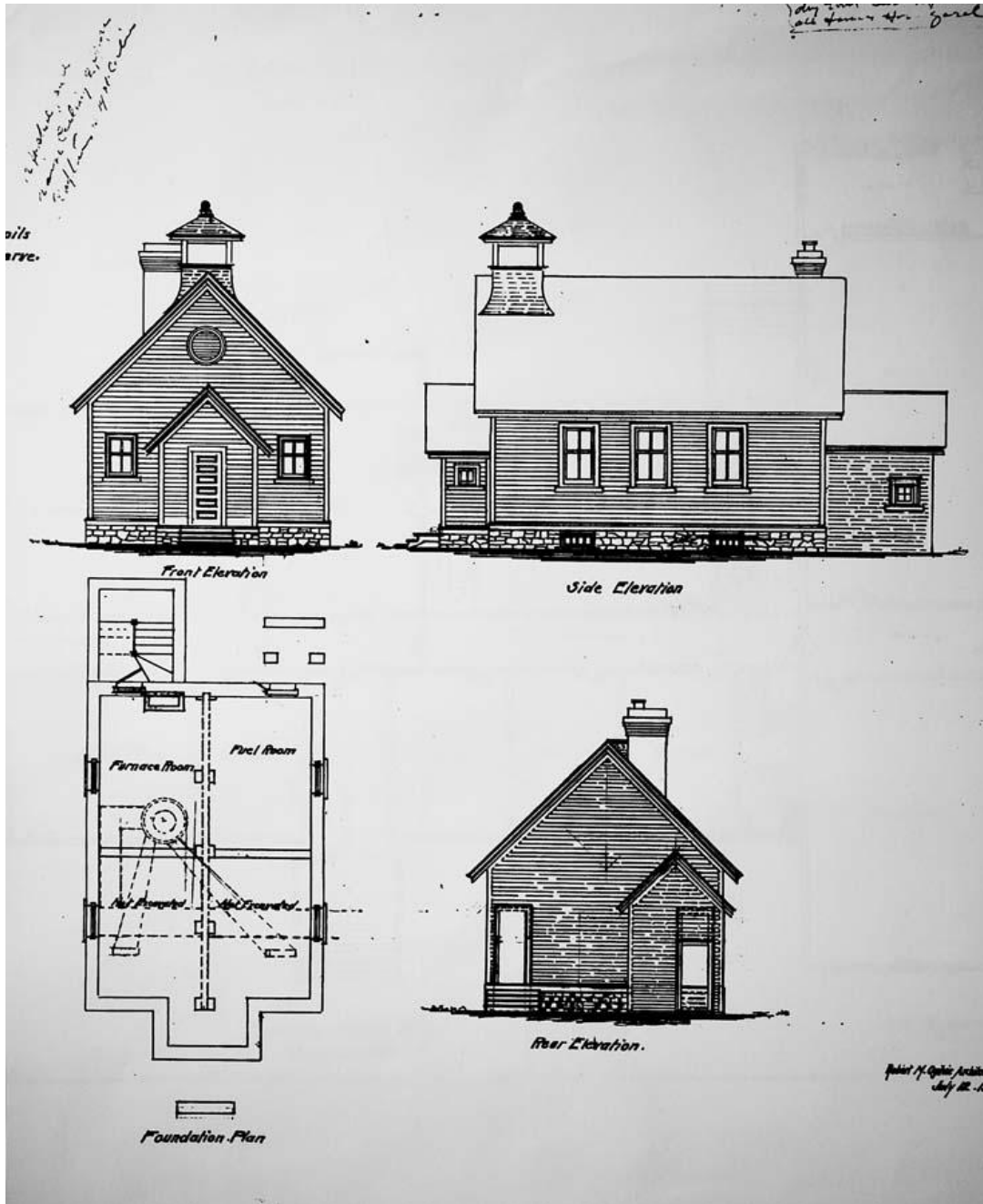
The dissertation also may be of benefit to those who researching questions of heritage preservation and policy in Canada. As mentioned, scholarship on discourses and practices of official heritage and its problematic relationship to Indigenous pasts has received very little scrutiny in Canada compared to that of other Settler nations. There is a wider trend evident in many countries around the world toward recognizing sites of difficult heritage, those places that disturb mostly positive accounts of the formation of the nation state. This is not to endorse this trend—in some instances this move seems akin to a form of public relations meant to manage rather than fully address painful pasts—but rather to suggest that in time Canada will engage this sort of policy more forcefully. To a limited degree this has already begun with the implementation of the Commemoration Initiative meant to memorialize the IRS, as well as with the Community Historical Recognition Program (2006), an initiative of the federal Conservative government to provide money for plaques, monuments, exhibits, and ceremonies marking wartime internment and restrictive immigration policies. Future researchers may draw upon those research findings in the dissertation that highlight the tensions between establishing an ethical relation to the material and intangible traces of darker inherited pasts.

Researchers may also turn to those aspects of the dissertation concerning the role of difficult heritage as a support for social reconciliation. Projects meant to promote reconciliation through commemoration are evident around the globe, as governments and NGOs in many countries seek to forward restorative or transitional justice programs with the support of memory projects. Indeed, most of the survivors interviewed for the dissertation expressed the need for educating young non-Indigenous students about the history of the Indian Residential Schools to facilitate such reconciliatory futures. As such, the question of social reconciliation as it relates to heritage—however briefly considered in this text—could direct future researchers to conduct more in-depth studies of this contested, underexamined, and important field of study.

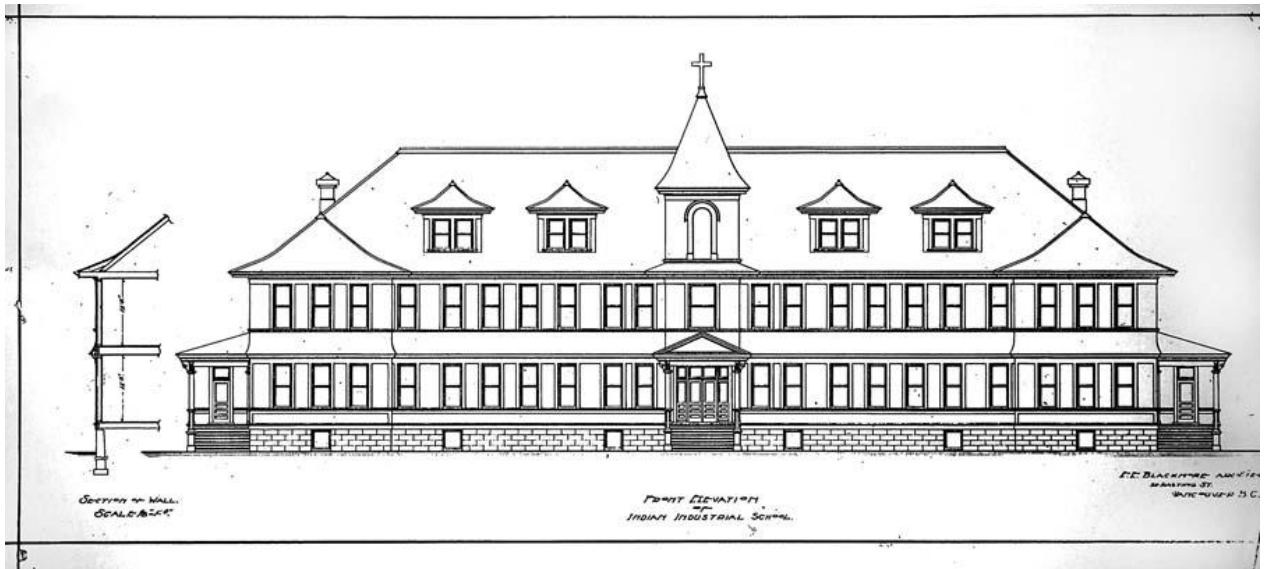
In this conclusion, I have outlined some of the more significant arguments advanced in the dissertation—regarding both the architectural history of the Indian Residential Schools and contemporary issues troubling their commemoration. I have also commented on the significance of certain research findings, reflected upon the strengths and limitations of the dissertation, and suggested possible future research directions in the field that may draw on the arguments informing this study. I will end here with the assertion that it is crucial, at this pivotal moment, for Settlers to avoid popular projections about the “legacy” of the IRS, that this complex, traumatic past in any way constitutes a book whose pages contain the content of this history and whose covers can be closed. On the contrary, for Settlers to understand this past, they must be prepared to undergo a self-reflexive process that may trouble self-assured images of the nation and of the self



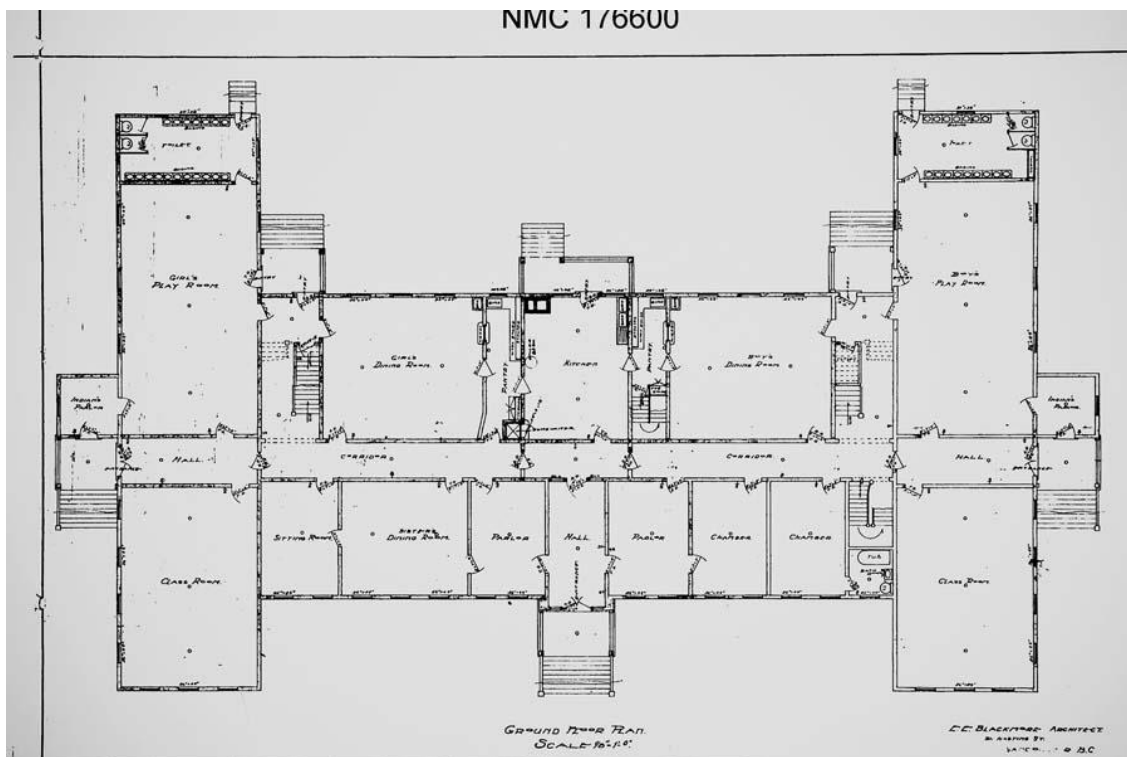
**Figure 1. 1** - Thomas Moore before and after admission to Regina Industrial School, N.D., courtesy of Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-82239 [1-2].



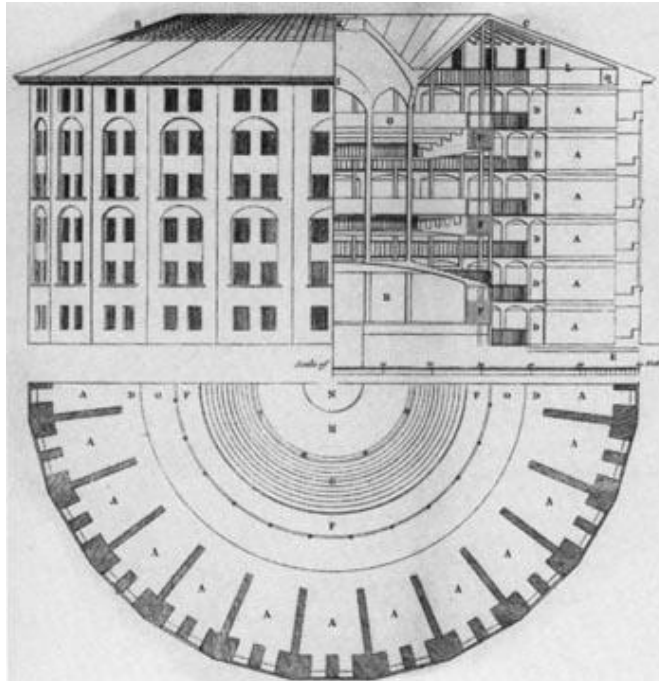
**Figure 1.2** - Architectural Plan: Day school for 50 students, 1904, R.M. Ogilvie, architect. Elevations and foundation plan. ©Indian and Northern Affairs. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2011. Source: Library and Archives Canada / Indian and Northern Affairs / RG22M 77803 / 111 Item 229.



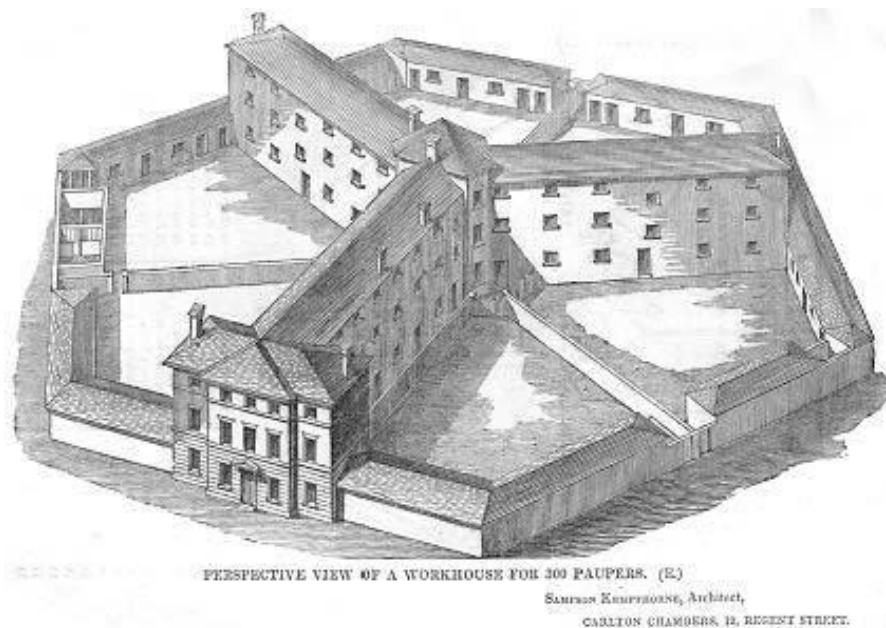
**Figure 1.3** - Architectural plan: Industrial school, N.D., E.E. Blackmore, architect. Façade elevation. © Indian and Northern Affairs. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2011. Source: Library and Archives Canada / Indian and Northern Affairs / RG22M 77803 / 111 Item 120.



**Figure 1.4** - Architectural plan: industrial school, N.D., E.E. Blackmore, architect. Ground floor. © Indian and Northern Affairs. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2011. Source: Library and Archives Canada / Indian and Northern Affairs / RG22M 77803 / 111 Item 123.

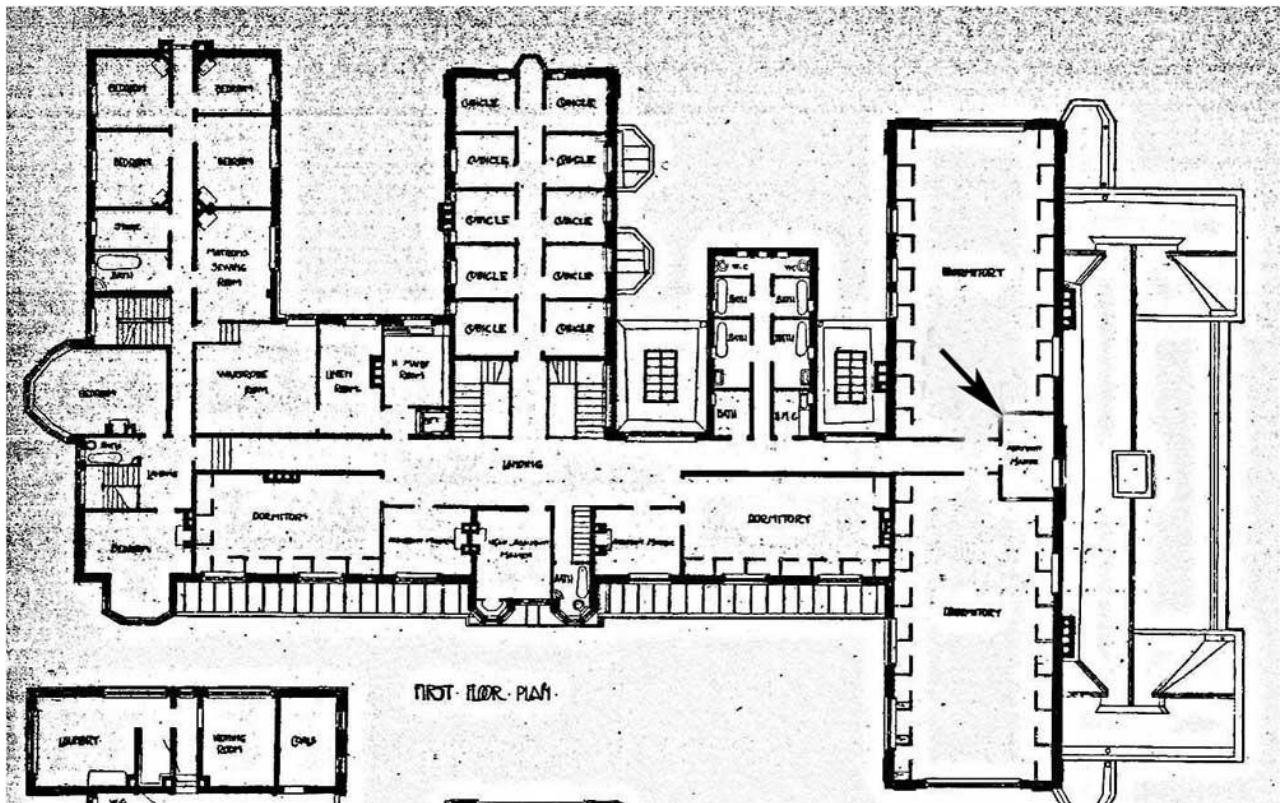


**Figure 1. 5** - Architectural plan: Plan of the Panopticon, Jeremy Bentham, 1791). Source: Wikimedia Commons, *The works of Jeremy Bentham* vol. IV, 172-3

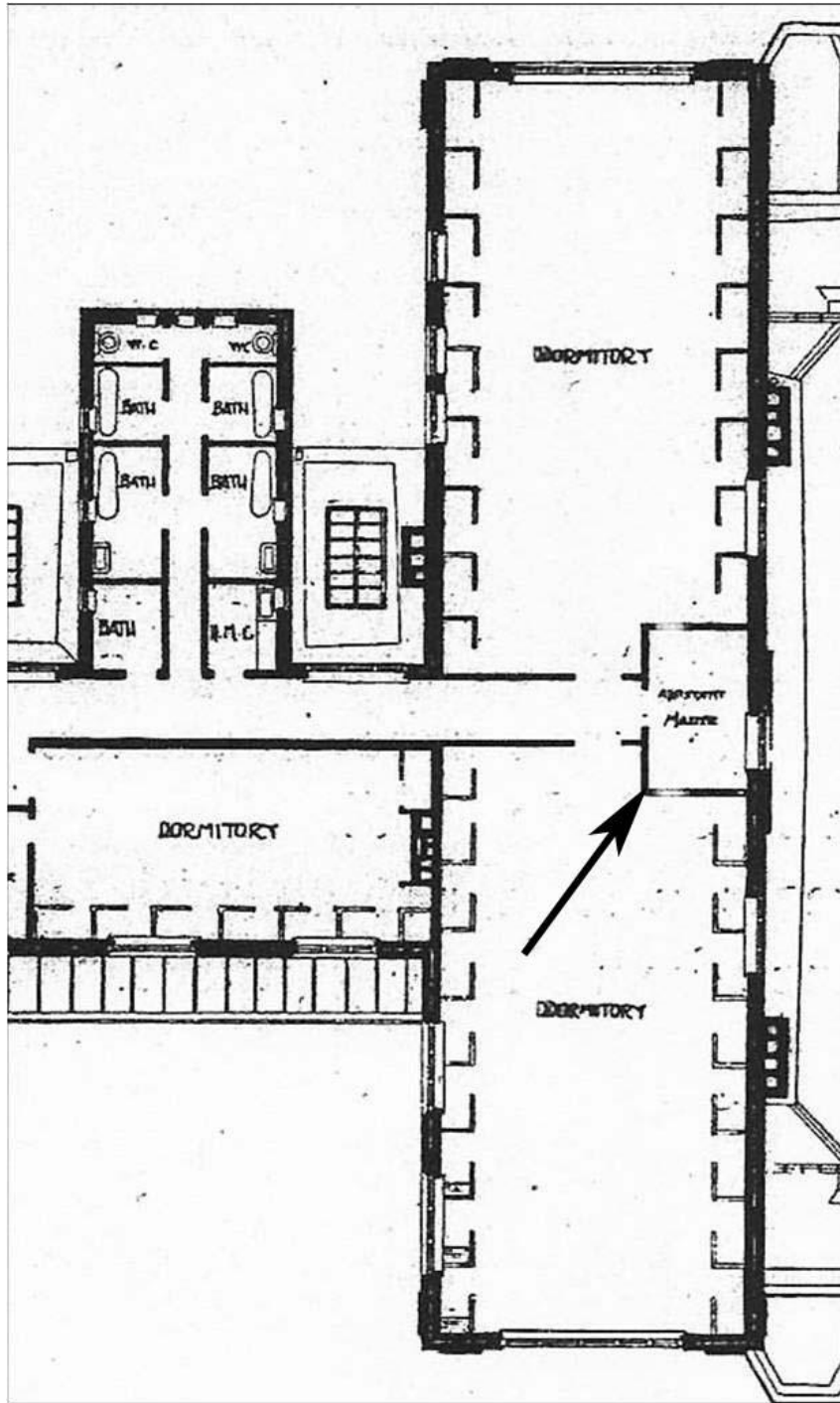


**Figure 1. 6** - Perspective View of a Workhouse for 300 Paupers, Sampson Kempthorne, architect (1835). Source: Higginbotham, Peter "The Workhouse" [www.workhouses.org.uk](http://www.workhouses.org.uk), consulted 16 February 2011.

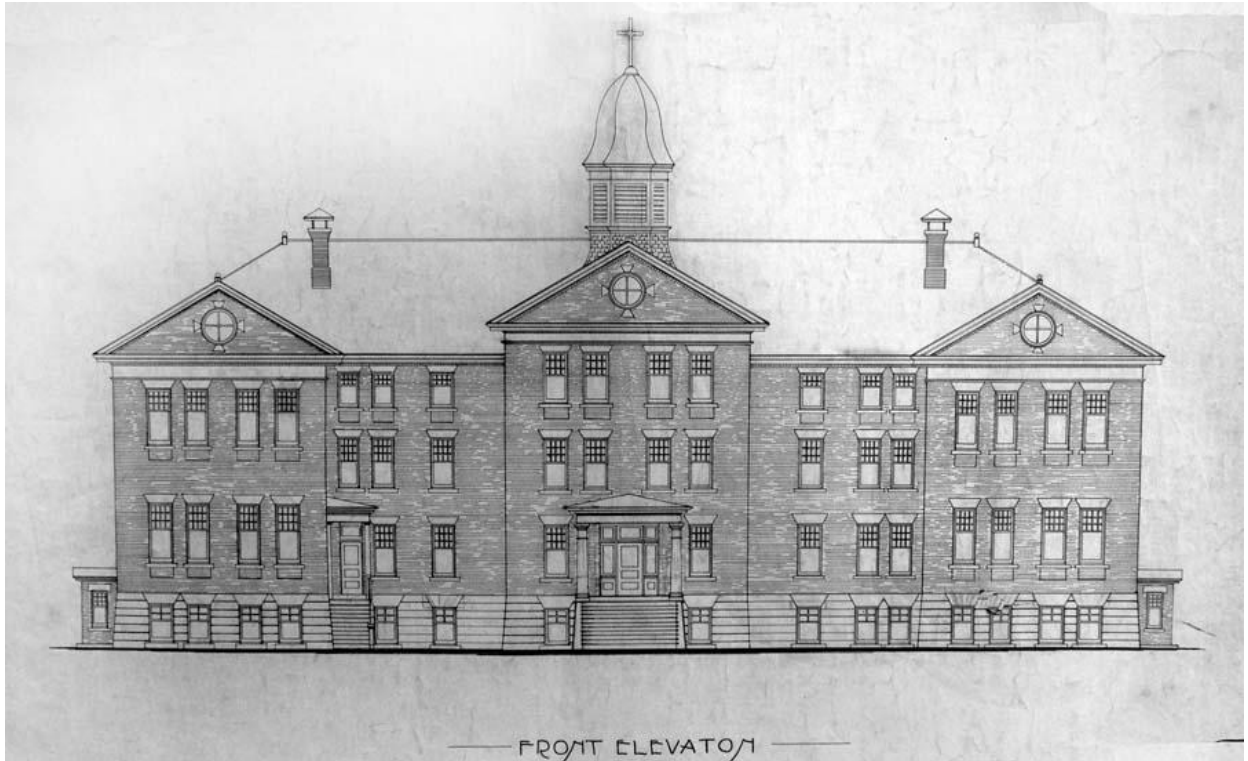




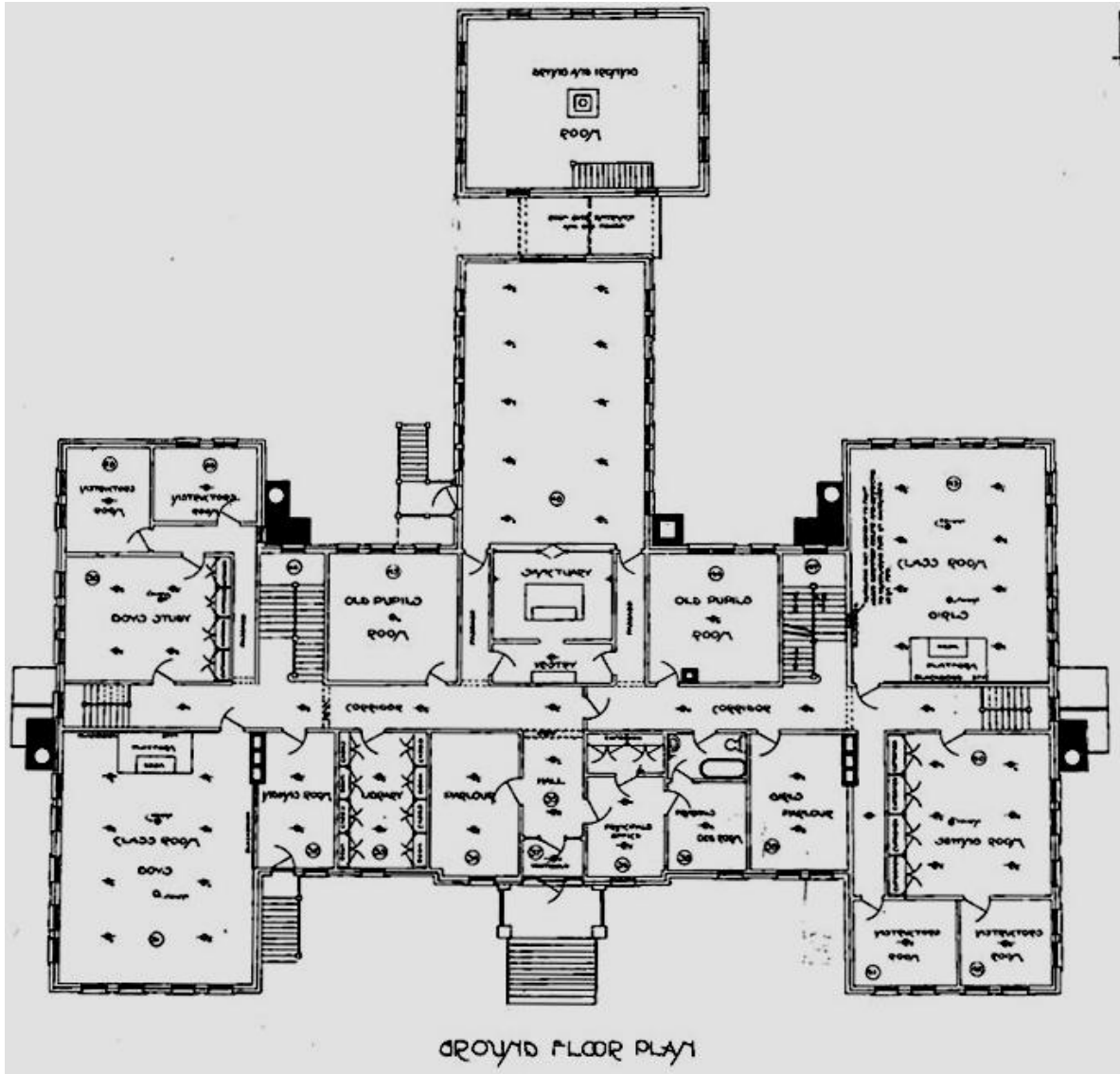
**Figure 1. 7** - Architectural plan: New College Hull, Hall, Cooper, Davis, architects (c.1900). Source: Felix Clay, *Modern School Buildings* (1906), 248. Arrow indicates “Assistant Master” quarters.



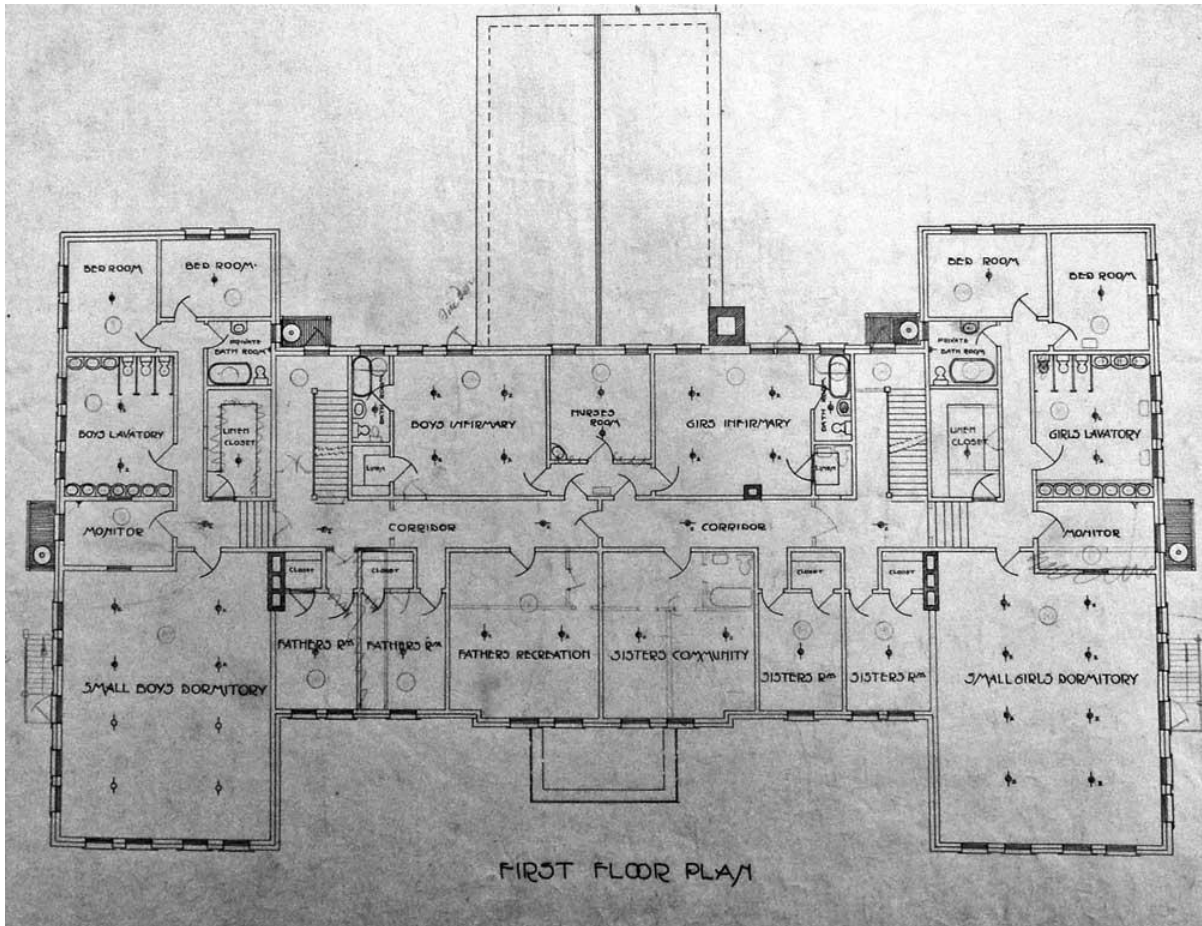
**Figure 1. 8** - Architectural plan: New College Hull, Hall, Cooper, Davis, architects (c.1900), detail. Source: Felix Clay, *Modern School Buildings* (1906), 248. Arrow indicates “Assistant Master” quarters.



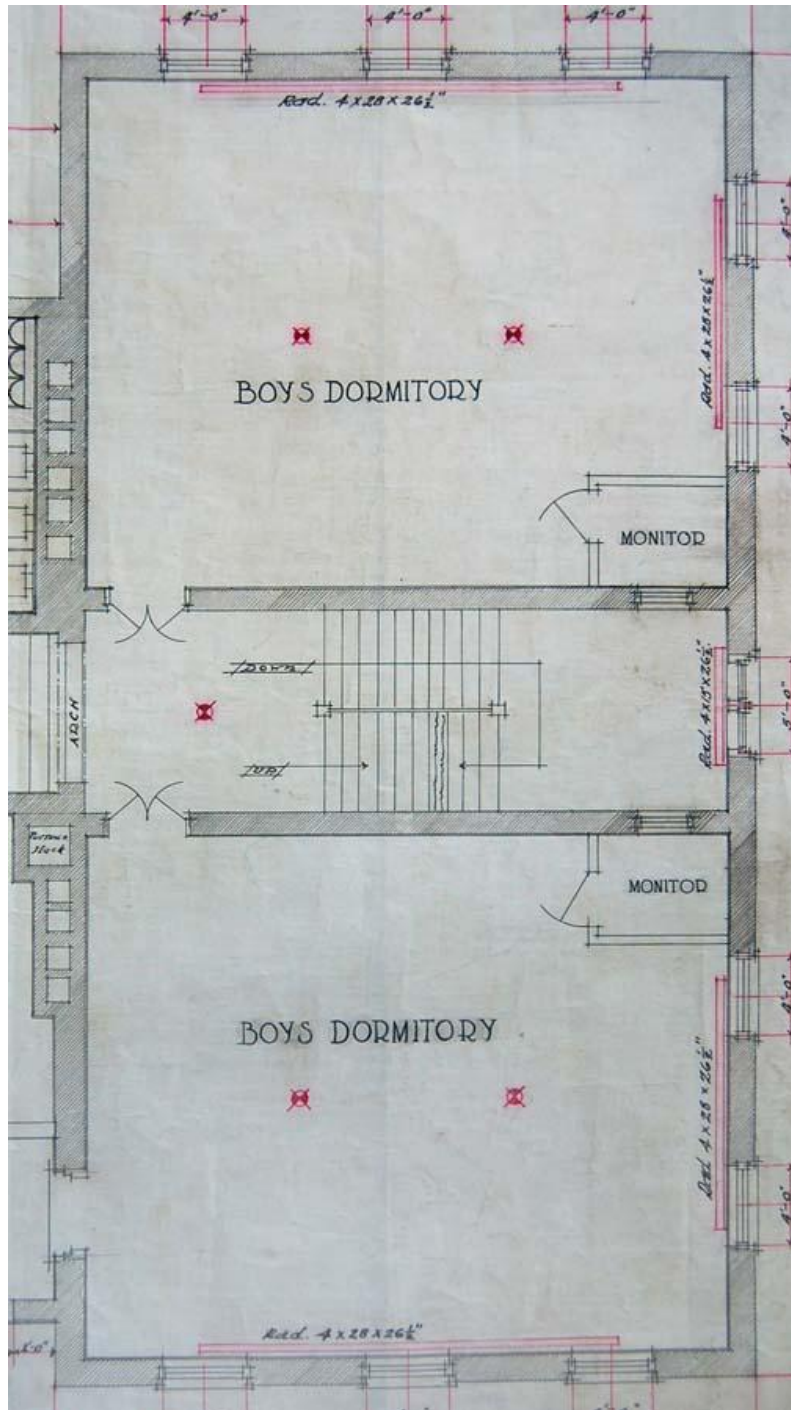
**Figure 1. 9** - Architectural plan: Kuper Island Residential School, 1914, R.M. Ogilvie, architect. Façade elevation. © Indian and Northern Affairs. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2011. Source: Library and Archives Canada / Indian and Northern Affairs / RG22M 77803 / 111 Item 837.



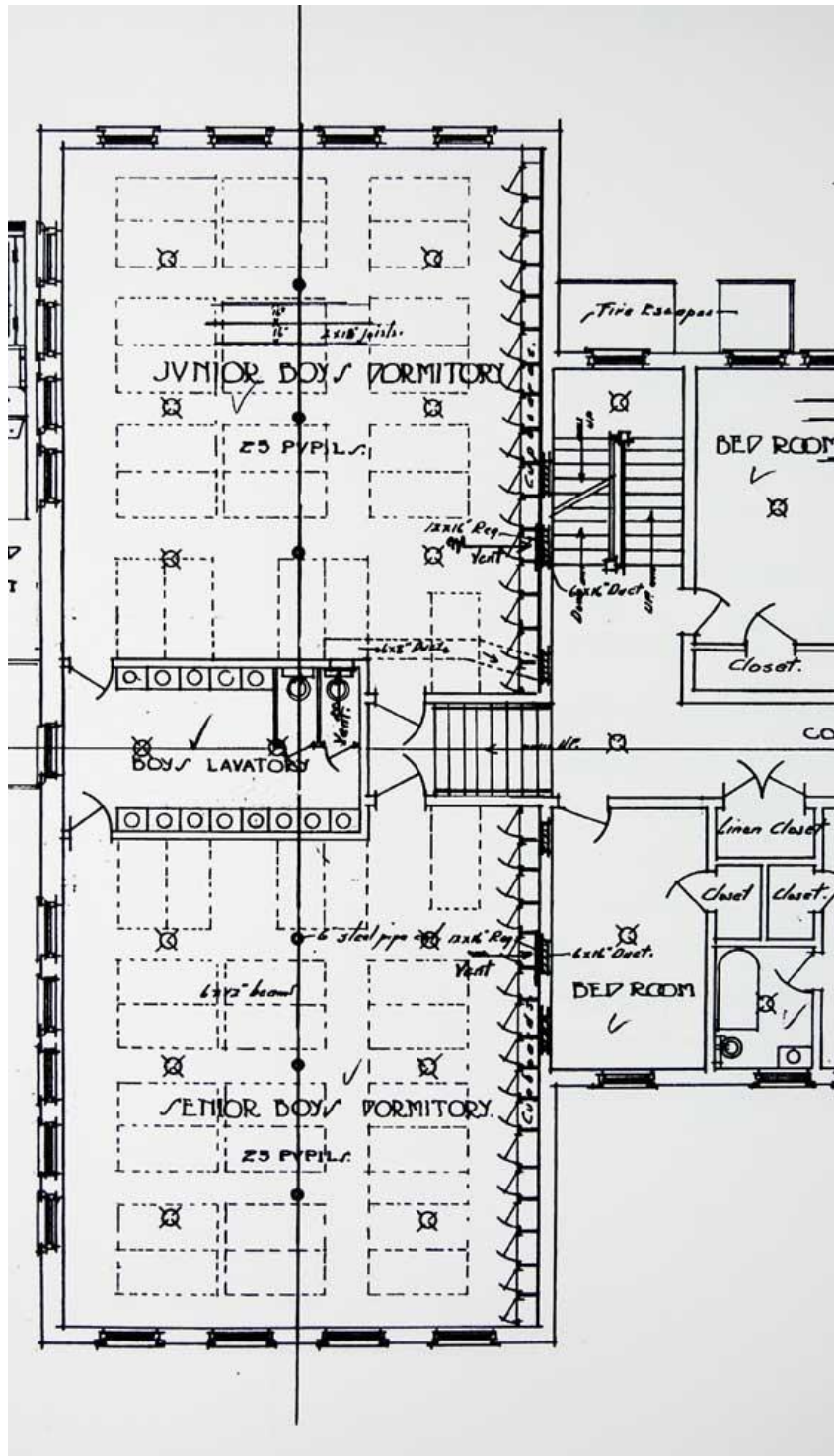
**Figure 1. 10** - Architectural plan: Kuper Island Residential School, 1914, R.M. Ogilvie, architect. Ground floor. © Indian and Northern Affairs. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2011. Source: Library and Archives Canada / Indian and Northern Affairs / RG22M 77803 / 111 Item 843.



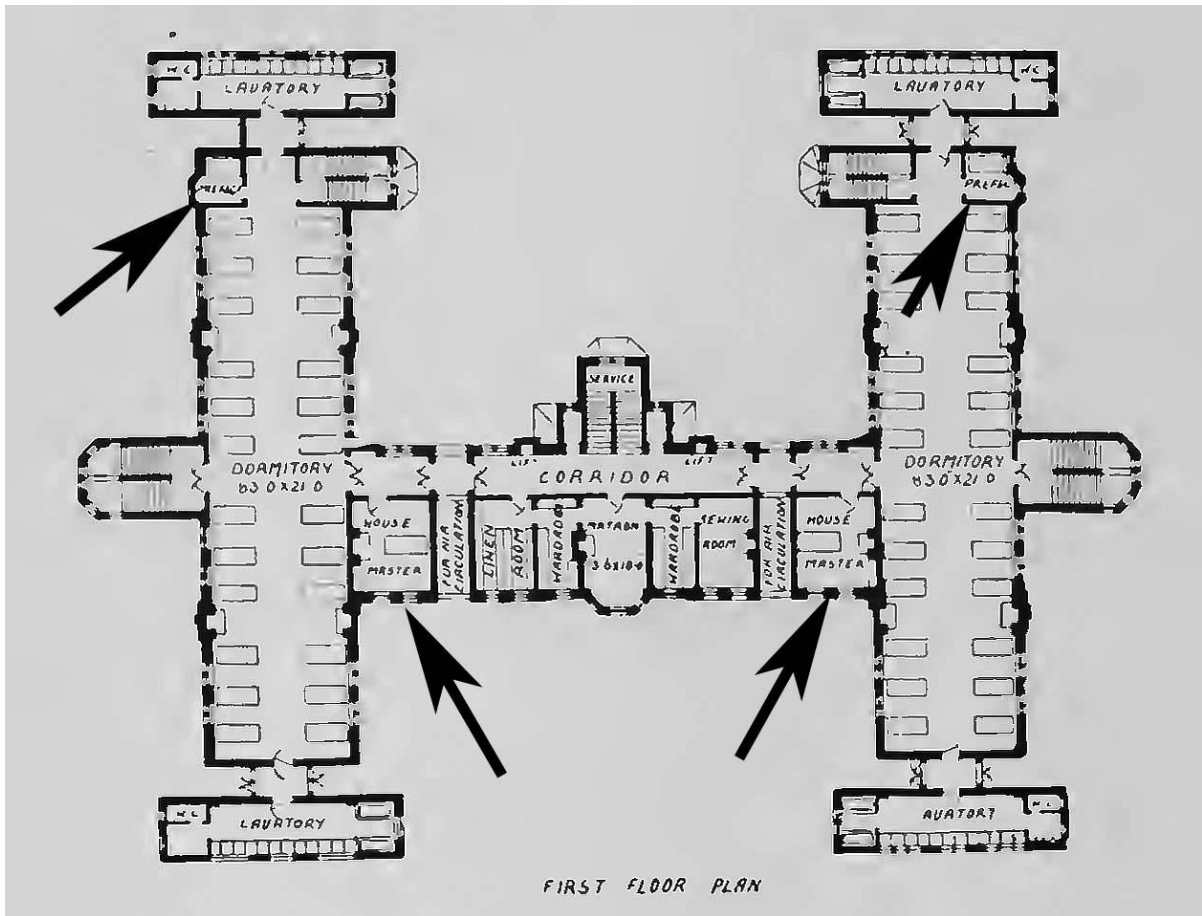
**Figure 1. 11** - Architectural plan: Kuper Island Residential School, 1914, R.M. Ogilvie, architect. First floor. © Indian and Northern Affairs. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2011. Source: Library and Archives Canada / Indian and Northern Affairs / RG22M 77803 / 111 Item 844.



**Figure 1.12** - Architectural plan: St. Eugene Indian Residential School, 1911, Allan Keefer, architect. Detail, second floor. © Indian and Northern Affairs. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2009. Source: Library and Archives Canada / Indian and Northern Affairs / RG22M 77803 / 111 Item 1068.

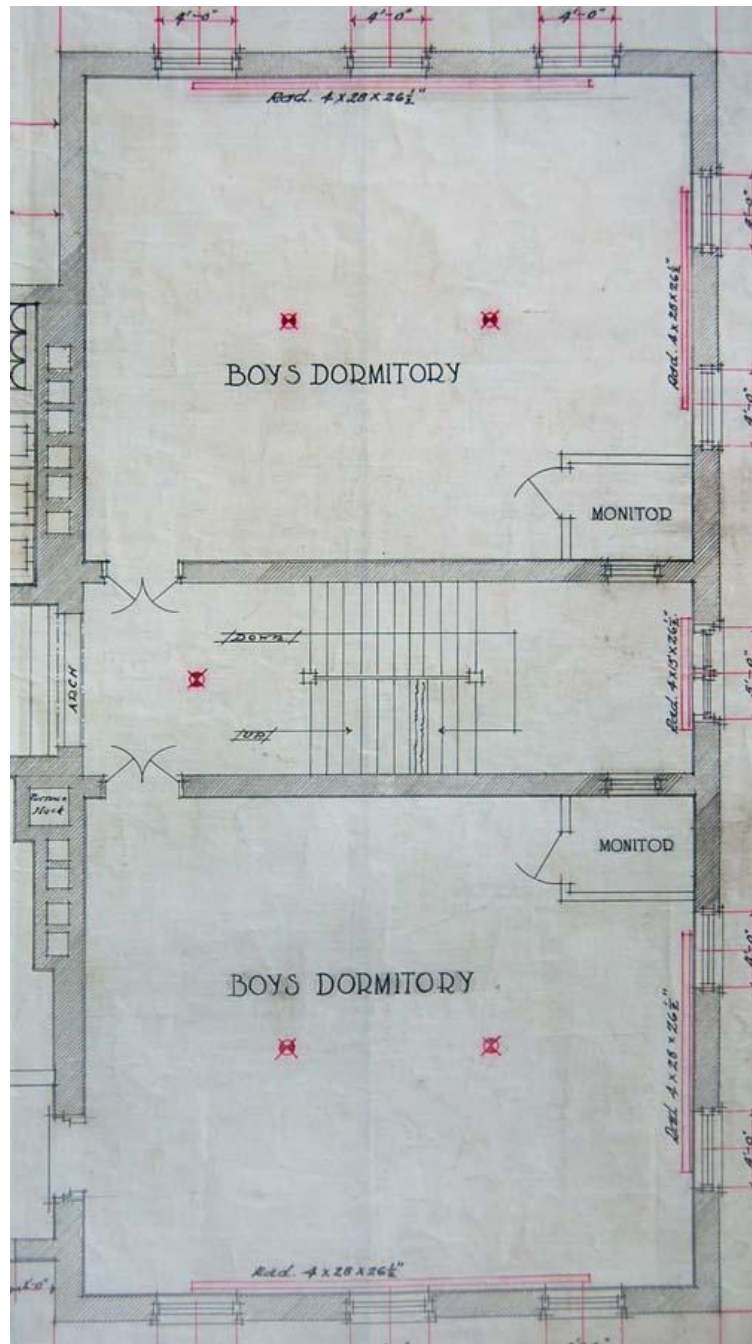


**Figure 2. 1** - Architectural plan: Lejac (Stuart Lake) Indian Residential School, 1919, R. G. Orr, architect. Detail, second floor. © Indian and Northern Affairs. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada (2009). Source: Library and Archives Canada / Indian and Northern Affairs / NMC 178063

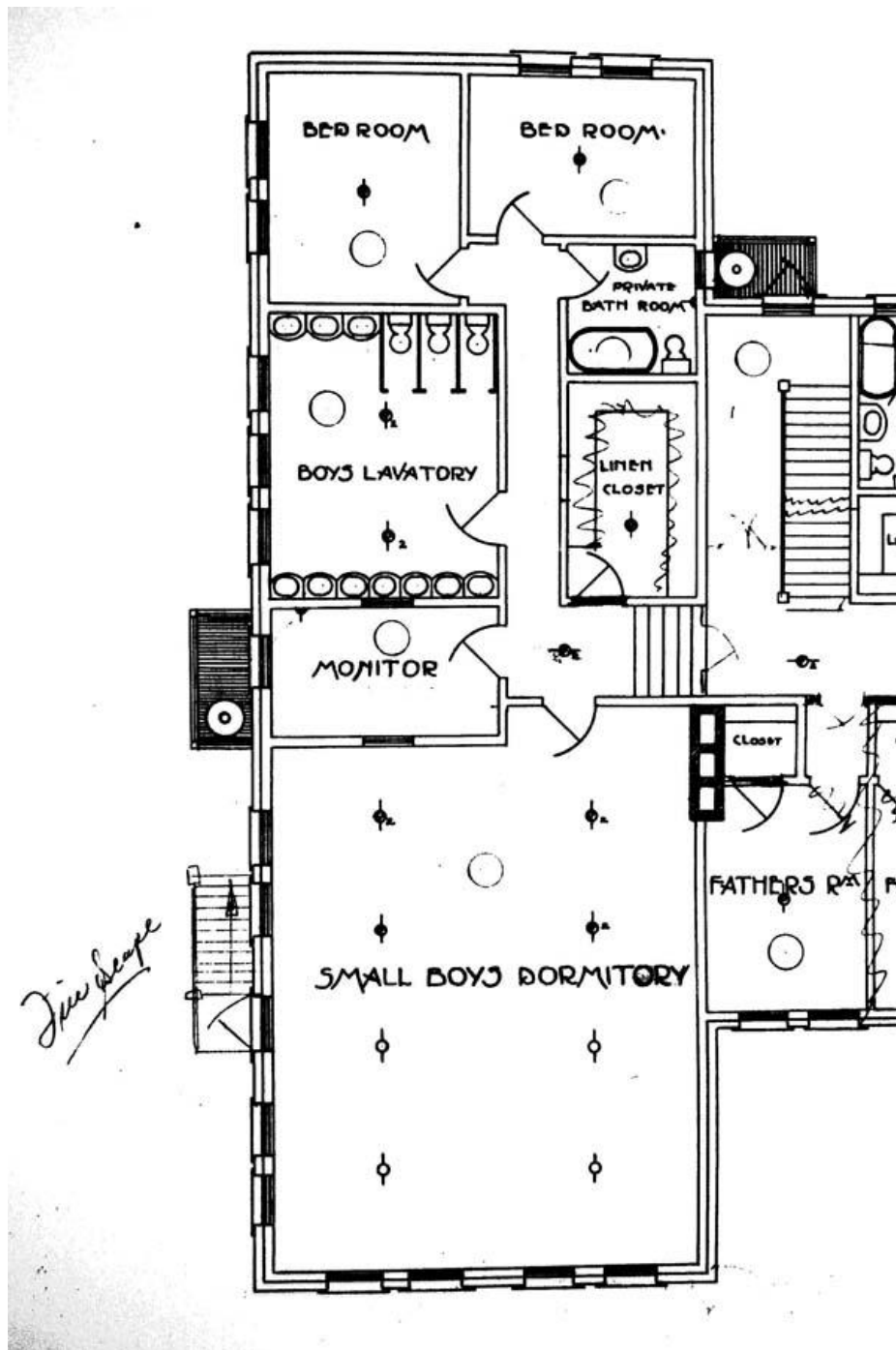


**Figure 2. 2** - Architectural plan: “One of Boarding-Houses, New Buildings, Christ’s Hospital, Horsham,” architect(s) unknown. Source: Felix Clay, *Modern School Buildings* (1906), 230. Bottom arrows indicate “House Master” quarters; upper arrows indicate “prefect” quarters.

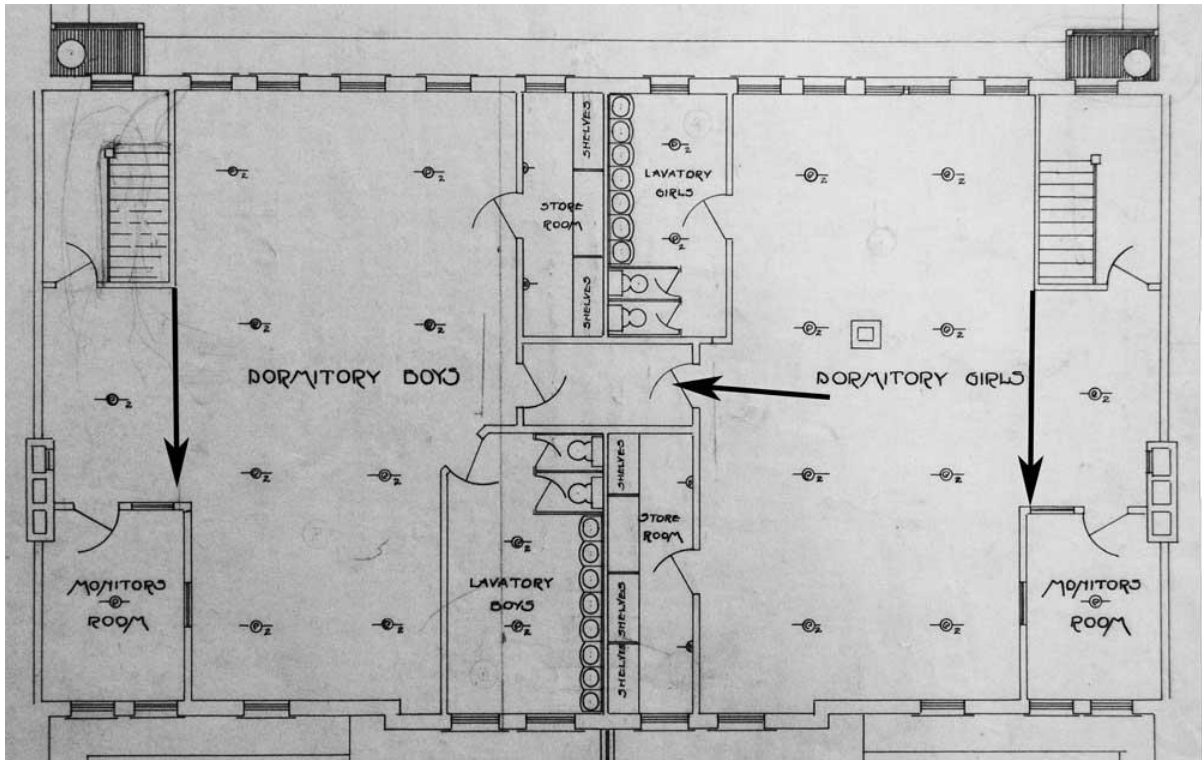




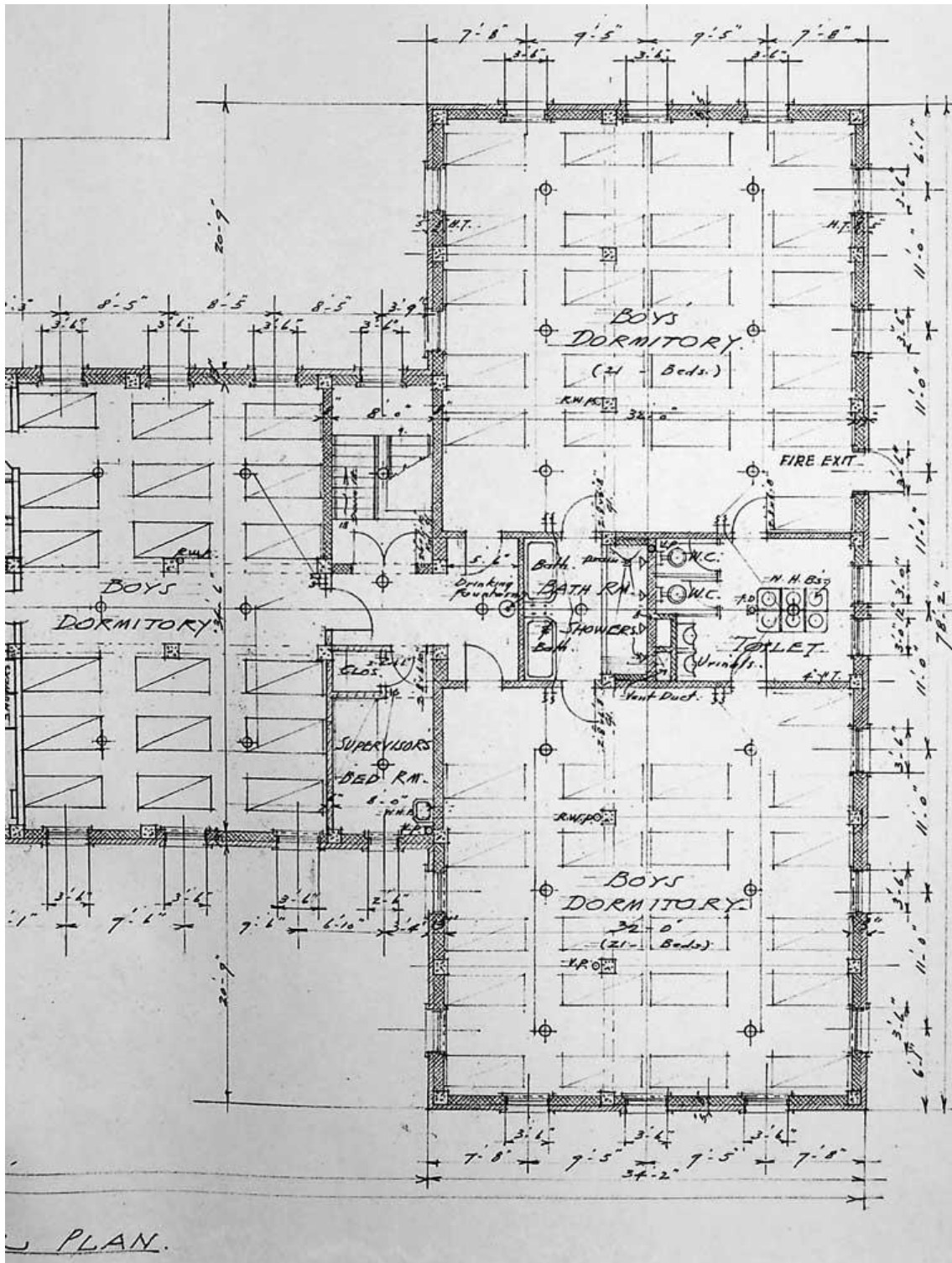
**Figure 2.3** - Architectural plan: St. Eugene Indian Residential School, 1911, Allan Keefer, architect. Detail, second floor. © Indian and Northern Affairs. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2009. Source: Library and Archives Canada / Indian and Northern Affairs / RG22M 77803 / 111 Item 1068.



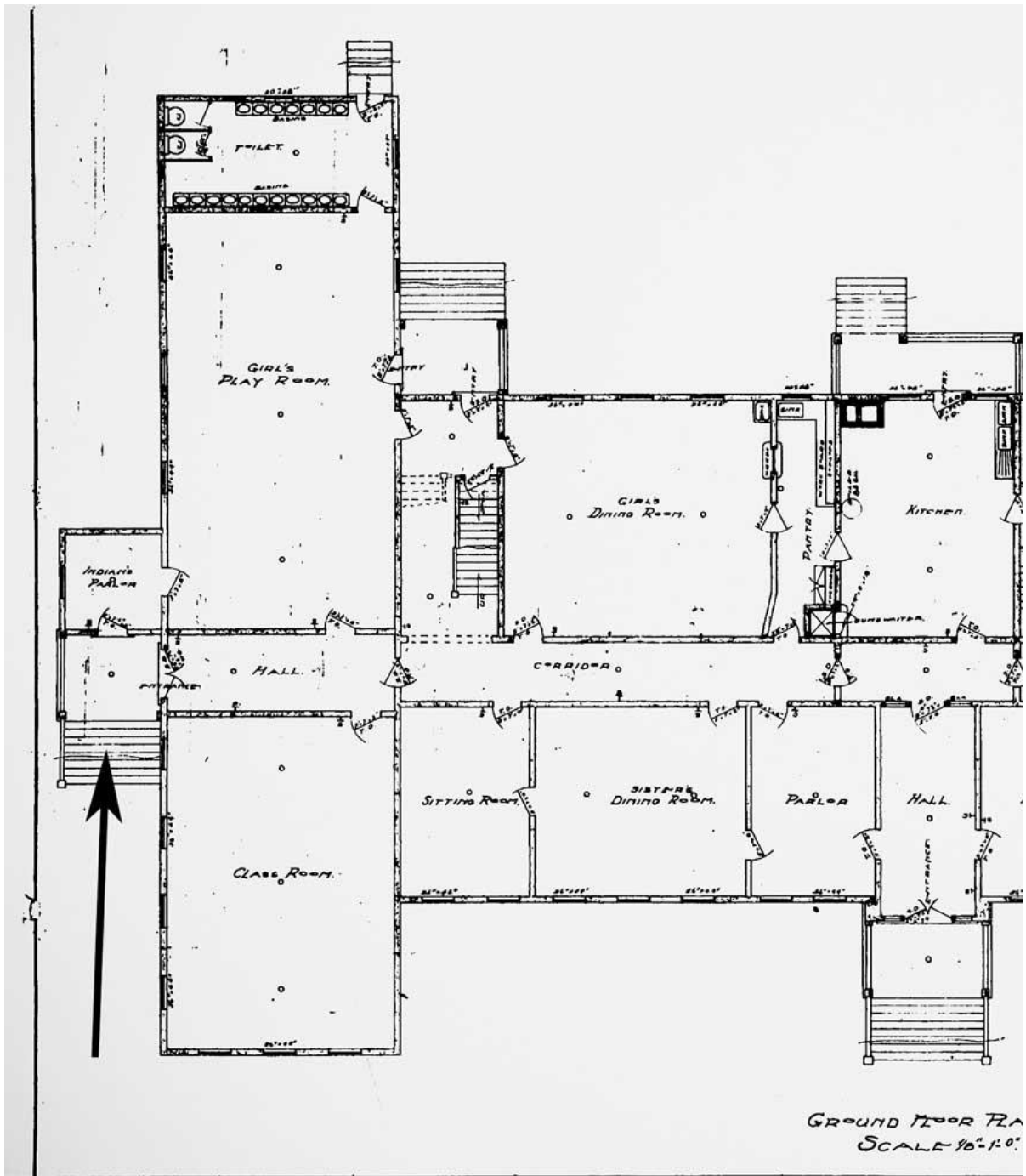
**Figure 2. 4** - Architectural plan: Kuper Island Residential School, 1914, R.M. Ogilvie, architect. Detail, first floor. © Indian and Northern Affairs. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2009. Source: Library and Archives Canada / Indian and Northern Affairs / RG22M 77803 / 111 Item 844.



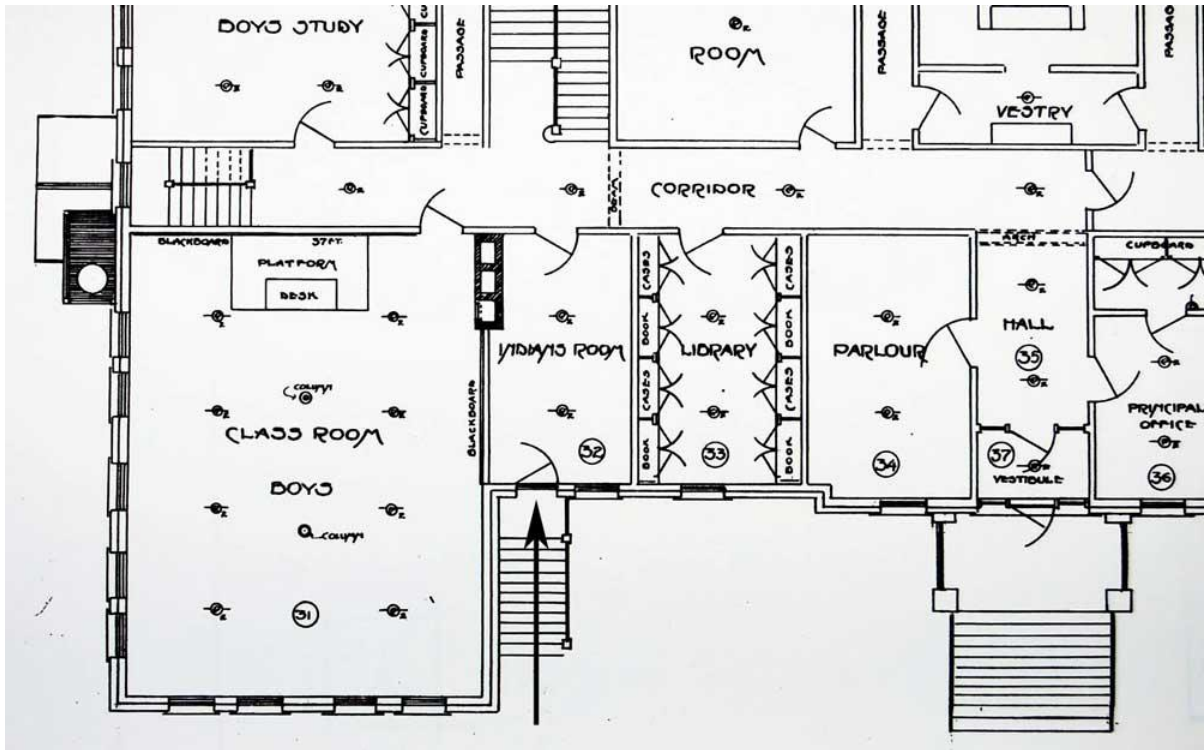
**Figure 2.5** - Architectural plan: Kuper Island Residential School, 1914, R.M. Ogilvie, architect. Second floor. © Indian and Northern Affairs. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2009. Source: Library and Archives Canada / Indian and Northern Affairs / NMC 177332. Central arrow indicates omitted passageway; left and right arrows indicate open plan later partitioned with walls.



**Figure 2. 6** - Architectural plan: Alberni Island Residential School, 1939, J. Halley, architect. Second floor, detail. © Indian and Northern Affairs. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2011. Source: Library and Archives Canada / Indian and Northern Affairs / Q4-46489-B.



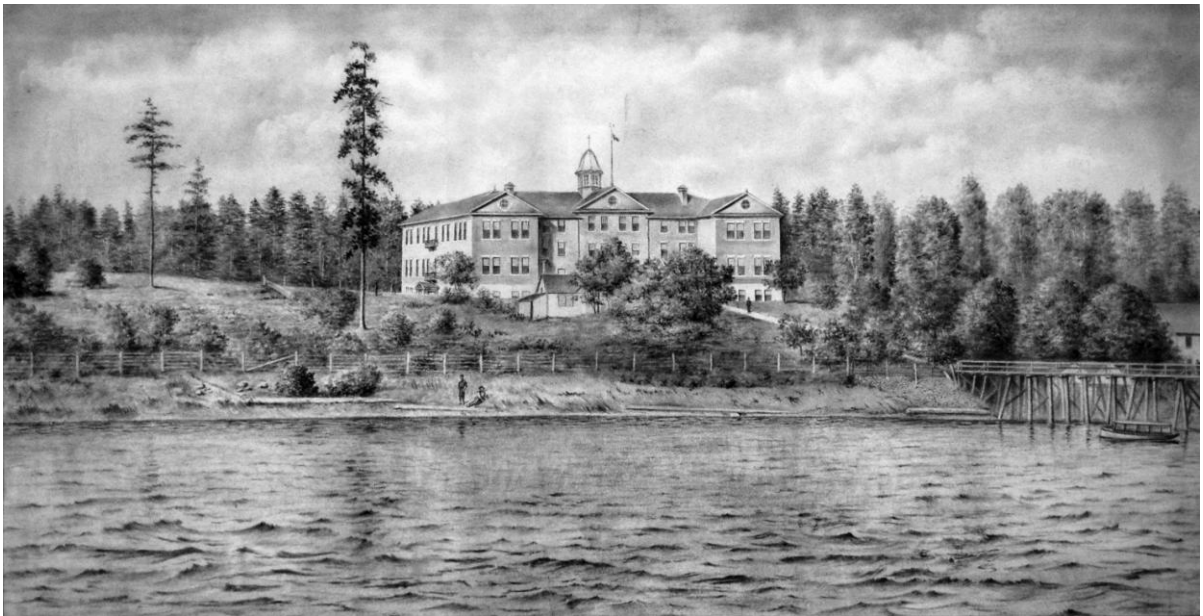
**Figure 2. 7** Architectural plan: industrial school, N.D., E.E. Blackmore, architect. Ground floor, detail. © Indian and Northern Affairs. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2011. Source: Library and Archives Canada / Indian and Northern Affairs / RG22M 77803 / 111 Item 123. Arrow indicates entranceway to “Indians Parlor.”



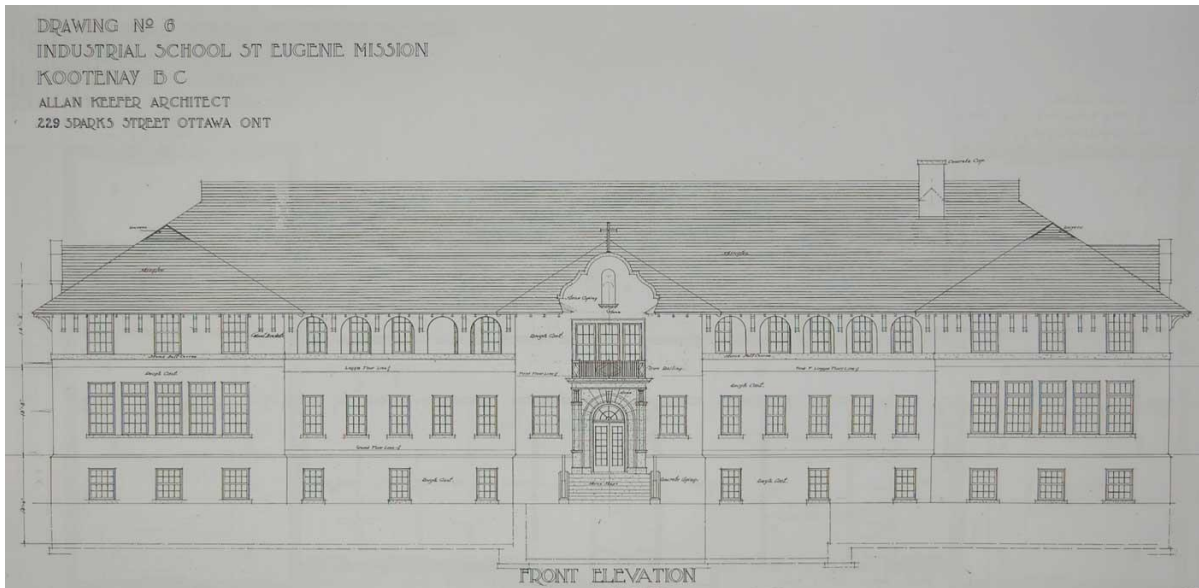
**Figure 2. 8** - Architectural plan: Kuper Island Residential School, 1914, R.M. Ogilvie, architect. Ground floor, detail. © Indian and Northern Affairs. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2011. Source: Library and Archives Canada / Indian and Northern Affairs / RG22M 77803 / 111 Item 843. Arrow indicates entranceway to “Indians Room.”



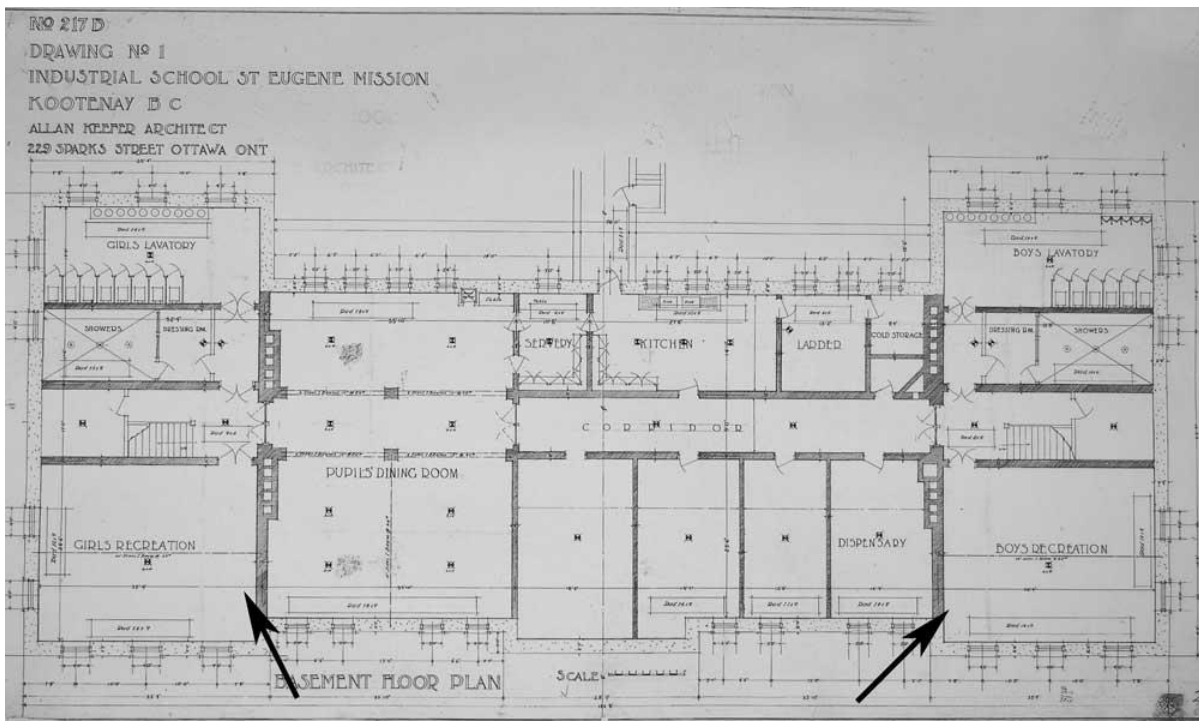
**Figure 2. 9** - “Mount Brenton from Kuper Island” (1915), Elizabeth Labossière (Sister Mary Osithe, RC). Courtesy of the British Columbia Archives, PDP05509. Photo: Geoffrey Carr (2008).



**Figure 2. 10** - “Kuper Island Residential School: View From Water” (c.1915), Elizabeth Labossière (Sister Mary Osithe, RC). Courtesy of the British Columbia Archives, PDP05505. Photo: Geoffrey Carr (2008).



**Figure 2. 11** - Architectural plan: St. Eugene Indian Residential School, 1911, Allan Keefer, architect. Façade elevation. © Indian and Northern Affairs. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada (2009). Source: Library and Archives Canada / Indian and Northern Affairs / RG22M 77803 / 111 Item 1067



**Figure 3. 1** - Architectural plan: St. Eugene Indian Residential School, 1911, Allan Keefer, architect. Basement floor. © Indian and Northern Affairs. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada (2009). Source: Library and Archives Canada / Indian and Northern Affairs / RG22M 77803 / 111 Item 1070. Arrows indicate “Recreation Rooms.”





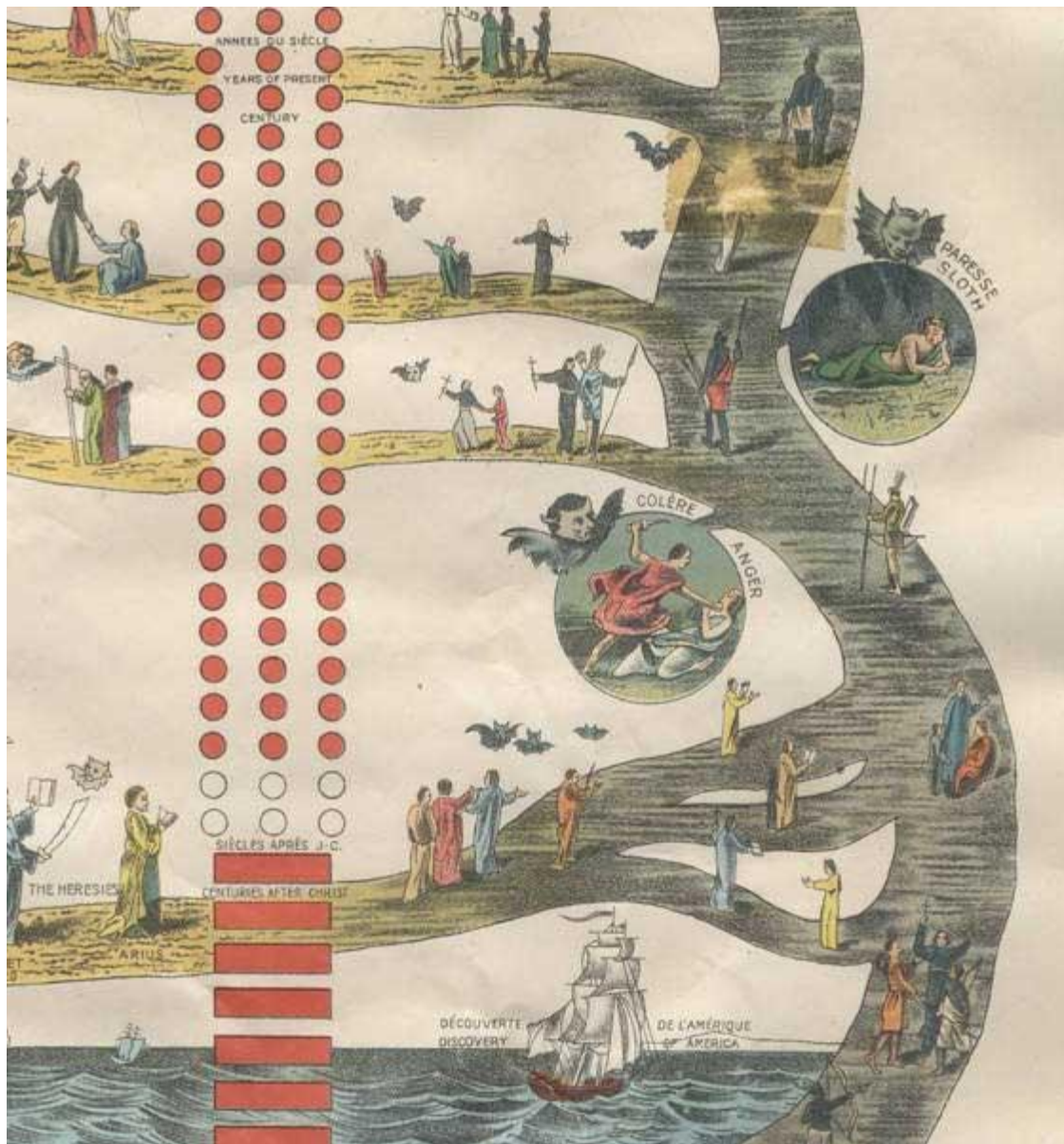
**Figure 3. 2** - St. Michael's Indian Residential School, Alert Bay, BC. Small bell tower atop corridor between main building and chapel (assembly hall). Photo: Geoffrey Carr (2009). Arrow indicates tower.



**Figure 3.3** - “Lacombe’s Ladder,” detail (1895-1896). Courtesy of Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University Libraries.

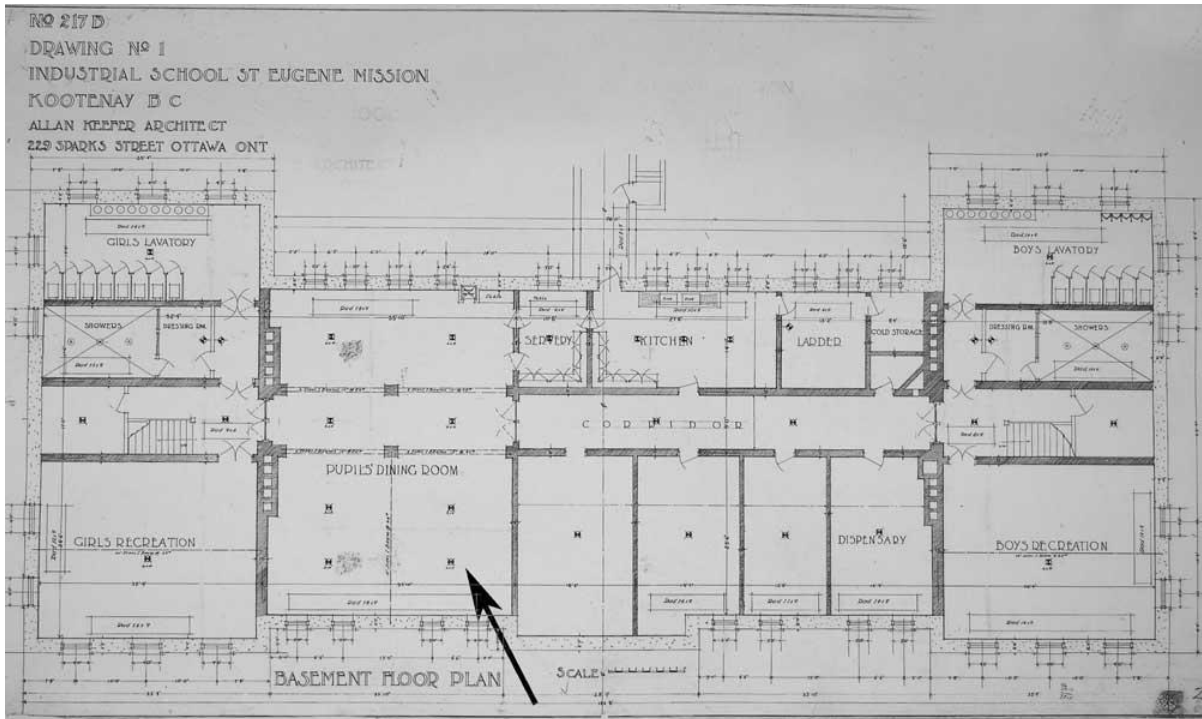


**Figure 3. 4** - “Lacombe’s Ladder,” detail (1895-1896). Courtesy of Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University Libraries.

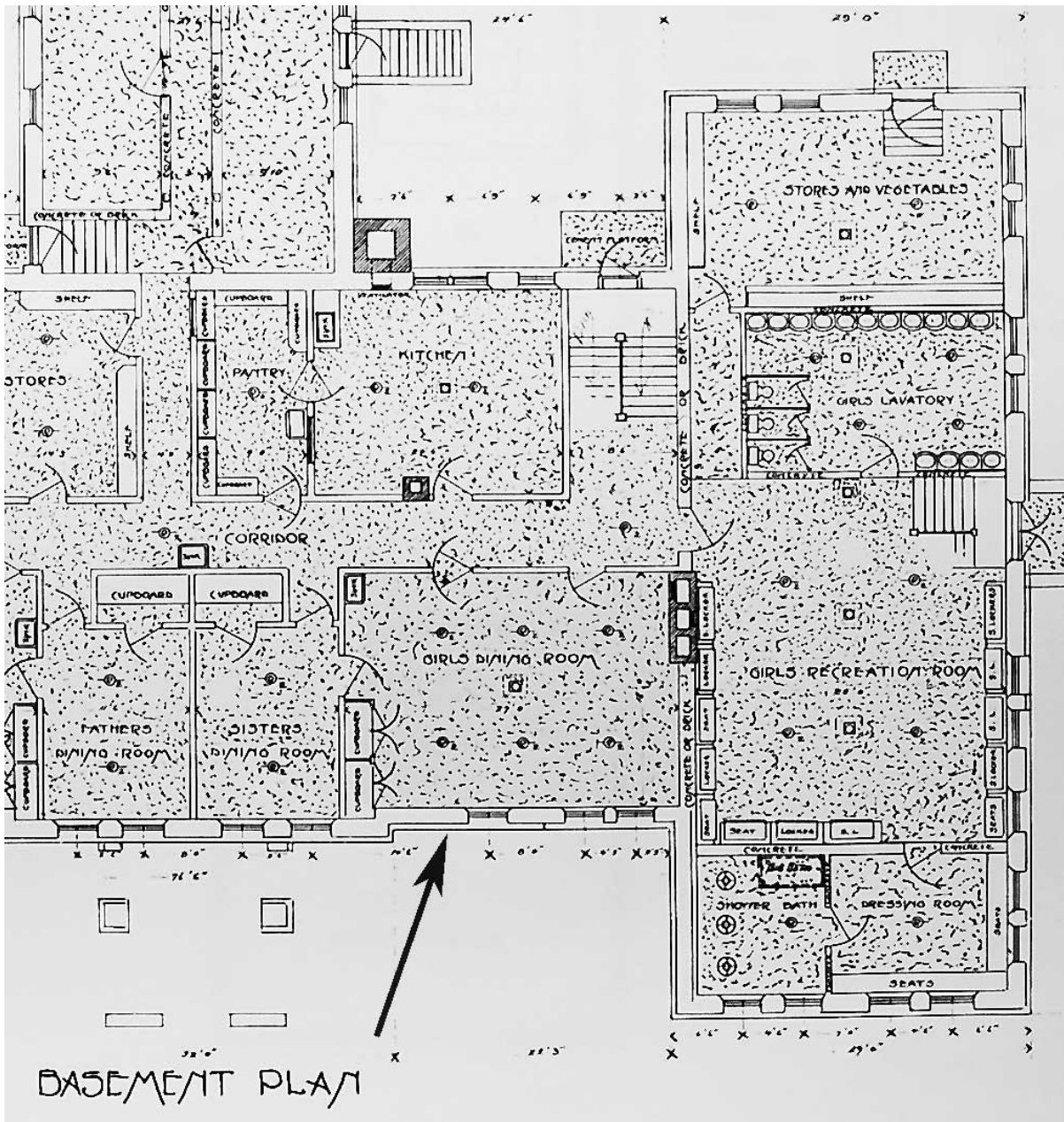


**Figure 3.5** - “Lacombe’s Ladder,” detail (1895-1896). Courtesy of Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University Libraries.





**Figure 3. 7** - Architectural plan: St. Eugene Indian Residential School, 1911, Allan Keefer, architect. Basement floor. © Indian and Northern Affairs. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada (2009). Source: Library and Archives Canada / Indian and Northern Affairs / RG22M 77803 / 111 Item 1070. Arrows indicate “Dining Room.”



**Figure 3.8** - Architectural plan: Kuper Island Residential School, 1914, R.M. Ogilvie, architect. Basement floor, detail. © Indian and Northern Affairs. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2011. Source: Library and Archives Canada / Indian and Northern Affairs / RG22M 77803 / 111 Item 842. Arrow indicates gender-segregated “Girls Dining Room.”



**Figure 4. 1** - St Eugene Golf Resort & Casino, Cranbrook (BC). Photo: Geoffrey Carr (2009)



**Figure 4. 2** - Renovated chapel interior, Chief David Meeting Room. Photo: Geoffrey Carr (2009)





**Figure 4.3** - Tribute to Human Rights, 1989, Melvin Charney, designer. Ottawa, photo: Geoffrey Carr (2008). Front view.



**Figure 4. 4** - Tribute to Human Rights, 1989, Melvin Charney, designer. Ottawa, photo: Geoffrey Carr (2008).Side view.



**Figure 4. 5** - Tribute to Human Rights, 1989, Melvin Charney, designer. Ottawa, photo: Geoffrey Carr (2008). Front view, detail.



**Figure 4. 6** - Tribute to Human Rights, 1989, Melvin Charney, designer. Ottawa, photo: Geoffrey Carr (2008). Interior passageway, with plaques inscribed in Indigenous languages.



**Figure 4. 7** - St Eugene Church, 1897, architect unknown. St Mary's Reserve, near Cranbrook, BC. Photo: Geoffrey Carr (2009).



**Figure 4. 8** - St Paul's Catholic Church, 1884, architect unknown. North Vancouver, photo: Geoffrey Carr (2008)



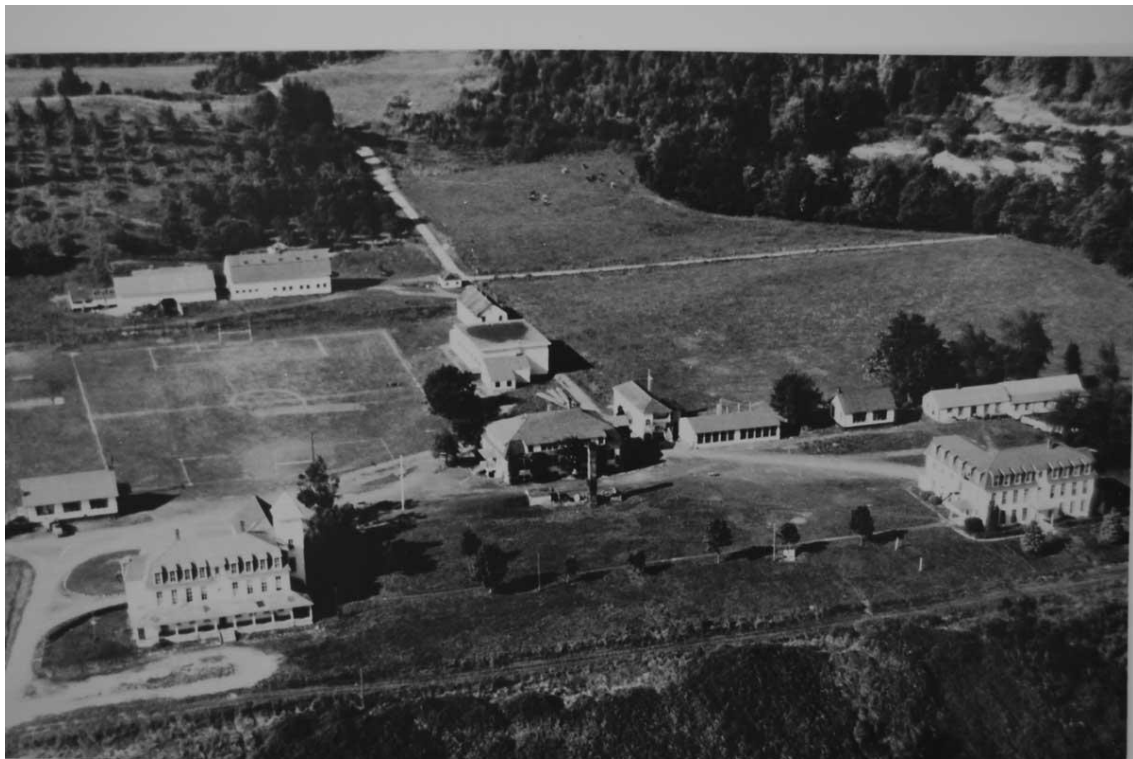
**Figure 4. 9** - St Paul's Catholic Church, 1884, architect unknown. North Vancouver, photo: Geoffrey Carr (2009).



**Figure 4. 10** - St Paul's Indian Residential School, 1898, architect unknown. North Vancouver. Courtesy of North Vancouver Archives: 3931-10.



**Figure 4. 11** - St Mary's Mission School, Girls Residence, 1883-1884, architect unknown. Mission, BC: courtesy of Mission Community Archives.



**Figure 4. 12** - Aerial View of St Mary's Mission School, BC, N.D.: courtesy of Mission Community Archives.





**Figure 4. 13** - Photo caption reads "Carrying the Lady to the Grotto". St Mary's Mission, Mission, BC, N.D.: courtesy of Mission Community Archives.



**Figure 4. 14** - Marian Shrine, Fraser Valley Heritage Park, Mission, BC. Photo: Geoffrey Carr (2010)



**Figure 4. 15** - Stó:lō Nation Pavilion, Fraser Valley Heritage Park, Mission, BC. Photo: Geoffrey Carr (2010)



**Figure 4. 16** - Stó:lō Nation Pavilion, Fraser Valley Heritage Park, Mission, BC. Photo: Geoffrey Carr (2010).



**Figure 4. 17** - St Michael's Indian Residential School, Alert Bay, BC. Photo: Geoffrey Carr (2009)



**Figure 4. 18** - St Michael's Indian Residential School, Alert Bay, BC. Sinks in Boys Dormitory. Photo: Geoffrey Carr (2009).

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## Appendix: Questionnaire

1. Had you ever seen, visited, or been told about a residential school before you first attended?
2. If so, what did you feel when you first encountered or heard about a residential school?
3. When you first entered the school building how did it impact your senses of smell, sight, hearing, taste, or touch?
4. How did you cope with the way dormitories separated children from family members and members of the opposite sex?
5. How did you cope with the lack of privacy in the dorms?
6. Did you ever spend time in the infirmary?
7. If so, what can you say about the experience of medical attention in these places?
8. What are your memories of services in the chapel?
9. What can you recall about the dining area and the service of food?
10. What different work duties were expected of you, and where on the site or in the building did you work?
11. Did you receive any trades or domestic training? And if so where in the building was such training conducted?
12. Where specifically in the building did family members visit students and how were these visits supervised?
13. How were these boundaries between student areas and staff areas enforced?
14. Were there areas of the building or site where you felt like you were being more closely watched or controlled?
15. What areas of the building/site did you feel least watched and controlled?
16. What areas of the building were used more often for the public display of disciplining students?
17. Where in the building did you feel the most afraid?

18. Did you ever feel at home in the residential school? After you left the residential school, did you feel like you belonged in your home community?

19. Have you ever returned to the site of your former school?

20. If so, how did this make you feel?

21. Did you enter the building?

22. Do you think that former school buildings and sites should be preserved and have memorials built on site to remind all Canadians of this difficult past?