

KILLING THE INDIAN IN THE CHILD: MATERIALITIES OF DEATH AND POLITICAL
FORMATIONS OF LIFE IN THE CANADIAN INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

Bryanne Huston Young: *Killing the Indian in the Child: Materialities of Death and Political Formations of Life in the Canadian Indian Residential School System*
Under the direction of Della Pollock

Drawing on archival materials, including legislation and policy under the *Indian Act* (1876), and contemporary accounts circulated in the Canadian news media, this dissertation brings together theories of biopolitics and psychoanalytic accounts of the death drive to explore strategies of subject-formation and self-making within the circuitry of the Canadian Indian Residential School System (IRS), 1883-1996. The dissertation excavates some of the IRS founding mythologies, the logics subtending it, and elaborates some of its effects. Provoked by the IRS *quo animo*, “Kill the Indian in the Child,” the dissertation asks: 1) By what logics did “killing the Indian in the child” register in the colonial commonsense? In other words, how did this paradoxical warrant to simultaneously sacrifice and save (sacrifice *to* save) make sense? 2) Within the IRS, how was this figurative itinerary literalized on actual child bodies? By what means, and along which axes, was “the Indian” sliced from “the child,” and the former exposed to death and the latter subjected to *technes* of saving? 4) What kinds of politics did this paradoxical warrant of simultaneous death and saving inaugurate, produce, formalize?

Examining the promise and limitations of archives, the dissertation resists recuperative action towards the redemption of subjects and subjectivities as lost but knowable objects. Instead, I point to events, subjectivities, moments, and bodies that seem to ‘slip’ or ‘overflow’ the archive, that direct us to indeterminate spaces of partial presence. In so doing I pursue a form of performative encounter with that which importantly remains unfixed. Each chapter frames its own form of writing into disappearance, and is less concerned with ratifying the veracity of a particular account than in understanding the terms that structure its non-recoverability through and against the archival drive to fix and claim. Considering the

untimely quality of IRS violence, I consider the disappearance of the Indigenous child body as a sign whose tenuous evidentiary status connects questions of sexuality and colonial worlding with the logistical workings out of the fantasy of eradication through the mundane operations of everyday life.

This work is dedicated to my brother, who, though he is younger in years, has taught me so much about living.

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Grosz saw promise and value in my work when I was just starting out, when the contours were only very faintly defined. Liz's feedback and support continues to be immensely sustaining, and her unflagging generosity has deepened my understanding and appreciation of feminism, while her pragmatic advice for ongoing learning has given me a scaffold to build upon. Kimberly Lamm jumped into the fray with vibrancy, energy, and full presence. The dissertation committee was greatly enriched by her membership, and the second chapter especially owes much to her own research and breadth of knowledge in feminist literatures, most especially those pertaining to psychoanalysis. I look forward to many productive and lively conversations to come! Sarah Dempsey, likewise, joined the dissertation committee with great generosity and spirit. Her orientation towards social justice provided a much-needed perspective that continues to guide both the pragmatic matters of writing and organization, as well as focusing theory towards the trouble and complexity of contemporary and historical life. In short, I could not have asked for, or indeed imagined, a more engaged, generous, and intelligent coterie of mentors. The best moments in this dissertation are owed to them.

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particularly sharpened by Drew's feedback; his thoughtful critique, insight, and wide breadth of theoretical knowledge made this project so much better than it would otherwise have been. These intellectual contributions would be singular on their own, but they accompany an exceptional sensitivity and a most extraordinary sort of kindness. Drew picked me up again and again when the archive of cruelty, depravity, and sadism my research saw me sorting through each day brought me to my knees. He continues to lift me up.

My father David Young passed away suddenly one year into my doctoral work. My dad taught me to see shadows on the snow in shades of blue-green, he taught me to trace the purple light. Through artist's eyes, he taught me to see the world. I don't paint or sculpt as much as I used to, but this way of seeing has opened into a world of language written in snow towards the vanishing point of a moving sky. He is in every page.

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CHAPTER 1: Bodily Archives: Tracing Death in Colonial Worldings

A child's body is a record of everything that has happened to it.
(Donoghue 2016)

For most of 2012 and all of 2013, Canadian civil litigation lawyer Fay Brunning fought to get the federal government to hand over documents pertaining to the St. Anne Indian Residential School. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), established in 2008 to investigate the Canadian Indian Residential School System (IRS), describes St Anne's as having some of the worst cases of abuse of all the Indian Residential Schools in Canada. Students at St Anne's, located near Fort Albany in Northern Ontario, were taken from their families at five or six years of age. Once at the school they were subjected to sexual and physical abuse, forced to eat vomit, and placed in an electric chair. Edmund Metatawabin, a survivor of the school, describes children strapped one after another into a metal chair. "Your feet is flying around you," he told the *Canadian Broadcast Corporation (CBC)* in December 2013, "and that was funny for the missionaries. So all you hear is that jolt of electricity and your reaction, and laughter at the same time" ("St. Anne's"). The TRC completed a seven-year study into the IRS in June 2015. Under its purview, the federal and provincial governments were compelled to release records and documents pertaining to the oversight of the state-sponsored, church-run institutions, which operated in Canada between 1883-1996. As previously classified information about the schools continues to be made public, and more survivors speak out against the abuse they suffered there, Metatawabin's testimony, while losing none of its descriptive force and affective resonance, has become commonplace. Abuse (physical, sexual, psychic) in the schools was pervasive and systemic; conditions were, in many instances, insufficient to sustain life. Within the schools, whose daily operations were overseen by the Christian

Churches, children regularly died of preventable illness, neglect, and malnutrition. In total 150,000 Aboriginal children passed through the IRS. It is difficult, now, to calculate the total number of students who died while at the schools or shortly after returning home. Some ran away, while others are buried in unmarked graves; some simply disappeared. The TRC Final Report estimates the number to be between 6,000 and as many as half of the children who attended the IRS. The ordinance of the IRS was: “Kill the Indian in the Child.”¹

A Brief History of the IRS and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

This dissertation takes up the history of the IRS, inaugurated in 1883 by the federal government of Canada and which existed until 1996, when the Gordon Residential School (located in the Province of Saskatchewan) closed. The government-funded, church-run system of Indian boarding schools had extended across all Canadian provinces and territories, including the Arctic (Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut).² The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report recognizes 138 Indian Residential Schools, which, together, formed the Canadian Indian Residential School System. This dissertation does not focus on any specific era of residential schooling, or geographical area, however many of the archival fragments I consider fall between 1930 and 1950, the era in which the initiative was at its most intense. The Métis and Inuit experiences of residential schooling—complex and significant as they are—are beyond the scope of my analysis.

¹ By using the term “ordinance” here, though it might seem aesthetically awkward at the sentence level, I point to the word’s polyvalence along the following registers: 1) A piece of legislation enacted by a municipal authority, 2) An authoritative order; a decree, synonymous to a command, dictum, directive, law, injunction etc., 3) A prescribed religious rite, aligned with a sacrament, ritual, rite, or observance, 4) Further, the origin of the word, from Middle English (also in the sense ‘arrangement in ranks’): from Old French *ordenance*, from medieval Latin *ordinantia*, from Latin *ordinare* ‘put in order.’ My argument is that the performative force of each converges in, and contributes force to, the dictum: “Kill the Indian in the Child.”

² There were 25 schools in Alberta; 18 schools in British Columbia; 14 schools in Manitoba; 14 schools in the Northwest Territories; 1 school in Nova Scotia; 13 schools in Nunavut; 17 schools in Ontario; 10 schools in Quebec; 20 schools in Saskatchewan; 6 schools in the Yukon. 63 of these schools were Catholic; 1 was Baptist; 30 were Anglican; 3 were Mennonite (all in Ontario); 19 were non-denominational, 11 of which were in Nunavut; 4 were Presbyterian; 13 were United. See Appendix A for a more detailed breakdown of the schools’ locations, and the corresponding denomination in charge of each school.

In what follows I outline some key features of IRS history, including the roles of the federal government, who funded the enterprise, and the Christian Churches, who oversaw and carried out the day-to-day operations.³ This summary is emphatically not a full account of the IRS history. Providing such an account would necessarily consider the history of European empires and imperial conquest and would need to begin long before the school system was concatenated. Writing from outside the discipline of History, but framing some comments about it, I must begin by observing that the history of residential schooling in Canada is also the history of Europe: how Europe constituted its others and thereby constituted itself. Accordingly, the IRS must be interpreted within European ethnocentric policies on First Peoples, attitudes and patterns that repeated throughout the colonial and postcolonial world and which I, following Ann Laura Stoler, call “the colonial commonsense.”⁴ Furthermore, IRS history marks some of the ways Canadian sovereignty was extracted through programmatic assaults on First Nations: weakening tribal councils and Aboriginal leaderships, smashing traditional kinship structures, unhoming First Nations from ancestral hunting grounds, and orphaning their children.

This dissertation offers a historiography, writing on and about history, but it does not offer a story of archival fullness or historical completeness. Through the research and writing of this dissertation I have become keenly sensitive to the fact that to say anything is to omit so much more; these worlding omissions can cut, efface, wound. The dissertation project explicitly works against efforts to construct a complete picture of the IRS. Accordingly, I hesitate to recite more than the barest of facts necessary to enter into the lifeworld of the dissertation. If readers are interested in a more completely rendered history, one can be found in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report on the IRS.⁵ This seven-

³ The TRC Final Report indicates the involvement of the following Christian Churches in the oversight of Indian Residential Schools: Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Mennonite, Presbyterian, and the United Church. See Appendix B for a more detailed breakdown.

⁴ Much of Stoler’s work centers on the colonial commonsense. For a concise and engaging exegesis on this concept, see: Stoler, Ann Laura. *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Commonsense*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009.

⁵ The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 2015. The seven-volume Final Report (pub. 2015) is available through McGill-Queen’s

volume report makes a laudable attempt to consider as much of the dense conjunctural complexity of Indian residential schooling in Canada as possible, from Indigenous perspectives as well as through traditional Western historical paradigms of discovery and reporting. Key augmentations to this history exist in performance art responses and oral history testimony by survivors, the latter of which are available online, in print, and in museum spaces throughout Canada.⁶

The Canadian Indian Residential School System was officially inaugurated in 1883. Although there had been many independent church-run schools before confederation (1867), it was not until 1883 that the federal government concatenated these schools together to form a network or system—though, “network” and “system” are terms that imply more coordination and oversight than what the IRS, in fact, embodied. In announcing the plan, Public Works Minister Hector Langevin told the House of Commons: “In order to educate the children properly, we must separate them from their families. Some people say

University Press. The entire report is within the public domain. Key elements of the commission, its mandate, and its findings are also available through the TRC website. See: <http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=3>

⁶ One very significant performance art intervention into the TRC history and archivization is the Witness Blanket, which is an installation inspired by a woven blanket, created in the form of a large scale art installation. The “blanket” is made out of hundreds of items reclaimed from Residential Schools, churches, government buildings and traditional and cultural structures including Friendship Centres, band offices, treatment centres and universities from across Canada. The Witness Blanket stands as a national monument to recognize the atrocities of the Indian Residential School era, honor the children, and symbolize ongoing reconciliation. See: <http://witnessblanket.ca/#!/project/>. I viewed the Witness Blanket at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg, Manitoba (RWB), in October 2016. Another art intervention into the legacy of the IRS is the Royal Winnipeg Ballet Company performance *Going Home Star: Truth and Reconciliation*. The ballet was commissioned by the TRC, which was given federal funding to put toward projects that could, in some way, transform the harrowing material shared by survivors into forms that were lasting, cohesive, powerful and collective. The ballet explores the world of Annie, a young, urban, First Nations woman adrift in a contemporary life of youthful excess. But when she meets Gordon, a longhaired trickster disguised as a homeless man, she is propelled into a world she has always sensed but never seen. Not only do they travel the streets of this place but also the roads of their ancestors, learning to accept the other’s burdens as the two walk through the past and toward the future. Together both Annie and Gordon learn that without truth, there is no reconciliation. *Going Home Star* was performed in the RWB 2015-2016 season. See: <https://rwb.org/whats-on/going-home-star>. Oral histories and first-hand accounts of the IRS from the perspective of survivors can be found at: <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/resources-researchers/Pages/residential-schools-bibliography-2009.aspx>.

that this is hard but if we want to civilize them we must do that.”⁷ The government built several schools across the Canadian West, appointed the principals (on church recommendation), and then gave the schools over to the Canadian churches to run. At their outset the schools were imagined as “industrial schools.” They were expected to prepare older students for assimilation into Euro-Canadian society by training them in trades ranging from boot-making and printing, to the garment trade, along with a basic education in farming, carpentry, cooking, and housework. The schools were deliberately located away from the reserves and were intended to complement smaller church-run boarding schools. Those schools were located on reserves but away from Aboriginal settlement. Neither the industrial nor the boarding schools offered high-school education.

From the outset, the schools were chronically under-funded, a condition that only worsened as the federal government’s budget for Indian Affairs diminished. Many schools were expected to maintain their own needs through farm labor, making their own clothing, and caring for livestock. It was expected that the schools would be essentially self-sustaining. In fact, what this approach inaugurated were conditions that were unsanitary, impoverished, riddled with disease, and chronically short on food. Children did not make adequate farm laborers as, in most instances, they were simply too small. Both students and staff died in fires, particularly in the early days of the IRS, primarily due to faulty building design and failure to maintain ventilation systems. Conditions were generally filthy, unsanitary, impoverished, and rife with abuse. Students who were supposed to be earning an education spent most of their waking hours performing the labor of grown men and women: farming, cooking, cleaning, repairing buildings, and even in the early days of the IRS, trapping food. The industrial school model quickly collapsed, as it was simply too expensive to operate, and the boarding school model persisted: isolated, under-funded, carceral.

In 1883, when the federal government under Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald gave Indian Affairs the \$44,000 needed to build the first three schools, he simultaneously cut the department’s budget

⁷ See: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Canada, Aboriginal Peoples, and Residential Schools: They Came for the Children*. Winnipeg: Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication, 2012.

by \$140,000. As a result, Indian Affairs reduced the already paltry relief rations it was providing to Western Aboriginal people at a time of food scarcity, starvation, and disease caused by the collapse of the buffalo hunt—a condition itself the result of the US sport, and European fur markets. These conditions of poverty, disease, and malnutrition contributed to the ability of the federal government to remove children from their families of origin promising them a better life. Actually, the schools were designed with the explicit intention to cut Aboriginal children off from their languages, cultures, families, and social practices with the general goal of eradicating Indianness and absorbing Indian bodies into the body politic. Accordingly, over the next fifty years, the residential school system grew dramatically. By 1931, the government was funding eighty schools. This increase was part of the government's policy to open the North and the West for white settlement.

The purpose of residential schooling was to separate children from their parents and their culture so they could be “civilized” and “Christianized.” The logic of this itinerary was that once students graduated from the IRS, they would no longer be Indians, and therefore not eligible to make claims on the state for government support—support to which status Indians were entitled under the series of treaties the federal government had signed with Aboriginal leaders in exchange for their ancestral lands. It was expected that the graduates would be self-supporting, since the schools would have instilled in them an industrial work discipline. Other than these goals, there was little unanimity, less policy, and scant regulation. The churches were absolutely essential to the survival of the school system, as they promised cheap labor and ‘moral salvation.’ Yet, there was little accord between government and church interests in the schools, how they ought to be run, and even who was in charge in day-to-day matters such as discipline and staff hiring. Policy was decided on a school-by-school basis, and newly-appointed principals often were unaware of instructions that had been sent to their predecessors. The history of the IRS is characterized by mismanagement and gross incompetence. Salaries were simply not competitive, and teachers, and other staff with other (better) options, gravitated away from the IRS.

Food policy at the schools followed a paradigm of the strictest economy and students often had either only rotten food to eat, or insufficient food to sustain their growth and maturation. Hunger is one of

the hallmarks of the IRS, and appears in an overwhelming number of survivor accounts of daily life in the IRS. Abuse was another hallmark. The approach to discipline at the schools was a biblically authorized way of keeping order and bringing children to the righteous path. There were no guidelines for how discipline ought to be dispensed and students were often thrashed, beaten, starved, locked in closets, or confined with chains when they misbehaved. The penalty for bed-wetting was typically public shaming (e.g., being forced to walk through the school cafeteria carrying one's soiled bed linens). In 1907, Principal W. McWhinney of the Presbyterian school at Kamsack, Saskatchewan, tied ropes around the wrists of boys who had run away from school and made them run behind the buggy from their houses to the school.⁸ Sexual abuse in the IRS was rampant, and prosecution utterly rare. To provide just one window into the systemic nature of this phenomenon, I offer the example of a 1990 interview between CBC's Barbara Frum and Phil Fontaine, an Ojibway First Nation leader born in Manitoba. In the interview, Fontaine states: "In my grade three class ... if there were 20 boys, every single one of them ... would have experienced what I experienced. They would have experienced some aspect of sexual abuse" ("Phil Fontaine"). As Fontaine's statements make manifestly clear, the culture of the IRS was a culture of sexual abuse.

Because of the poor conditions of life in the IRS, many students ran away. Truancy was a major problem throughout the history of the IRS. In some cases, these students died while trying to reach their homes. For this reason, the 1920 amendments to the Indian Act made school attendance mandatory, and gave school officials the right to enter the home of anyone suspected of harboring a truant, and return them to school. Anyone (e.g., a parent or relative) found harboring a runaway was subject to a monetary fine and could serve time in jail. This policy, which rendered illegal the child's body beyond the limits of the school, was part of a larger initiative aimed at eradicating 'Indianness'—which my account argues is a

⁸ See: Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Volume 1. *Canada's Residential Schools: The History, Part 1. Origins to 1938*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015. pp. 525. Print.

small but significant degree of difference away from eradicating ‘Indians’—and thereby securing Canada as sovereign state.

The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement

Well into the 1990’s, the history of the IRS and its crushing legacies remained very much outside of public notice. As a child growing up in Canada in the 1980’s I knew nothing about it. In the mid 1990’s however, due in very large part to the courageous and tireless advocacy of IRS survivors, IRS histories began to move into mainstream media and political and juridical debate. One might theorize that this movement into the public sphere was correlated with rising valorizations of Canadian multiculturalism. I suspect that such a connection, though far from being a simple matter of causality, is not far off the mark. The courage of Aboriginal people, such as Phil Fontaine, to speak publicly about painful topics, such as the sexual abuse he experienced, cannot be overstated. These survivors exerted pressure on the federal government to take seriously their claims of abuse and demands for justice by breaking the cycle of silence and shame so often fomented by long-term sexual abuse, neglect, and intimidation. In November 1996, four years after Fontaine’s much-sensationalized interview with the CBC, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) issued its final 4,000-page report with 440 recommendations. Indian residential schools were the topic of one chapter. In 1998, in response to the RCAP, the Canadian federal government unveiled an action plan entitled “Gathering Strength: Canada’s Aboriginal Action Plan,” a long-term, broad-based policy approach. The action plan included a document entitled, “Statement of Reconciliation: Learning from the Past,” in which the Government of Canada recognized and apologized to those who experienced physical and sexual abuse at Indian residential schools, and acknowledged its role in the development and administration of those schools. In 2001, the federal government created a taskforce called the Office of Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada to manage and resolve the large number of abuse claims being filed by former students against the federal government. In 2004, an Assembly of First Nations Report entitled, “Canada’s Dispute Resolution Plan to Compensate for Abuses in Indian Residential Schools,” lead to discussions to develop a holistic, fair and lasting resolution of the legacy of Indian Residential Schools.

On November 23, 2005 the Canadian federal government announced the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA), an agreement between the government of Canada and approximately 86,000 Indigenous people who had been removed from their families as children and placed in the IRS during the 20th century. The IRSSA compensation package represents the largest class-action lawsuit in Canadian history. On June 11, 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized on behalf of the federal government of Canada, and all Canadians, for the forcible removal of Aboriginal children from their homes and communities to attend Indian residential schools. In this historic apology, the Prime Minister recognized that “there is no room in Canada for the attitudes that created the residential school system to prevail” (“Statement”).

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was created as a direct result of the IRSSA. When former students of Indian residential schools decided to settle out of court with the federal government and four national churches, the launch of a TRC was part of the terms of settlement.⁹ The former students wanted to ensure that their stories would not be lost by settling out of court. The commission’s mandate was to gather the written and oral history of residential schools and to work toward reconciliation between former students and the rest of Canada. The commission was part of a holistic and comprehensive response to the abuse inflicted on Indigenous peoples through the IRS, and the harmful legacy of those institutions. The Commission was officially established on June 2, 2008, and was completed in December 2015. By August 2012, the federal government had released over 941,000 documents to the TRC related to residential schools. There were 31,970 serious sexual assault cases resolved by an independent assessment process and 5,995 claims still in progress as of the time of the

⁹ The four churches that participated in this settlement are: The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, The Presbyterian Church of Canada, the United Church of Canada, and Roman Catholic Entities. See the IRSSA at: “Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.” *Indian Residential Schools Adjudication Secretariat*. Web. <http://www.iap-pei.ca/legal/court-eng.php?act=irssa-settlement-eng.php#sthash.XdeJWsbi.dpuf>.

report's release.¹⁰ The commission was paid for with money from the out-of-court settlement, which included contributions from churches and the federal government. The settlement agreement provided the TRC with a five-year mandate and a \$60-million budget. The mandate was later extended.

The TRC held seven national events between 2010 and 2013 where they gathered stories from former students. In total, the commission collected more than 6,750 statements from former students, most of which were recorded on video. In total the TRC collected approximately 1,355 hours of video. It has also led a "Missing Children and Unmarked Graves Project" in an attempt to document the number of deaths of children at the schools. This project is ongoing. More broadly, the commission hopes that if Canadians have more knowledge of indigenous history they will have a better understanding of the background behind current policy disputes between governments and aboriginals over natural resources, education and child welfare. Currently, the TRC is officially disbanded. Their focus now is on redacting and digitizing the very large body of text surrendered to them by the federal and provincial governments.¹¹ Once this task is complete, the documents and records will be made available first to the survivors of the IRS and their families. Then, the files will be made available to the public. These files will be compiled and sent to the newly convened National Research Center for Truth and Reconciliation at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg.

A full account and analysis of the TRC is beyond the purview of this dissertation. Certainly there is much to be said about the principles of both 'truth,' and 'reconciliation,' particularly across structurally formalized power differences (i.e. between the federal government of Canada whose sovereign claims rest

¹⁰ The settlement awarded what is called a "common-experience payment" (CEP) to former students of the schools, regardless of whether they had suffered physical or sexual abuse. As of September 2015 79,272 applications for payments were paid and 23,892 were deemed ineligible. The average payment was \$20,452 and total payments were \$1.62 billion. In addition to the CEP, former students could seek damages for claims of sexual abuse or serious physical abuse through a system called the Independent Assessment Process. As of last September, 29,384 claims had been resolved (including 4,712 that were not admitted or withdrawn). The average payment was \$114,179 and the total amount of payments approved under this process stands at \$2.552 billion.

¹¹ The files and records are read by archivists and any identificatory information pertaining to individuals still living is redacted to protect their privacy.

on the continued suppression of Aboriginal sovereignty). Canadian Indigenous Studies scholar Glen Coulthard, for one, has written a sharply critical account of the principles of recognition upon which efforts to redress the past, such as the TRC, are based. Extending Frantz Fanon's critique of colonial recognition in *Black Skin, White Masks*, Coulthard underscores what he views as the false promise of recognition. Coulthard's book, *Red skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, advances, instead, a politics based on Indigenous cultural practices to envision a way to intervene into the model of recognition as a method of organizing difference and identity in liberal politics, and questioning the assumption that contemporary difference and past histories of destructive colonialism between the state and Indigenous people can be reconciled through a process of acknowledgement. Coulthard's important critical intervention is well taken here, and much more remains to be said on the topic of reconciliation as a model for redressing deeply wounding histories of colonial violence. A full account of these nuances, possibilities, promises, and limitations is, however, beyond the scope of this dissertation.

The work that follows utilizes some of the archival materials made newly available for public use by the TRC initiatives to expand access to IRS histories; my aim is that the brief account of the TRC I offer here will provide the necessary background for readers to move into the more narrowed focus of what is to come. This work does not take TRC archival materials up as if a full rendering of the past could be found there, but rather activates some of the gaps and fissures that exist within these and all archives. My intention in doing so is to contribute to the ongoing work of truth and reconciliation through a small piece of work that considers what archives are and do, and what the IRS and its mandate inaugurated, formed, and formalized through its state-authorized regimes of killing and civilizing (killing to civilize, civilizing through and as killing). My intention is to chip away at the paradigms that viewed the enshatterment of children as not only necessary, but desirable.

Killing the Indian in the Child

Indian Residential Schools date back to the 1870's. The policy behind the government funded, church-run schools attempted to "*kill the Indian in the child.*" (emph added. TRC 2015)

What does it mean, to “kill the Indian in the child?” What kind of death does this ordinance mandate? What kind of life does it inaugurate? This dissertation, on the Canadian Indian Residential School System, writes into the ambiguous, paradoxical, world-making violence of the IRS mandate: “Kill the Indian in the Child.” Subtending the one hundred and twenty-year history of residential schooling in Canada, the directive to kill on the one hand and save on the other has an uncertain provenance. It is often and incorrectly attributed to Duncan Campbell Scott, who oversaw residential schools at the height of their brutality toward Aboriginal peoples in the 1920’s and 1930’s.¹² Some critics (e.g., Mark Abley, Scott’s biographer) attribute it to an American military officer. Regardless of its indeterminate origin, the phrase was, and is, emblematic of the IRS, whose design was to eradicate Indianness, thereby expanding civility. A remarkably durable fragment of historical rhetoric, the slogan is referenced in virtually every contemporary account of Canadian Indian residential schooling. As the epigraph to this chapter section indicates, the TRC Final Report on the IRS foregrounds the phrase in their introduction to Indian Residential Schools. More colloquial texts (e.g., Wikipedia) place it front and center in the IRS histories they offer. In nearly every instance, the phrase simply arrives in the text and sits there as given. I have yet to see an account of the IRS that offers a convincing citational account for its origin. The phrase is widely accepted as the guiding ethos, what I call the *quo animo*, of the IRS and the horizon of expanded ‘citizenship’ towards which it so violently operated.

Circulating as a mythic utterance without an origin, the phrase is untimely, telling, materializing. Its continued presence at once establishes the centrality of killing in the colonial project of nation-making, and identifies the death of the non-European native other as a necessary, even optimal, outcome of

¹² The ethos the phrase projects, however, is rightly associated with Scott’s ‘civilizing’ initiatives to expand of the Indian residential school system in the 1920s and 1930s, an orientation to policy that consigned Aboriginal people and their children to merciless assimilation, abuse, and death. Although this project considers excerpts from Scott’s writings on the project of assimilating Indigenous people into what he calls “the body politic,” the full extent of Scott’s legacy, as deputy superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs from 1913 to 1932, on relations between the federal government and Aboriginal people is beyond the purview of this dissertation. For an excellent writerly reckoning with Scott, See: Abley, Mark. *Conversations with a Dead Man: the Legacy of Duncan Campbell Scott*. Maderia Park: Douglas & McIntyre, 2013.

colonial worlding. Precisely because it cannot be ascribed/anchored to a specific speaker in/at a specific moment in time, the fantasy of eradication it indexes cannot be foreclosed as an anachronistic artifact of a racist epoch now past. Likewise, anchoring it to ‘an unfortunately misguided speaker’ (e.g., Duncan Campbell Scott) cannot contain it. As I engage it here, the phrase has material force, functioning as an original, generative, interpellative speech-act: an inaugural site in the formation of Indianness, childhood, life, and death in Canada. Under its auspices, being “Indian” placed one under the totalizing authority of colonial sovereign dominion, whose worlding capacities had the *puissance* (the valence of power that indicates force, as in strength or might) and *pouvoir* (the valence of power that indicates political authority, the right to decide/rule) to constitute Indianness as inextricably joined with death.¹³ It signaled the impossibility of being both Indian and child, since one was marked for dying and the other for saving. Simultaneously, it reinforced colonial sovereignty, guaranteeing the sovereign right of the nation both to kill and to let live, and extended these rights over life and death into the power to decide when and who to ‘save,’ and how to ‘save’ them. It marked ‘Indians’ as bodies unfit for self-governance and self-regulation. As it enters the present work, the IRS *quo amino* makes visible the aggressiveness within liberal discourses on legitimate citizenship, and foreshadows the privileging in the contemporary moment of what Lee Edelman describes as the all-pervasive figure of the (white) Child as the linchpin of our current universal politics of reproductive futurism.¹⁴ Finally, and of central importance to the work at

¹³ The French language has two words that translate to English as “power:” *puissance* (the valence of power that indicates force, as in strength or might) and *pouvoir* (the valence of power that indicates political authority, the right to decide/rule). As a student in a French classroom, one would ask one’s teacher: “Est-que je peux aller au toilet?” (May I go to the restroom?) In this sentence, “peux,” the conjugated first-person form of “pouvoir,” indicates that one is asking to have the power conferred on one such that one would be ‘allowed’ to visit the restroom. The valences of these two components of power are not always as straightforward in English. It is peripheral to the work at hand, but interesting, to note that the Graham Green novel “The power and the glory,” a religious/spiritual reference, is translated to French as, “La Puissance et la Gloire.” When one talks about God in French, one tends to say *puissance* and *toute-puissance*. “Tout-pouvoir” does not make sense, as it relates to juridical power and the rights of sovereign decision and political power. “Dieu Tout-Puissant,” on the other hand, indicates “God Almighty.”

¹⁴ Edelman persuasively argues that the fantasy subtending the image of the Child invariably shapes the logic within which the political itself must be thought. He claims: “That logic compels us, to the extent that we would register as politically responsible, to submit to the framing of political debate—and,

hand, it points to the way in which the colonial commonsense figures Indianness as always outside the state, or body politic, and the sheltering protections and rights it offers.

Recent scholarship and media coverage of the IRS, particularly in the wake of the seven-year TRC inquiry, has focused on naming and describing specific instances of abuse, ascribing institutional responsibility, and demanding accountability from responsible parties. This is necessary and significant work. However, the mechanisms through which the category of “the Indian” was pruned from the “the child”—by which the former was deemed killable, and her/his death deemed *necessary* for the health, betterment, and survival of the latter—remain under-examined. My dissertation intervenes into the racialized, racializing, and lethal violence that provides for the sustenance of the IRS, and underwrites its *quo animo*. Though this violence can at times be subterranean, my argument is that it nonetheless secures social relations and manifests within the everyday: both historically, and in our current moment. Accordingly, the dissertation tries to show the (sometimes unexpected) ways the semantic object, “killing the Indian in the child,” is sliced into its composite parts, “the Indian” and “the child,” along a number of axes. Nearly all of these ‘severings’ occur within the register of everyday speech and everyday scenes, through the language and deeds of ordinary people.

My analysis into the world-making violence that constitutes what it means to be Indian in the era of the IRS and following, attends to Saidiya Hartman’s exploration of racial subjugation during slavery and its aftermath. In her book, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-making in Nineteenth Century America*, Hartman focuses on forms of domination that often go undetected, in particular the encroachments of power that take place through the notions of humanity, enjoyment, protection, rights, and consent. Hartman resists spectacularizing black pain, arguing that the violent complexity that unfolds in familiar, sensational accounts of black suffering play out no less complexly in everyday scenes. By

indeed, of the political field—as defined by ... reproductive futurism: terms that impose an ideological limit on political discourse as such, preserving in the process the absolute privilege of heteronormativity by rendering unthinkable, by casting outside the political domain, the possibility of a queer resistance to this organizing principle of communal relations” (2). In short: “That Child remains the perpetual horizon of every acknowledged politics, the fantasmatic beneficiary of every political intervention” (3). See, Edelman, Lee: *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. Durham: Duke UP, 2004.

situating her analysis at points at which the lethal, racial, racializing violence of black pain seem *almost* imperceptible, she shows that the vanishing point of theory and representations of suffering bodies is a rich and important site for analysis. My own analysis of Indigenous child suffering attempts to locate the lethality of colonial worldings where only the barest outline of presence remains. By striving to follow the violence colonial archives have endeavored to nullify, palliate, tamp down, my aim is to contribute to the legacy of Hartman's call to write the suffering of bodies without ontologizing them, or over-exposing them to the same world-defining violence that attempted to shatter them.

This project of writing towards the suffering of the Indigenous child body, and the bodily disappearance such suffering so often opened into, is greatly indebted to Gayatri Spivak's insights on subalternity. The proceeding chapters do elaborate Spivak's shaping influence. I cannot, however, overemphasize the possibilities Spivak's literary attunement to sites of subaltern death have opened for this study, which is informed equally by her approach to reading certain instances of subaltern death *as text*, as well as her commitment to archival research as what she calls an "un-grasping." Spivak describes the ethos of the latter as that in which one reaches (into history, into archives) not as an attempt to recuperate, claim, and fix lost bodies as knowable objects, but precisely *not* to fix or claim. I frame my work here as speaking back to, or into this meditation of Spivak on the Rani of Sirmur, in which Spivak (1985) examines the absence of a text that can "answer one back" after what she calls "the planned epistemic violence of the imperialist project" (256).¹⁵ The generative brilliance of Spivak's work, as I see it, is her ability to hold in tension the literary-deconstructivist orientation to philosophy/theory with the political economic imperatives of empire, imperialism, colonialism: what postcolonial thinker Ranjana Khanna (2003) calls "the contingencies of Europe" (5). Spivak provides a way to read/interpret death as text, excavating the living substrata upon which power inscribes itself. She calls these living substrata

¹⁵ Spivak's (1985) essay on the Rani of Sirmur traces the appearance in colonial archives and subsequent falling from those archives of the Queen of Sirmur. Correspondence between British officials at the time indicate the Rani's intention of becoming a *sati*, of self-immolating on her husband's funeral pyre. However the eventual fate of the Rani, we cannot now know whether she did or did not commit the act of *sati*, is not a matter of record. Spivak's essay, accordingly, foregrounds the questions: "As the historical record is made up, who is dropped out, when, and why?" (270).

“the subaltern.” Reading death as a text, she locates the claims on being and self that underwrite what most would simply call the ontological. She shows that claims on being are always ideological, and therefore always political—and therefore always to the benefit of some at the expense of others.

Just as Spivak’s account of British India shows the ways in which imperial interests convoked new subjects and forms of subjectivity, while rendering (its) others utterly silent, my study emphasizes the ways of being in the world that the IRS formed and formalized. The IRS’ claims on being, ‘what is’ and therefore ‘what should be,’ convoked colonial subjects, shaped modern national selfhood, and articulated citizenship. Some of these notions of citizenship and corresponding aggregates of civility, responsibility, and normativity were spoken into existence. Others were created, or worlded, as their underside, rendered as earthly raw materials, as primitive, deviant: the ‘bad’ other against which the modern Euro-American self, the ‘good’ subject of colonial governance, was aggregated.

Worlding

In order to consider the full force of the world-making/world-breaking articulations enacted in attempts to actuate the injunction to “kill the Indian in the Child,” the present work makes use of Martin Heidegger’s notion of “worlding.” Worlding, which Heidegger advances in “The Thing” and “The Origin of the Work of Art,” is the production of art in the gap, or rift (*Riss*), between earth and world. He develops the concept as a way to think about the imaginative and ontological work performed in and by art objects, to understand the forms of being brought into the world by art. In “The Origin of the Work of Art,” Heidegger (1977) writes:

Projective saying is poetry: the saying of the world and earth, the saying of the arena of their strife and this of the place of all nearness and remoteness of the gods. Poetry is the saying of the unconcealedness of beings. Actual language at any given moment is the happening of language of this saying, in which a people’s world historically arises for it and the earth is preserved as that which remains closed. Projective saying is saying which, in preparing the sayable, simultaneously brings the unsayable as such into the world. In such saying, the concepts of a historical people’s essence, i.e., of its belonging to world history are performed for that people. (185)

In “The Thing,” he (2001) writes: “The world presences by worlding. That means: the world’s worlding cannot be explained by anything else, nor can it be fathomed through anything else ... As soon as human cognition here calls for an explanation, it fails to transcend the world’s nature, and falls short of it” (177).

In her book, *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism*, Khanna (2003) mobilizes Heidegger’s concept, turning it explicitly towards the imperialist project. She ventures that if what Heidegger calls “actual language” is “the happening of the saying,” then art is not, precisely, an object that represents something already existing. She writes: “Rather, it is an event of a condition for the possibility of coming into being. Worlding performs the ‘unconcealedness of being’ because it brings new ways of being in the world, along with the attendant concealedness of the earth that occurs simultaneously” (3). For Heidegger, the process (of worlding) is one of strife, between the unconcealed (worlded) and the concealed (unworlded). This process is profoundly ideological, though it claims not to be. Gayatri Spivak interprets and extends Heidegger’s thought by understanding the violence, or strife, his work describes as the passage from earth to a world, as the establishment of colonial control through mapping, land appropriation, and the transformation of the raw materials of the earth into the politico-economic and geographical category of “world”. All of these practices make claims on the nature of being, which necessarily implicates the register of legibility, determining what signifies—how, to whom, and to what effect(s)—and also, what does not.

Heidegger’s writings claim that the work of art performs the labor of opening up the world so we might be able to understand it in new ways. On the transmutation of the concept from its original context to that of colonial world-makings, Khanna writes: “If Heidegger claimed that the art work allowed a sense of the unsayable, Spivak translates those terms as the projecting of the colonized as ‘other,’ nonself, or as the unsayable of colonial selfhood. The colonized thus become the ‘closed,’ or the ‘earth’ through the establishment of the world” (4). If Heidegger saw the process of naming as bringing being into the world and into history, Spivak generatively locates that history more specifically in coloniality. As Khanna glosses Spivak, “She wrests the metaphor of earth into world from timeless abstraction, tying it into the historico-political contingencies of Europe” (5). As I read Khanna, whose own mobilization of worlding

extends the concept from Heidegger through Spivak's interpretation, her understanding of colonial worlding(s) as the processes by which "participants are brought into temporality and history, or, conversely, excluded ... and concealed timelessly into the earth" (4), indicates that colonial worlding is deeply invested in practices of naming, classifying, and hierarchizing difference.

In the work at hand, I am interested in situating the concept of worlding within colonial praxis that seeks to render its other invalid on the other's own terms. I argue that the imaginative and ontological work of colonial worlding(s) render(s) the voices of its other unhearable, its names unspeakable, its lives subaltern, its bodies ungrieveable, its deaths an otherworldly haunting of the body politic. Further, I follow Spivak (1985) in insisting that the agents of the "cartographic" transformation of the earth are not only the great names of political philosophers, decision-makers and military conquerors, but what she calls "small unimportant folk" (253) like the priest(s), nun(s), and other school officials who oversaw the daily operations of the IRS, the Indian agents whose job it was to monitor the conditions there, and the bureaucrats whose task it was to oversee such matters as budget allocation, providing for sufficient food, heat, clothing, medicine, support etc. These "small unimportant folk" also include scientists who, in the 1930's and 1940's saw fit to utilize Indigenous children at the IRS as test-subjects in experiments on the effects of malnutrition, and the nutritional outcomes of scientifically altered food, without the consent or knowledge of these children, or their families/parents/guardians.

My aim in pointing to these—and other—systemic, but profoundly managerial violences exercised on students at the IRS, is to write against the claim that the schools were simply a failed but well-intentioned experiment in colonial governance of First Peoples. My argument is that the system-wide conditions of death (psychic, sexual, physical, social, cultural) in the IRS point to something more subterranean within the operations of colonial worlding, the fantasy of eradication without remainder: a fantasy in which the 'bad' Indian could be erased in the projective saying of a postcolonial (white) unified, civilized future. I theorize that this fantasy of eradication, the sought-after annihilation of, what I have started to think of as, the 'inconvenient life' of the Indigenous child, points to something altogether subterranean, something death driven. Elaborating some features of what I consider as 'cultures of the

death drive,⁹ I point to the death drive as a central element in psychic life that plays out as a fundamental aggressivity in the social bond. The motor-force that surfs invisibly atop existing libidinal processes (disappearing within them, able to camouflage itself perfectly), the death drive is difficult to detect. A telltale sign of its involvement is the compulsive, repeating, push, or drive, beyond pleasure, towards an unattainable objective, such as a perfectly unified body politic, or the ability to actualize, finally, the vision of the earth promised but never fully delivered by ‘The New World’ as *terra nullius*.

While Freudian theory does not arrive at a full exegesis of the death drive—a fact that is not at all insignificant to the essence of what the death drive is and what it does—Jacques Lacan elaborates the concept in ways that are productive for the work at hand. In this work, Lacan renders the death drive as the push that *feels/seems* as if it is *towards* the desired object, when in fact the trajectory of its aim only circles or orbits *around* the desired object. Lacan introduces the term *objet petit a* to designate that which stands in for the object of desire, an object that is, by definition, unattainable. For Lacan this “object” is a spectral, virtual construct. It is the object cause of the subject’s desire, the ‘thing’ the subject *thinks* will bring final satisfaction/completion. Rather than imagining a trajectory that unfolds along the linear progressive logic of teleological progress with the desired outcome at the end, we must visualize the trajectory of the death drive towards the desired object as necessarily elliptical. This is because full arrival at the object of desire is, for Lacan, emphatically impossible, as *objet petit a* in fact covers over what, for Lacan, is a constitutive lack at the center of all experience/existence. Where the subject feels her/himself drawing close to the object of desire, only to narrowly miss achieving it, the propulsion of the death drive incites an intensification. One valuable interlocutor calls this intensification a “doubling-down,” in which the subject redoubles her/his efforts to reach what is, essentially, not reachable.¹⁶ My argument is that the

¹⁶ I borrow this language from conversations with Lacanian rhetoric scholar Christian O. Lundberg, whose book, *Lacan in Public: Psychoanalysis and the Science of Rhetoric*, explores the Lacanian notion of adequation, which is the concept of the full arrival of unity between the word and what it signifies (i.e., subject and object, self and other, word and thing). Galvanizing this concept and deploying it within rhetorical analysis, Lundberg’s argument is that we are driven towards an adequation (or moment of perfect transparent communication) that never arrives. As an attempt to accomplish the impossible task of suturing the constitutive gap between the three registers (the Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic)

death drive is a useful reading strategy through which to interpret the colonial fantasy of eradicating the inconvenient life that it viewed as standing in the way of its ability to ‘cash in’ on the promise of *terra nullius* and the attaining of full, uncontested, sovereignty.

Using psychoanalysis as reading practice, reading through the subterranean concept of the death drive, my analysis amplifies Spivak’s (1985) claim that, “the necessary yet contradictory assumption of an uninscribed earth which is the condition of possibility of the worlding of a world generates the force to make the “native” see herself/himself as ‘other’” (250). What resonates in in this account of colonial interpellation is an emphasis on the violence or strife latent in Heidegger’s description of the space between earth and world as rift/*riss*. When Heidegger’s concept of worlding is turned to the imperialist project, what emerges out of the violence of this rift-space is the violence of a fight or battle to hold suppressed, as earth(ly), what cannot be risked as world, that which cannot be allowed to materialize—or remain material.

Biopolitics

What initially drew me to the site of the IRS was the provocative coupling of politics with life/death instantiated in the IRS *quo animo*. First and foremost, I wanted to understand the commonsense that made the injunction to kill in the name of preserving life make sense. In so doing, my analysis of the IRS and its peculiar mandate needed to consider the political commonsense that bore it out. My dissertation makes a unique contribution to scholarship surrounding the IRS by arguing that the logic of killing in the name of life (killing in order to save), an edict made quite literal in the IRS, was both produced by, and productive of, a new form of politics. In contrast to traditional forms of governance, this new form shifted the objective from the management of singular human beings to the regulation of their characteristics. In other words, governmental authority transferred its focus from the governing of individual legal subjects to the management of populations. This political paradigm, which Michel Foucault terms ‘biopolitics,’ understands life to be an objective and measurable factor, a collective reality

Lundberg’s account traces the labor of affective investment that aims for the ‘unicity’ marked by the term ‘adequation’, a project that is aimed for, but only feigned.

that can be conceptually and practically separated from concrete beings and the singularity of individual experience. ‘Life itself,’ in this paradigm, is unfixated from the individual and instead aggregated on the level of population. In this way, the materiality of death becomes a more abstracted matter of demography. It is the aim of demography to establish and monitor the norm, the average, and to trace any deviations from it. The threshold logic of the norm, who falls inside and who does not, is a tightly controlled border. It is policed by the management of features and characteristics viewed as unique traits essential to particular groups of people. The recognition of these particular groups, and the hierarchies that determine the value of their lives, is not believed to be ideological, though, of course, it is. Characteristics, morphological similarities, and behavioral traits are understood and treated as if they are ‘facts’ rooted in biology. For instance, the characteristics of “the Indian” as “shiftless, indolent, and inert” were understood as *inherent* traits of the “Indian race”—traits that needed to be regulated, managed, and stamped out for the good of the “greater” (i.e. white, Euro-Canadian) population. By the biopolitical calculus of relative value, the lives of First Nations were simply viewed as less valuable than the lives of the white mainstream/norm. My argument is that the IRS is not an instantiation of Indigenous lives *just simply not mattering*. As institutional forms, they are complicit in the internal racism of permanent purification that Foucault (2003) tells us “will become one of the basic dimensions of social normalization” (62). This normalizing function of racism does not limit itself to establishing a dividing line between healthy and sick, worthy of living or not worthy of living. Rather it searches for “the establishment of a positive relation of this type: The very fact that you let more die will allow you to live more” (255). Racism and the norm work in co-purpose, facilitating a dynamic relation between the life of one person and the death of another. As Thomas Lemke (2011) has it, this conjoining “not only allows for a hierarchization of ‘those who are worthy of living’ *but also situates the health of one person in a direct relationship with the disappearance of another*” (emph. added 42). The imperatives to die more, to disappear more, while remaining markedly present as a racially legible body, converge upon Aboriginal children, generations of children whose libidinal energies were seized upon by disorienting, reorienting imperatives: annihilate and assimilate, eradicate and civilize, sacrifice and save.

My research indicates that the biopolitical attunement to population manifest in the IRS *quo animo* emerged alongside the rising prominence of the normative disciplines (e.g., statistics, sociology, demography, epidemiology) for which population was the primary epistemological unit of analysis. By the height of the IRS, at the start of the 1930's, the normative disciplines had become powerfully influential on paradigms of political thought, philosophies on governance, and corresponding aggregates of citizenship and society, alongside structures of valuation for assessing whose lives were worth protecting and whose were not. Within the ideology through which they were inaugurated, the disciplining of recalcitrant "Indian" children through physical intervention (e.g., submitting them to practices meant to re-order their bodily configurations, such as electro-shock) were natural extensions of a logic that sought to protect the norm by regulating and removing undesirable, or deviant, characteristics.

Homo Sacer and Bare Life

Still speaking through the register of the political, the kind(s) of death into which the IRS hailed the Indigenous child, the paradoxical call to embody both saving and sacrifice, is immediately evocative of Giorgio Agamben's *homo sacer*. This figure, for Agamben, embodies the threshold of the political: killable but impossible to sacrifice. In his book *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Agamben (1995) asserts what he calls, "the inner solidarity between democracy and totalitarianism," (10) and defines the concentration camp as "the biopolitical paradigm of the West (181). For Agamben, biopolitics forms the inner core of sovereign power. In contrast to Foucault who views biopower as an historical caesura signaled by the advent of biopolitical mechanisms in the 17th and 18th Centuries, for Agamben the modern era does not signify a radical break, but rather a generalization and radicalization of that which has always been there. According to Agamben, the constitution of sovereign power assumes the creation of a biopolitical body. Inclusion in political society, he argues, is only possible through the simultaneous *exclusion* of human beings who are denied legal status. For Agamben, in contrast to Carl Schmitt's seminal formulation (in his book *The Concept of the Political*, published in 1932), the fundamental oppositional relationship of the political is not friend/enemy, but rather the separation of bare life (*zoé*) and political existence (*bíos*): in other words, the distinction between natural being and legal existence.

For Agamben (1998), the beginning of all politics is the establishment of a borderline and the inauguration of a space that is deprived of the protection of the law: “the original juridico-political relationship,” he writes, “is the ban” (181). This description of the inauguration of a space deprived of the protection of the law seems to speak directly into the material conditions of the IRS. Typically, these were isolated outposts, as the mandate for Indian schooling clearly intended Indigenous children to be kept as far away from the Reserve *and* white settlement as possible. The schools were certainly zones in which law did not extend its sheltering auspices to the children within them, whose mode of being in the world certainly dramatizes, with acute poignancy, life under the ban.

Agamben outlines this hidden foundation of sovereignty through a figure from archaic Roman law: *homo sacer*. He writes: “This is a person whom one could kill with impunity, since he was banned from the politico-legal community and reduced to the status of physical existence” (59). For Agamben, *homo sacer* represents the other side of the logic of sovereignty. “Bare life,” which is considered to be furthest from the political, proves to be the basis of a political body, which makes life and death of a human being the object of sovereignty, the object of a sovereign decision. Agamben’s argument is that in this way, the production of *homines sacri* presents a renounced, yet fundamental, even constitutive part of Western history. One of Agamben’s (1998) most infamous arguments is his claim that the concentration camp is “the hidden paradigm of the political space of modernity” (123). The camp, in this context, functions for Agamben, not so much as a concrete site in time and space, but as a symbolic border that fixes the limit between “bare life” and political existence.

While critics (e.g., Thomas Lemke) maintain that Agamben’s analysis remains “in thrall of the law” (Lemke: 2011 60) and owes more to Schmitt than Foucault (and more to Heidegger than to Schmitt) his focus on the two registers of life that converge in the same body, a notion that likewise implicates/activates at least two registers of death, remains profitable to the work at hand. I do agree with Lemke (2011) who points out that Agamben fails to recognize that “biopolitics is essentially a political economy of life” (ibid) and that Agamben’s analysis remains “under the spell of sovereign power and blind to all mechanisms that operate outside the law” (ibid). Certainly, in the IRS, the child residents were

captive to the carceral institutions that unhomed them. This was a programmatic orphaning that severed them from their families, languages, and cultures of origin. Within the IRS, they were subject to the law but not, it would seem, protected by it. Both the juridical and broader political *pouvoir* and *puissance* have inscriptive power to make meaning for and of the child, to write her/his bodies in different ways, yet neither are zones that the child can fully enter as subject. Because the Aboriginal child never possessed what we might today call the civil rights that were subject to removal by sovereign power (thereby exposing her/him to bare life), the conditions of extreme precariousness in which the Aboriginal child circulated proximal to the IRS cannot, properly speaking, be considered bare life. I would argue that rather than embodying bare life in a fixed sense, the Aboriginal child resident of the IRS bears the trace of bare life, contains within his/her child body, some shattered (shattering) fragments of the *homo sacer*.¹⁷

Agamben himself did not understand the child to ever embody bare life. In an essay *Infancy and History*, he (1996) writes: “the child is a paradigm of life that is absolutely inseparable from its form, an absolute form-of-life [*forma-di-vita*] without remainder. What does ‘form of life’ mean in this case? It means that the child is never bare life [*nuda vita*], that it is never possible to isolate in the child something like bare life or biological life.” (122) His logic in making this claim is as follows:

The politics we are familiar with (characterized by his distinction between *zoé* and *bíos*) increasingly and ever more profoundly enters the political sphere which, in the end, turns into the incessant deciding on life as such. If the child seems to escape this structure and never allows, in its self, the differentiation of mere life, it is not, as is maintained too often, because the child has an unreal and mysterious life, one made of fantasy and games.

(ibid)

¹⁷ She/he is more correctly aligned with the remainders excluded from the terms of the political. This is the (political) depoliticization of anything that threatens to complicate the oppositional integrity around which the political is convened. In this way, anything the political cannot resolve through the structuring opposition of friend/enemy—which since Schmitt is the essential condition of the political—is exported elsewhere. This helps us to understand the shunting of Indigenous children outside of the political preview of the state strictly speaking, and into the purview of the church. The Indigenous child as problem became a matter of saving souls and civility. In short, removing it from the political, the Indigenous child became a social problem.

For Agamben, it is the very opposite that characterizes the child. He writes:

It adheres so closely to its physiological life that it becomes indiscernible from it ... the life of a child is ungraspable, not because it transcends towards an other world, but because it adheres to this world and to its body in a way that adults find intolerable ... The life of the child, as a result, instead of seeming completely scattered into small facts and episodes lacking meaning and history (like the lives of the primitives), remains unforgettable, the cipher of a higher history.”

(emph. in original 122)

Agamben is saying that the child cannot be separated from its biological life far enough for political life to insert itself and take hold: the child embodies the force of life with such intensity that she/he *belongs utterly* to life, a belonging in which the child is not an object of life but rather manifests life as possibility, a potentiality that never exhausts itself in biographical facts and events, since, as Agamben writes, “it has no other object than itself ... It is an absolute immanence that *moves and lives*” (emph. in original *ibid*). From a promising account of the imbrication of two different valences of life contained within the same body, both tied to the political (in which the severing of one—*bíos*—is over-exposure to the other—*zoé*), the utility of Agamben’s philosophy of life in the context of the IRS seems to stall out: the child is never bare life. The quagmire this ‘stalling out’ presents, compels me to ask: What in fact (or figure) is a child? Without letting go of the useful and intriguing offerings of both Foucault and Agamben, where might a more nuanced and generative account of the child be found?

As the project at hand developed, it do so in such a way as to require a theoretical site more capable of speaking to the register of violence that existed in the IRS beyond thresholds that could be explained through the account that certain bodies are not afforded the protection of the law (i.e. Agamben’s theory of the ban). Certainly Indigenous child bodies in the IRS were not protected by the law, but that very juridical-level observation does not seem up to the task of accounting for the very extreme forms of aggressivity meted out onto Indigenous child bodies in the IRS: the use of torture as in the opening example of the use of the electric chair at the St. Anne School for example, and the absolutely rampant culture of sexual abuse that characterizes life in the IRS. Further, as provocative and interesting

as Agamben's juridical position is, it does not help to understand the widespread 'cycles of sexual abuse' in the IRS whereby victims of sexual assault so often recapitulated the sexually abject position held by the Indigenous child by abusing other children.

Theorizing 'the Child'

What is a child's *Dasein*? One could say that it is an immanence without place and subject, an adhering that adheres neither to an identity nor to some thing, but solely to its own possibility and potentiality. It is an absolute *immanence* that is immanent to nothing. In this sense the child is a paradigm of a life that is absolutely inseparable from its form, an absolute *form-of-life* [*forma-di-vita*] without remainder. What does form of life mean in this case? It means that the child is never bare life [*nuda vita*], that it is never possible to isolate in a child something like bare life or biological life. (emph. in original Agamben 1996)

Trying to locate the child, in fact or in figure, as I have laid it out, is not an ontological project, or even a definitional one. The child's location in philosophy, as Agamben's somewhat obscure and reductive rendering of its *Dasein* in the passage above indicates, is no straightforward thing. And while what Foucault has called the 'normative disciplines' (e.g., statistics, sociology, demography, epidemiology) might seem to offer a concrete definition of 'a child,' what I began searching for was a richly nuanced theoretical landscape capable of moving with my own analysis through the shadowy, strange, *somehow* different-from-ours world of the child. My aim in doing so was to attend to the libidinal forces, the tempos, rhythms, and intensities that were seized upon by the IRS in order to link childhood so inextricably with death.

In the second chapter of the dissertation, I begin with a question impelled by the extremely pervasive culture of sexual abuse in the IRS. I ask: interpreted through the overarching *quo animo* of the IRS—"kill the Indian in the Child"—how did sexuality become sutured to death and converge with such intensity over the site of the Indigenous child body and Indigenous childhood? In other words, how was Indigenous child sexuality driven towards death? The question immediately evokes Edelman's work in his book *No Future* in which he links queerness to reproductive non-futurity. A sexuality driven towards

death, accordingly, is a sexuality that enacts non-futurity. In this second chapter, I begin with sexuality and arrive at the child. Although this move seems obvious and straightforward in the way I lay it out in the chapter, what is interesting to mark is that, in the early stages of the project, this movement actually happened in reverse. Beginning with the child, I arrived at sexuality. My work locating the child in a body of theory that could account for its recalcitrant agency, its libindinal forces, *and* its excessive kind of polymorphous bodily liveness—the inseparability of the child from its *bíos* that, for Agamben, disqualified her/him from the political—pointed immediately and emphatically towards theories of sexuality. In this more explicitly psychoanalytic domain, the child is not the paradigm for innocence contemporary ideologies suggest her/him to be. The psychoanalytic child, animated by its own kind of sexuality, what Freud calls ‘polymorphous perversity,’ is a somewhat ‘queerer’ figure. Queer theorist Kathryn Bond Stockton, for one, argues that childhood is a landscape rife with queerness, where the designation of ‘innocence,’ bestowed upon the child by the Victorians, and amplified in the current moment by ‘we ‘Other Victorians,’¹⁸ is actually an alibi for ‘straightness.’ In bolstering the child as innocent, in her thinking, we are bolstering a notion of childhood as naturally straight, in which straightness is not viewed as sexual but as neutral and natural, and where queerness is the sexual deviation from ‘normal.’ In this positioning of sexuality vis-à-vis the child, sexuality is the opposite of innocence: a child cannot be both ‘innocent’ *and* sexual. Therefore, by sexualizing the child, the IRS actuated a non-innocent child, a racialized child who was not due the same sheltering protection as ‘good,’ ‘normal,’ ‘nonsexual’ children.

Accordingly, the project places sexuality at the foreground of its analyses, particularly in the second and fourth chapters. While I do not relinquish insights into biopolitical paradigms of governance—these are the central fulcrum points in the third chapter—biopower is not dominant in the theoretical scaffolding my work here convokes. Similarly, while not wishing to jettison Agamben’s notion of the *homo sacer* or bare life completely, his theorization of the child stops at the statement that

¹⁸ See Foucault, Michel. *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.

the child can never be bare life. Rather than continue to wrestle my analysis into an Agambean framework, I simply mark that in the Indigenous child's marginalization, both spatially and on the level upon which she/he was not protected by the sheltering auspices of the law, the Indigenous child resident of the IRS was effectively banned/barred from the political. This is a line of inquiry I investigate more fully in the dissertation's third chapter, "Bodies out of Time: 'the Indian,' 'the Child' and the Racialized Logics of Futurity."

In attempting to delve with some acuity into matters of childhood, sexuality, death, and colonial worlding, my approach develops a framework indebted to Spivak's work on subalternity and her extension of Heidegger's notion of worlding. I am further informed by Spivak's literary approach to reading death *as text*, an approach that accounts for the figurative, mythological, symbolic, and material dimensions of bodily death within a political and social context. This theoretical scaffolding is augmented by certain concepts and approaches from psychoanalytic theory, an orientation to the child and to childhood as a deeply embodied and affective topography with sexualities as complex as our own.

From this basis, I began to wonder what kinds of sexualities colonial authorities and institutions had worlded on and through the Indigenous child. What kind of bodily archives had colonial sexuality concatenated, claimed, branded, and destroyed? As if the sexuality of children is not already a slender and tenuous terrain, attempting to say something vital about the kinds of sexualities impressed onto Indigenous children in the IRS seemed an altogether elusive 'object.' I was forced to confront the politics and promises of archives, as I found myself reaching across an indeterminate impasse towards something fleeting and fragile, the remainders of which seemed to me to be to exist as only the barest outline of presence: research that I knew already to be, what Anjali Arondekar (2009) calls, "an unrepresentable search for an impossible object" (ix)

Archival Reaching: Politics and Problems of Archives

I came face-to-face with the problem(s) of the archive. In many ways, the critical task at the heart of this study has been to theorize a politics of the archive that neither fetishizes its historical formation nor relinquishes its epistemological possibilities. On the one hand, the IRS is a topic on which archival

analysis and research is urgently needed, especially in the wake of the newly declassified documentation released for public consumption by the TRC. On the other hand, we dare not take colonial archives at their wor(l)d, or mistake them for complete. Rather than attempting to recuperate lost but knowable objects, the work at hand situates loss at the center of archives to consider both the authorized account or ‘what really happened’—an undertaking that so often leads to a notion of just how unstable such claims are—and that which “circulates *against* the consoling mystifications of ‘papers’ and the verifiable certainties of archival discovery” (Arondekar: 2009, 4).

An intensively researched archival project, the bulk of my analyses draw upon the TRC Final Report on Residential Schools (pub. March 2016, McGill-Queens UP). This work is augmented by first-hand research into the Indian Affairs archives housed at the Library and Archives Canada. Over the course of the TRC investigation, many previously classified documents on residential schools were released to the Commission by provincial and federal governments, an unconcealment that was mandated by court order. The reluctance of government administrations to comply fully with this order is evidenced by their refusal to follow stipulated filing and organizational requirements. As staff at the newly created TRC archive at the University of Manitoba told me when I visited in 2015, documents were surrendered to the Commission late, sometimes simply dumped into boxes. After their seven-year investigation into residential schooling in Canada, the TRC compiled their findings, assembled an archive of the materials they had considered, and made both available for public access. In March 2016, their seven-volume final report was made available to the public. These volumes occupy an entire shelf in my office bookcase. The archive the Commission convoked is comprised largely of church and government documents and it will eventually be housed at the University of Manitoba in the newly created Center for Research on Truth and Reconciliation. At the time of my visit, in December 2015, there were no documents housed there. Staff told me that the process had been delayed by recalcitrant government administrations, delaying the turning over of the mandated documents. The emptiness at the center of this trip, to the center of the nation in the coldest weeks of winter, continues to resonate.

An additional IRS archive, indeed the central archive pertaining to Canada's First Peoples, and from which my work draws extensively, are the records collected and filed as the 'Indian Affairs Record Group,' or, as I know it, Record Group 10 (RG10). Housed 'at' the Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa (the archive is, in actuality, stored across the river in a facility in Gatineau, Quebec, filed away in climate-controlled rooms no one is allowed to visit), RG10 occupies 2,400 meters of continuous shelving. So, while I have been *told* by archive librarians about the impossible reckoning instantiated in the excessive physical presence of *so many records*, I have never seen the archive my work here considers. The fact that I have not seen it, however, does not reduce its affective weight. A particular kind of archive fever sets in at the prospect of contributing yet more paper to this already monstrous corpus—there is a way in which, paradoxically, too much has already been written on/by the IRS; yet, concurrently, not nearly enough has been said.

While RG10 signals completeness through its sheer volume, it is important to point out that one of the most significant pieces of historical information on the IRS that has come to light in recent years did not originate in this archive. I am referring to the discovery by a SSHRC post-doctoral fellow in History named Ian Mosby working in the area of food politics and nutrition in Canada in the era leading up to, and including, the Second World War. In the records of the Department of National Health and Welfare (RG29), Mosby uncovered evidence of long-term nutrition research undertaken at six Indian residential schools without the knowledge or consent of the students or their parents/guardians.¹⁹ Mosby's findings shed light on a little-known biopolitical initiative, advancing scholarship in fields associated with colonial, postcolonial, Indigenous, and historical studies as well as public health. In the context of my meditation on archival politics, at least part of what Mosby's findings brings to light is the extent to which archives are constructed to represent a completion and a boundedness that never was. In this instance, the monumental archival body of RG10 projects a kind of certainty, a fantasy of perfect containment suggesting that RG10 contains the record of everything that ever happened between Canada's First

¹⁹ For an account of Mosby's important work, see: Mosby, Ian. "Administering Colonial Science: Nutrition Research and Human Biomedical Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools, 1942-52." *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 46.91 (2003): 145-72. Print.

People's and the Canadian government. This is certainly not the case, and working within this massive body is to perform the labor of constantly framing 'the archive' as an assemblage of *some* records that refer to some version of some events that may or may not have happened. The effect is vertiginous, the omissions are aporetic. Now, as I imagine those 2,400 meters of paper, I envision them stretching out into interminable strands in both directions, into the past and into the future. The strands fray and multiply and from this multiplicity, more strands proliferate, branching off like dendrites, firing in all directions. What does it say about the imperatives of the contemporary moment, that we have constructed 'an archive' (The Archive) believed to be, and represented as though it is, complete, a completion borne out (very simply?) in the material fact that it is: 1) very, very large and, 2) that no one is permitted to see it?

On my first visit to the Library and Archives Canada, a monumental edifice in the heart of Canada's capital city, I expected that I would be given access to this landscape, to this closed world of worlding documents. I imagined that I would walk through narrow aisles, lay my white-gloved hands against the very skin of text-as-history, and feel something of the bodies, and the dense relations between them, which the textual records suture and stand in for. I marvel at the naivety in this early conceptualization of what archives are, what they do, and what I would do *with them*. Chiefly, I wanted to *touch* them, to stand quietly among them, as in a clearing among trees, and feel the effect of 'being in a forest.' This fantasy was not to be. The Library and Archives Canada, flanked on all sides with the flourishes of official 'state-dom'—flags and statues and houses of parliament—is empty of any material fragments of the past. There are no historical records housed there; only the bureaucratized traces of their archivization remain: glass offices and finding aids, some microfiche machines, books on early Canadian law, forms for requesting non-digitized records, camera stands, some early-model computer terminals under flickering rows of lights. Between 9AM and 5PM, people with low voices trace their genealogies. This is an activity so common that the archivist I met with on that first day assumed that my interest in the history of Indian residential schooling stemmed from family history research. There was a tremendous absence in the center of that first day, no records to touch or see. And I had come such a long way. In a backroom, to fill out the space of an empty day, I read yellow-paged compendiums of amendments to the

Indian Act dating back to 1874. Under my careful fingers the law seemed so brittle it nearly crumbled into dust. Later in the visit, medical records of IRS students—an unending litany of poverty, disease, and malnutrition—whirled soundlessly by on microfiche. This processional of tuberculosis exams administered, diseases identified, records of parental abandonment, fracturing family relations, linguistic separation, began to feel utterly inexhaustible, so much so that I began to scroll faster and faster, no longer able to, or wanting to, read. I scrolled so fast that the individual records began to blur together, names and dates and names of disease and records of death each running into the next, faster and faster in black and white. The effect made me think about the starkness of some anonymous northern landscape in winter seen from the window of a train, evoking, eerily, the journeys undertaken by so many Indigenous children, from their home communities into the heart of colonial darkness—which is how I have come to think about the IRS. I continue to find more resonant significance in the effect of those documents blurring together than I do in the records themselves. Walking out of The Archives at the end of that day, into the clamor of the capital city at rush hour, I realized how deeply I had been aching for *sound*.

Research Questions

Writing into the violent, materializing force of the IRS *quo animo*, the work at hand asks: 1) By what logics did “killing the Indian in the child” register in the colonial commonsense? In other words, how did this paradoxical warrant to simultaneously sacrifice and save (*sacrifice to save*) make sense? 2) Within the IRS, how was the injunction to “kill the Indian in the child” enacted? What I am asking here is how its rather esoteric or figurative itinerary was literalized on actual Indigenous child bodies, 3) How, in figure and in fact, was the semantic object, “the Indian in the child” sliced into its component parts (“the Indian,” and “the child”), the former exposed to death and the latter subjected to *technes* of saving. Finally, 4) Were the *technes* of sacrifice and saving as opposite as they sound, or, read deconstructively, were there points at which these itineraries converged, in which the line between them came undone, in which they exceeded their semantic and ideological containers and flowed together, indistinguishable?

Method

The critical task of the dissertation is to consider the *quo animo* of the IRS, excavating some of the founding mythologies and logics subtending it, elaborating some of its effects. It is not within the scope of the dissertation to offer a complete history of the IRS, or to recuperate, via forensics of archival retrieval, a complete accounting of its effects. Rather, focusing on ‘the fragment’ instead of on stories suggesting archival wholeness, the dissertation commits to the important work of sustaining the tension between the uncertainty of archival labor, with the persistent, ethical imperatives of historical research and archival reaching. Activating Spivak’s (1988) account of the Rani of Sirmur, in which she argues that “one can grasp, precisely *not* to fix” (emph added. 251), the work sets out to enact a practice of archival reading and of historiography that, as Arondekar writes, “incites relationships between the seductions of recovery and the occlusions such retrieval mandates” (11). In my analysis of the IRS and its disastrous *quo animo*, I find myself on an archival path which, at times, I can neither grasp nor fix, and yet that I pursue in order to grasp without fixing, asking: How might figurations of death emerge not as objects of knowledge or events that can be made fully re-present, but as dense affective sites that have mythic and temporal as well as kinetic force?

In what follows, I engage psychoanalytic theory as a reading practice, enlisting Spivak’s feminist deconstructivist approach to reading death *as a text*. Proceeding from Peggy Phelan’s (1993) call in her book *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* to “write into disappearance” (148), the work at hand turns writing towards what I call the performative encounter, away from notions of writing as claiming, fixing, branding, documenting, preserving. My telling centralizes loss, locating that which cannot be had at the very center of archives and archival practice. For me, the presence-non-presence of this mode of telling neither redeems nor totally refuses our (my?) desire for archival retrieval; it attempts to attend to something of the liveness of the living bodies that circulate beneath and throughout the account. For Phelan, without a copy, live performance plunges into disappearance, a movement that evokes for me with such poignancy, the figure of the runaway, considered in the third chapter of the dissertation. Phelan argues: “To attempt to write about the undocumentable event of performance is to invoke the rules of the

written document and thereby alter the event itself” (148). Every (re-)telling shifts ‘what really happened.’ She continues:

Just as quantum physics discovered that macro-instruments cannot measure microscopic particles without transforming those particles, so too must performance critics realize that the labor to write about performance (and thus to ‘preserve’ it) is also a labor that fundamentally alters the event ... The challenge raised by ontological claims of performance for writing is to re-mark again the performative possibilities of writing itself. The act of writing toward disappearance, rather than the act of writing toward preservation, must remember that the after-effect of disappearance of subjectivity itself (148).

The search for a disappearing performative writing moves from what Phelan calls “the grammar of words” to “the grammar of the body” which activates a move from metaphor to metonymy. In performance, she argues, “the body is metonymic of self, of character, of voice, of ‘presence’ ... performance uses the performer’s body to pose a question about the inability to secure the relation between subjectivity and the body *per se*; performance uses the body to frame the lack of Being promised by and through the body—that which cannot appear without a supplement” (149-50). The critical task of this approach to writing and the politics of archives I theorize, is to imagine a representational model and archival politics that redirects attention from practices of frenzied “finding,” to an understanding of the processes of subjectification made possible through which Arondekar (2009) calls, “the very idiom of the archive” and historiography (3). Such a turn mandates a theory of reading and writing that moves away from capture, from the project of ontologizing remains. Using psychoanalysis as reading practice, the dissertation attempts to elaborate some of the features of the death drive as it surfs along, atop such projects as colonial worldmaking, archivization (a process which includes the archive-making of and on material bodies), and the expansion of civility through a fantasy of eradication.

Stakes

By way of entering into a discussion on the stakes of this study, I would like to offer the following brief anecdote: Several years ago, I worked in a living history museum on the Western Prairies. The mandate of the living museum was to present an account of Western Canada in the late 19th to early 20th centuries. The museum was situated on 88 acres of land and the scope of the histories it animates were, and are extensive. What was absent from the account of the past, which the museum ‘brought to life,’ were the Indigenous People who lived and continue to live on the Western Prairies, as well as an account of their contact with European settler-colonials. My job at the time was in Public Relations. In fact, I was the official spokesperson for the museum. Unsure what this omission signified within the utopic copacetic rendering of Western Canada’s past (which the museum invested so highly in mediating in perfect historical correctness and verisimilitude) I asked a superior: why don’t we tell Aboriginal stories? Her answer was disciplinary, and for a long time it prevented me from saying *anything* about Aboriginal heritage, which of course, is inextricable with Canadian heritage. She told me that speaking for Aboriginal people was colonial and therefore violent. *It’s their story to tell*, I remember her saying, *not ours*. Not ‘ours.’ The interpellative, lethal, muscular ‘ours’ reached out and enveloped me, making me complicit.

The result of this policy (that “it” is “their” story) of course, was absence, erasure, silence that covered over guilt and apathy and even antipathy. I have spent the last decade or so working my way across the dense impasse this silence indexes. I have not yet arrived at the other side. Probably I never will. Nietzsche writes that the uses and abuses of history are for life, and in this way they are all about the present. The critical work at hand is to ask in what way the interests of the present are being served by our renderings of the past, where we stutter and fall silent, when we displace that which is difficult, that which implicates our own bodies and our own histories in something terrible.

I want to frame this dissertation, in part, as a response to the smugness of the speaker who hid her own complicity behind claims of political correctness and in knowing just enough about the politics of not speaking for others to disavow her own responsibility, the place at which her own body extended towards other bodies, other histories, other contacts. I want to frame it as a speaking into Spivak’s (1985)

examination of the absence of a text that can “answer one back” after what she calls, “the planned epistemic violence of the imperialist project” (256). One thing I think locating this study does in the contemporary moment, after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission released their final report, is to insist that truth and reconciliation are ongoing, because, just like full presence, full redemption (or perhaps any) is unreachable. In my view, in the context of scholarly work, to struggle with IRS history, to struggle in and through archives towards and away from Indigenous children, their bodily suffering, their planned erasure and the eradication of Indianness, is to struggle with the problems truth and reconciliation leave open-ended and necessarily incomplete. It would be a grave mistake to assume that because the TRC is ended the work of truth and reconciliation have ended, have somehow become less urgent. We cannot allow the archives to tend to the woundedness of the past. We must do this embodied labor ourselves.

I argue that we cannot do this labor without recognizing the untimeliness of the violence formalized in the IRS and encysted at the center of colonial and postcolonial Canadian commonsense. This project moves through accounts centered on Indigenous childhood and the figure of the Indigenous child. These accounts connect the psychic, sexual, physical shattering of Aboriginal children with a mythic fantasy of eradication whose mobilizing force is death driven. Thinking through the figure of claimed, branded, defiled sites of Indigenous childhood, I am struck by the over-marked, unclaimed, effaced sign of the Indigenous mother, which opens into a negation of Indigenous womanhood/femininity. The racialized, racializing, gendered violence of the present is intimately shaped by the violences of the past. The contemporary scenes of violence in which Aboriginal women are murdered, or simply made to ‘vanish,’ the structural violence embedded in the indifference to these lives such that these vanishings were not investigated, are, in so many ways, inhabited by the earlier violences of Indian residential schooling in Canada. In the contemporary moment, as well as in the history of residential schooling, even though there were and are physical Indigenous mothers, there was and still is, an excess of orphaning. These kinship-severing practices stem from early coercive means through which the federal government made illegal Indigenous parenting and mandated Indigenous children into

residential schools. They extend through to the practices of removal common throughout the 1960's that further severed Indigenous kinship systems and practices of Indigenous parenting (referred to in the contemporary moment as 'the 60's scoop'). In this era, the Aboriginal mother was deemed unfit and children were removed and placed in federal foster systems. Throughout the history of contact, the Indigenous mother—synthesized into/symbolized in a rather careless and ac hoc way that elides all Aboriginal mothering practices into the figure of the Indigenous woman—is a poignant site of de-futuring, erasure, sexual violence, loss.

The figure of Indigenous femininity extends beyond the purview of the work at hand, but in the current moment in Canada, this is a site of intense violence. We are now in a moment in which the absolute privilege to kill that was diffused throughout government bureaucracy and church officials in the IRS, and the power these figures had to place under erasure any trace of that killing, has become subterranean: this is not to say it has vanished or in any way 'gone away.' The postcolonial moment is one of reckoning and recognition. This is politics, I argue, not of laboring towards recognizing the other, but of recognizing ourselves. In so many ways, what follows is more than an account of an institution, the Christian churches that oversaw it, and the early liberal biopolitical mode of governance through which it was managed. It is about more than the enshatterment of children and the fantasy of eradication, more than the endurance, disappearance, death, survival, hope, and perseverance of Canada's First Peoples. Indeed, it is a story about the postcolonial world and the violences that made it possible. These are the very worlded violences we live in today.

CHAPTER TWO

Sovereign Innocence: The Child, Sexuality, and the Death Drive

The archival object of sexuality, after all, emerges only after it is lost, a be-coming that can conversely only take place if more stories of its loss are produced. (Arondekar 2009)

This impression of erogenous colour draws a mask right on the skin ... As inheritance, it leaves only its erotic simulacrum, its pseudonym in painting, its sexual idols, its masks of seduction: lovely impressions. These impressions are perhaps the very origin of what is so obscurely called the beauty of the beautiful. As memories of death. (Derrida 1995)

Sexuality is indeed designated as the “weak point” in psychical organization (Laplanche 1976)

This chapter is about sexuality and death. It is at once about the perpetration of sexual and erotic violence on indigenous children in the IRS, and how that violence is encoded with sovereignty or the imperialist imperative to obliterate the other in the name of civility, especially to the extent that the “other,” in this case Indigenous children, represent a threat to total claim to both nation and land, or

“motherland.” Accordingly, I am concerned with: how Indigenous children are sexually abused; how they (in turn) abused other children; kinship and the destruction of the family by sexual violence, even in the form of torture; the circularity of abjection that includes the banality of everyday violence. In what follows I examine how the death drive operates under the particular purview of colonial power and techniques/technologies of colonization within the concentrated site of the residential school, asking: How did colonial practices in the IRS make sexuality a site of death, or how did it capitalize upon and intensify the imbrications of sex and death localizing them with such density over the figure of Indigenous childhood and the bodily site of the Indigenous child?

Sexuality and death present so dense a conjuncture the work has been difficult to begin. For a long time it yielded nothing but circularity. For a long time it seemed a doomed place to start. I think perhaps it is. I think that might be precisely the point. To find a particular form of colonial sexuality, to locate it as an object of the archive—a practice that sexuality studies and (post)colonial studies scholar Anjali Arondekar (2009) calls “recuperative hermeneutics” (2)—seems to indicate the bringing forth of a kind of veiled hiddenness, a there-to-be-had/found narrative that emerges if the light is right. A “recalcitrant event,” it is already as though there is something to/of sexuality that is lost, or silent—an already melancholy object.²⁰ Arondekar invites us to think of this bringing-out-of-concealment as “the Derridean spectrality model” (ibid). She is (ironically?) inviting us to consider sexuality vis-à-vis its ontology. If one is a critical theorist who’s milieu is the archive, Arondekar’s comment also, simultaneously, raises the question/problem of the archive as a kind of *objet petit a*: an indexing of our desire for archives, our desire for some lost object—perhaps something like sexuality, (even) sexuality

²⁰ The “recalcitrant event” is Shahid Amin’s term for an engagement with the material imprint of archival evidence that moves us beyond the territory of the contested fact, the unseen record, from the history of evidence and into the realm of narration. Here, the “recalcitrant event” as trace eludes the historian/scholar’s attempts at discovery, offering instead a new ways of both mining and undermining the evidence of the archive. Arondekar complicates Amin’s formulations further to suggest that to read archival evidence as a recalcitrant event reads the notion of the object against a fiction of access, where the object both eschews and solicits interpretive seduction. See: Amin, Shahid (1995). *Event, Metaphor, Memory: Chauri Chaura*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Arondekar, Anjali (2009). *For the Record: On Sexuality and the Colonial Archive in India*. Durham: Duke University Press. pp. 3.

itself, or perhaps its origins—in archives, and the standing in of archives for that which we most want to touch, describe, know, possess, control.

Mal d'archive: a sickness unto death for the archive. We cannot ignore the sexuality latent in the archiviolithic force that destroys as it advances, that Derrida (1995) tells us *leaves nothing of its own behind* (11)—this is not to say that it leaves *nothing*. As this chapter will argue, colonial sexuality leaves traces of itself everywhere. It has its own way of making objects out of the earth, or, differently stated, of reordering the libidinal forces of the people autochthonous to that earth. A violent worlding, it is a dispersed and scattered writing. Its generative destructiveness is no less present in the documents it leaves behind it like so many desiccated scales, than it is in what we today call the repeating ‘cycles of abuse’, the mimetic quality of Freud’s primal scene, enacted over and over again. A recursive event, this violent sexual intervention is an enshatterment that continues to make all forms of Indigenous childhood an opening on/into death. This is a worlding that marks over with sexual violence the missing (but not absent) bodies of Aboriginal women and girls, as, under its erotic and obscuring auspices, they seem to vanish into nothingness.²¹ It underwrites the extraordinarily high rates of Aboriginal suicide and disordered patterns of substance use; it continues to fund the high rates of infant mortality that, even today, plague Aboriginal communities. Presently, Indigenous sexuality seems to recursively enact Edelman’s slogan for queer negativity: *no future*. In the recursive patterns it is made to repeat this sexuality seems indivisible from death.

All of these forms of death enact a refusal of/to (post)colonial futures. They are instances of death-written non-futurity, a futurity that is negated by death. As bodily writings, they bring to mind the connected lexical experience/expression of Gayatri Spivak’s great aunt, whose writing on her body in menstrual blood made of her body an archive of a sexuality that refused, through performative non-

²¹ The Native Women’s Association of Canada reports that as of March 31, 2010 there are approximately 600 cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada. Of these, 67% are murder cases; 20% are cases of missing women or girls; 4% are cases of suspicious death; 9% are open cases in which the women was either murdered, missing, or died in suspicious circumstances. See: Native Woman’s Association of Canada. *Fact Sheet: Murdered and Missing Aboriginal Women and Girls*. Web. 31 March 2010.

reproductivity, to participate in an Imperial future, that likewise refused the kind of future the political movement to which she belonged imagined. Spivak tells us, in her 2010 meditation on her earlier (1988) essay (“Can the Subalterns Speak?”), that unable to carry out an assassination, Bhubaneswari substituted her own death for the death of an unnamed politician. Death had been called for, was required, and she offered herself. Bhubaneswari’s writing in menstrual blood is a non-reproductive bodily writing that could not, for many years, until Spivak herself entered into the practice of reading Bhubaneswari’s death *as text*, be read outside of sexuality. It is a kind of death that was not legible outside the gendered expectations Bhubaneswari’s seventeen-year-old body carried, even (especially?) in death. These expectations were the ordering frame within which her body made sense, within which her body signified. It is poignant and it is profoundly significant that the sexual logic Bhubaneswari’s death *seemed* to speak was the catalyst for Spivak’s writing on the subaltern.

It is important to continue to mark that the present work, which in many ways follows Spivak’s, engages psychoanalytic theory as a reading practice, reading death *as a text*. Readers of psychoanalytic theory know that death is never a straightforward object. As it intersects the subject it moves underground, it obfuscates itself, it surfaces in the form of drives and instincts. For the indigenous child residents of the IRS, sexuality was sutured to death, became a site of death under the purview of the death drive. By reading death *as text* through the interpretive framework of psychoanalysis, this chapter seeks to read in the interrupted patterns of sexuality of Aboriginal children in Canadian Indian residential schools—forms of sexual abuse which did in many cases result in literal, on top of, figural death—not that which easily conforms to contemporary ideologies or concepts of agency and resistance, liberal theories of the individual and corresponding multicultural valuations of difference etc. Instead, the aim is on that which is not reconcilable with any of these smooth discourses or ideological formations—the ineluctable remainders. Like the details of the death of Spivak’s foremother, I am looking here for that which is not easily integrated and narrativized. What is ambitious here, perhaps even impossible, is an attempt to think colonial sexuality from both directions, in doing so to stretch what we think of as

‘archive’ topographically, to follow the anarchical violence the archive indexes and tamps down, to follow it most vociferously where it seems most to vanish.

What remains, open to be interpreted, is a culture of death-drivenness: at the site of the production and reproduction of Indigeneity, of colonialism, in the corporeal records of both and at the loci of their collision/collusion. This is to argue both that colonial sexuality creates its own archives, while at the same time burning them to the ground. And, it is to argue that locating sexuality as it hooks together with death, death understood here colloquially *as well as* psychoanalytically, within archives, in this case in Colonial Archives, is to already be searching for a spectrality, is already to render both death and sexuality spectral. Further, it is to invest in an object, the *archival object* of sexuality, which, Arondekar tells us, emerges only after it is lost—“a be-coming that can conversely only take place if more stories of its loss are produced” (17). The archival object of sexuality becomes itself only as sexuality is assumed to be a presentable absence; only in the stories that are told about sexuality does the archival object of sexuality emerge. The present work does not aim to take place within the economy of this production. Can one notice/witness spectrality without participating in producing it? Yet, if we do not, over and over again, seek to produce it, what becomes of it? What becomes of us? Writing sexuality is, I argue, already to encounter archives. It is a writing that cannot seem to get outside of Derrida’s elaboration of what he calls, just outside the frame of the epigraph in which he is quoted above the start of this chapter, *the anarchy drive*. We know that the anarchy drive is just one pseudonym—there are others—for the death drive.

That which eludes perception, the anarchy/death drive, Derrida tells us, draws a mask right on the skin. This mask: (an) *impression of erogenous*—eros producing—*colour*. So, if in writing, we do not arrive (safely) at sexuality, is there the barest possibility of arriving at its impressions, at the archives it makes of itself as it burns its way towards its own aiming, its own desiring. Is there a way of commenting on the way it writes us, writes our bodies? Derrida indicates that this touch of the death drive, its marking of/on the skin—itsself, a complicated erogenous zone—is generative of eros, of bodily love/pleasure. He writes: “As inheritance, it [death drive] leaves only its erotic simulacrum, its pseudonym in painting, its

sexual idols, its masks of seduction: lovely impressions. These impressions are perhaps the very origin of what is so obscurely called the beauty of the beautiful. *As memories of death*” (emph. added *ibid*). As the phrase and its literary context is vital to the unfolding of this chapter, it is important to note before going any further that the critical uptake of Derrida’s *Mal d’archive*, particularly for Anglophone readers, has missed what the French title conveys: not the fever of the common cold, recruiting accompanying images of stomach ache and warm, clammy skin, but rather a sickness unto death. This is a sickness that connotes more a relentless desire for possession and mastery that outstrips pleasure than it does *la grippe*, more a sickness of erotic compulsion that leaves its mark right on the skin, that has no outside. The *unto death* this sickness marks is, remarkably, the least commented upon feature of Derrida’s text. Uptakes of *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* have found productive Derrida’s expanded conception of archives as indexical of state power, a power which itself, perhaps, has no outside, and links them to Foucault’s earlier observations about the function of archives in the machinations of state power, or perhaps, simply, Power²². Carolyn Steedman’s excellent meditation on archive fever foregrounds archives as objects of belief;²³ And, because of the timing of the monograph in the mid 1990’s, the text has broadly been folded into the larger ‘archival turn’. But, even against the background of Freudian psychoanalysis delivered in the monograph’s subtitle, English-speaking readers have neglected what I see as the book’s most outstanding and important feature, which is that the book is in every way about the death drive. This is perhaps not surprising. Even scholarship explicitly focused *on* the death drive seems to have a difficult time looking it straight in the eye. When we set out to talk about the death drive, we almost always (inevitably? compulsively?) find ourselves talking about something else. Paradoxical though it may seem,

²² See, for instance: Stoler, Ann Laura (2009). *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

²³ For Steedman, it is all about the dust, the stubborn set of beliefs about an objective material world inherited from the nineteenth century with which modern history writing and its lack of such a belief, attempts to grapple. Her argument is that history writing belongs to the currents of thought shaping the modern world. By Steedman’s definition, the archive is the repository of that which will not go away. The book suggests that, just like dust, the matter of history can never go away or be erased. See: Steedman, Carolyn (2009). *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

this is the best way to begin to talk about the death drive: focusing on the effects it produces, focusing on the forces to which it attaches itself rather than the drive itself. Derrida's elaboration of *mal d'archive* goes a long way to demonstrating why this is so. The text is of further value to the present work in the way in which it enacts the polemic that the death drive is simultaneously all about archives, and all about sexuality. Archives and the death drive, the death drive and sexuality, sexuality and archives. This Borromean knot arrives, already, densely conjoined around the outside, around the invisible center the tangle indicates/shelters. What is on the inside? Is it the raw center of sexuality itself? Can we get there in words? Can we get *there* at all? And, if this is a drive with no outside, capable of recruiting everything, of leaving nothing of *itself* behind, then how do we locate it? How do we trace its movements, its meta-structure, its meta-structuring capacities? These questions are, to my view and to the work at hand, of vital concern.

A writing that extends from what I have begun to think of as the paradox, or riddle of the death drive, the archival responsibility of the present work is to propose a different kind of archival encounter, one that displaces the narrative of retrieval (while marking the compulsion it indicates—for the drive to retrieval is not at all irrelevant) with what Arondekar calls “a radically different script of historical continuation” (3). Further, it is to note that the script of historical continuation marks, not progress/teleology, but an elemental structure, a repetition in fact, that one can see echoed throughout the colonial and (post)colonial world. Think of it, if you like, as the Fibonacci Sequence²⁴ of colonial psychic-political life—the structuration that underwrites colonial logic and colonial common sense. Instead of the repeated precise proportionate unfurling of ferns and nautilus shells, the latter of which is also a symbol for expansion and renewal, we have the circularity of the death drive, its obliterating

²⁴ The Fibonacci sequence was discovered in the west (by Leonardo Bonacci) c. 1202 as a question and answer to the problem of population growth of rabbits based on idealized assumptions. Based in a theory of reproduction, the origin of the Fibonacci sequence is a question of animal sexuality. The solution, generation by generation, was a sequence of numbers known as the Fibonacci sequence, in which each number is the sum of the previous two numbers (1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144, 233, 377...). A positively arranged model of growth, the Fibonacci sequence appears throughout the natural world: in the branching in trees, phyllotaxis, the fruit sprouts on a pineapple, the flowering of an artichoke, the curling of a fern, the growth of a nautilus shell. It is a first principle of growth, reproduction, and natural ordering.

propulsion towards order and mastery, the drive that underwrites/funds the biopolitical impulse that justifies killing in the name of life. The critical challenge at hand is to imagine a practice of archival reading that incites relationships between what Arondekar calls “the seductions of recovery and the occlusions such retrieval mandates” (ibid). The ethos of this ‘radically different script of historical continuation’ holds on to the movement between embodiment/bodies and the move to the archive, critically refusing the kind of flight from corporeality that seeks to find a disembodied kind of truth—a cleaner, smoother, transcendent truth beyond/above the inconveniences, contradictions, and material limitations, divergent, inchoate wills to power, and ungovernable excesses of physical-psychic life. The uses and abuses of history, Nietzsche reminds us, are always in service of the present. What this indicates here is the necessity of holding on to an analytic of performance, which, itself indicates a particular kind of disappearance, which can at its best prompt a turn away from what performance and critical theory scholar Peggy Phelan (1997) calls “a conserving and conservative method” (3). At its best, performance holds the question of ontology open and draws continually and explicitly on the live body, as referent, as raw material, as erotic simulacrum, as *revenant*. The erogenous leavings of the death drive/archive fever indicate the presence of a live body, even if that body seems, in the words of performance and critical theorist Della Pollock (1998), to have *gone away* (1). This is further to enact a kind of Derridean poetics in which the recuperative practices, gestures, and hermeneutics do not precisely return us to a space of absence.

Writing from outside sexuality studies, but permitting myself to comment on what I notice within its topography, the particular kind of sexuality a critical theorist, literary critic, (or) historian sets out to discover cannot help but find itself conjured forward. These sexualities—sometimes queer, sometimes lesbian, sometimes homosexual, sometimes resistant etc.—move towards us through the archive like the shadow of a flame. As though it is there in the flesh, sexuality seems to flicker and dart, mesmerizing, the brighter flame we have invented for ourselves²⁵, its origin our own brief candle. Queer theory scholar

²⁵ A phrase borrowed from Nietzsche’s wandering monograph *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, in the chapter suggestively, for my purpose here, titled ‘The Afterworldly’ or ‘Of the Afterworldsmen’, the passage

Kathryn Bond Stockton (2009) elaborates this quality of the archival object of sexuality, its compelling intensity and affective resonance, in her discussion of the protogay child. This is a child that appears to the gay adult in retrospect, only after what Stockton calls “a death” (6). She writes: “For this queer child, whatever its conscious grasp of itself, has not been able to present itself according to the category ‘gay’ or ‘homosexual’—categories culturally deemed too adult, since they are sexual, though we do presume every child to be straight” (ibid). For Stockton, the effect on the child who feels queer is “an asynchronous self-relation. Certain linguistic markers for its queerness arrive only after it exits its childhood, after it is shown not to be straight. This is to say, in one’s teens or twenties whatever (parental) plans for one’s straight designation have died, the designation ‘homosexual child,’ or ... ‘gay kid’ may finally, retrospectively, be applied. ‘I am not straight’: ‘I was a gay child’” (ibid). I have quoted Stockton at length here to indicate a movement from the live body towards the archive of experience, the swirling darkening archive of self-memory, in order to substantiate in reverse the origin of sexuality in the child that authorizes the identity, expression, and experience of the sexual adult. Childhood, one could easily argue, following Freud if one likes, is a landscape ripe/rife with queerness, yet, importantly for Stockton, the phrase ‘gay child’ is “a gravestone marker for where or when one’s straight life died” (ibid). What is useful here is the notion, assumed, latent, that the child is innocent and that innocent means heterosexual/straight. Further that the innocence of the child is a sovereign innocence whereby the presence of heterosexuality and normative sexual expression and impulses erase themselves the way that waves of color cancel one another out, producing what adults look nostalgically back upon as purity. (Isn’t there an expression: *pure as driven snow*?) It is the queer child, the child of color, Freud’s child,

reads: “What happened then, my brothers? I overcame myself, the suffering one; I carried my own ashes up the mountain; I created a brighter flame for myself. And lo! The ghost fled from me!” (59). This passage, in the image it offers of the act of gathering and carrying ash up the mountain to invent a brighter flame—a mimetic act of creation that molds carbon atoms from one form to another—is powerfully evocative and suggestive of the movement from the ambiguities of embodiment and fleshly finitude towards archives, the drive to find and possess origins—the authoritative word that inaugurates our being-in-the-world. This allegory (its description of “self-overcoming”) also contains reference to the movement from embodiment to the transcendent world of spirit, or pure idea. In other words, archive fever. *And lo! The ghost fled from me!* Is this not the Colonial Impulse? See: Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm. (1961). *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. Trans. R.J. Hollingdale. Middlesex: Penguin Books. pp. 59.

which is sexual. As for Freud, he locates the covering over of the sexuality of the infant/child in the kettle logic²⁶ of the mother. As Laplanche (1976) glosses Freud: The mother knows the child to be sexually innocent, and since he isn't he should be condemned (29). As this double resistance indicates, "Freudian sexuality leads to repression and denial" (ibid).

Through the mechanisms of repression and denial, coercion and manipulation, violence—epistemic, archival, psychical, physical—and structural indifference, the violent colonial intervention into Indigenous child sexuality is already only the barest of outlines; we are left to interpret its traces and impressions in testimonies and oral histories by survivors, and archival fragments that, while they may not discuss sexuality directly, point towards it all the same. It is there in a child's game, it weaves its dangerous and sinuous way around the dissonant grammar of a badly transcribed testimony whose attempts at approximating Native Speech achieves instead a racist linguistic caricature. It is there in the hearsay motives for escape—escape by running away, by setting of fires, sometimes, even suicide. Cognitively, is there evidence to suggest that young/pre-adolescent children always understand the differences between these forms of escape, these lines of flight? In the conditions of slow death perfected in the IRS, colonial sexuality is indelibly death driven—meaning that it is collared tightly to non-furturity, though not necessarily non-reproductivity, by the death driven colonial imperatives of nation/narrative building. And it is driven into circularity, the 'cycles of abuse' we so often hear about pertaining to Indigenous sexuality. It is there in the relations between captive siblings, whose relationality the IRS sought first to gender, then to sexualize, finally to prohibit, to rewrite in the language of sin. It is in the arrested gender development of Indigenous children within Indigenous languages—which, in many instances (i.e. Ojibway) does not contain gendered pronouns—from which they are exiled. It is there in traces in the Colonial Archives and in the archives that came later, the TRC archives and the artistic responses to removal and native child captivity. It is in the relationality between these children and the wider/wilder environment of their enclosure, in the analogous arrangement of children and animals,

²⁶ Freud's kettle argument is as follows: you never loaned me that kettle; moreover it was broken, and anyway, I already returned it to you.

children and labor. It is there in the performances of hair cutting and the humiliating experiences of bed-wetting and bullying.

My argument here is that the IRS seized upon existing libidinal processes and turned them against the child, such the child's own body became a site of/for recursive forms of (self-)betrayal. This tactic nullifies the Indigenous body as a sign/site of innocence, turning it towards lust and/as loss. In her meditation on the Victorian cult of girlhood, *Pleasures Taken: Performances of Sexuality and Loss in Victorian Photographs*, Carol Mavor (1995) writes: "Children have a sexuality as complicated as anyone's ... their sexuality deserves recognition, respect, scrutiny" (1). I follow Mavor's thinking here, though we diverge just a little at the point of her localizing this sexuality on girls, her channeling of Monique Wittig who argues: *only females are sexed* (19). To be clear, my aim is not to recover something of indigenous child sexuality from archival traces, which, Stockton describes as "a shadowy spot on a field of light ... leading us, in moments, to cloudiness and ghostliness surrounding children as figures of time" (2). My argument does not operate in the service of queerness as a category or analytic. Rather, my argument is that for the indigenous child residents of the IRS, sexuality was sutured to death, became a site of death under the purview of the death drive. This movement of colonial desire sought to segregate children from unruly polymorphous perversity and genderless (genderqueer?) indigenous subjectivity, performatively interpellating them into good French- or English-speaking, gendered subjects of colonial power and Colonial Life.²⁷ What Colonial Life marks here is an actualized expression of successful interpellation into civility and citizenship from which Indigenous and Aboriginal children were always already permanently barred.

The sexuality of children is already a slender and tenuous archival object. In the Freudian sense, it is present insofar as it is repressed. The sexuality of captive children under the purview of the Colonial

²⁷ In French we know that every noun comes already gendered *le garçon ou la fille*. Even the plural traffics under the sign of one gender or the other (*ils ou elles*). In the instance that there is a group of women and one man, the ensemble flattens into the sign of the masculine *ils*. In English, the gendering of language is a more insidious, though no less imperative, pedagogical, disciplinary operation requiring consistent reinforcement, especially in the instance of the child/*l'enfant*, which, in French, we notice signifies under the rubric of gender neutrality—an aporia that must, by adulthood, be closed.

dictum to ‘kill the Indian in the Child’, to expose the Indian within the child to death, a interpellative call towards innocence that, for logistical, linguistic, and structural reasons was manifestly impossible, seems impossible to retrieve. The excessive presence of sexual violence and gratuitous forms of physical punishment (i.e. shackling students together and locking them together in a room with very little food for days, whipping students on the face and head, strapping them into an electric chair, forcing them to eat nothing but vomit for a number of days) are so extreme in the colonial sexuality/violence/drive for mastery they index that they overwrite Indigenous child sexuality to the brink of disappearance, or, worse, unthinkability. These sexual non-sexual traces that lead from scenes of primal violence are so horrific they seem not to have happened. This is a refracted and shattered landscape littered with loops and patterns which, in the barest of ways, speaks of the sexual violence in everyday things: here, bed-wetting remains the sexual violence of the dormitory, and the libidinal energies of bullies reiterates with a difference the abuses operating elsewhere, a slip-sliding chain that enacts bodily betrayal like a contagion. Sexuality is diffused through the violent practices of hair-cutting, the killing terror of cold, of hunger, and diseases that stunted growth and caused children to seem to ‘fade away,’ in extreme forms of corporeal punishment, and the suggestive ways students sought escape. Through the reading practice of psychoanalysis, the diffused traces of sexuality can be, if not brought out of concealment precisely, at least read interpretively beyond the frameworks within which colonial lives were made to mean. These (recursive) traces, as well as the ideological motives that impel contemporary work in these and other archives, return us to first principles: First, the drive for mastery indexed by the excessive wide-spread violence endemic to the IRS suggests the presence of the death drive, whose logic underwrites the biopolitical colonial imperative to kill in the name of life. Second, the escalation in violence as the drive for annihilation is frustrated, satisfies itself by corraling already existing/open/available libidinal forces into appropriate patterns of repression and denial. A non-signifying zone of negativity, Indigenous sexuality is made to repeat over and over, the slogan: *no future*. In what follows I examine how the death drive operates under the particular purview of colonial power and techniques/technologies of colonization within the concentrated site of the residential school, asking: How did colonial practices in the IRS make

sexuality a site of death, or how did it capitalize upon and intensify the imbrications of sex and death localizing them with such density over the figure of Indigenous childhood and the bodily site of the Indigenous child?

Colonial Sexuality is Child's Play (or: fort-da: the drive to mastery)

To suppose that children have no sexual life—sexual excitations and needs and a kind of satisfaction—but suddenly acquire it between the ages of twelve and fourteen, would (quite apart from any observations) be as improbably, and indeed senseless, biologically as to suppose that they brought no genitals with them into the world and only grew them at the time of puberty. What *does* awaken in them at this time is the reproductive function, which makes use for its purpose of physical and mental material already present. You are committing the error of confusing sexuality and reproduction and by doing so you are blocking your path to an understanding of sexuality. (Freud 2011)

The emergence of modern sexuality as the primary epistemological unit of biopolitics takes place, originally, in the family. The family is the interstitial referent between the regime of alliance (kinship and bloodline) and the regime of sexuality. In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault writes: “It is not exact to say that the deployment of sexuality supplanted the development of alliance. One can imagine that one day it will have replaced it, but as things stand at present, while it does not cover up the deployment of alliance, it has neither obliterated the latter nor rendered it useless. Moreover, historically it was around and on the basis of the development of alliances that the deployment of sexuality was constructed” (107). He continues: “The family is the interchange of sexuality and alliance. It conveys the law in the juridical dimension in the deployment of sexuality and it conveys the economy of pleasure, and the intensity of sensation in the regime of alliances” (108). For Foucault, family is the most active site of sexuality; biopolitics doesn't replace the family, but becomes the place where sexuality begins. What the Indian Residential Schools did was reengineer the Indigenous family, dissolving Indigenous structures of kinship—which, in the Lévi-Straussian sense of the term is the way of generating a social and political structure in a society based upon affiliation, marriage, and descent. The IRS reconfigured economies of

pleasure—for instance, away from such operations as eating, a primary site of (erotic) pleasure. They reordered the intensity of sensation in such a way as to alienate the child from its/the regime of alliances. Through myriad technologies that even, in the instance of the St Anne’s School, included an electric chair, they rewired what Foucault calls ‘the intensity of sensation’ in the body of the child, who, now severed from familial ties, had only her/his body and the immediacy of her/his own bodily pain—and had only colonial maps with which to interpret and fix the coordinates of that body, that pain.

As colonialism birthed the modern biopolitical Canadian nation, it concentrated tremendous violence on the site of Indigenous childhood. Through intense lines of force, it created Indigenous sexuality as an object no longer sutured to Indigenous kinship structures and historical/traditional/inherited familial background/ties. This process is traceable throughout dispersed archival sites, including: the gendered re-ordering of language-games, including the severing of traditional naming practices; the symbolic reorganization of familial relations around sexuality as taboo; the focus on the body as *the* locus of pain, humiliation, and sexual mortification. In this last instance, the body and its sexual capacities and energies were cast as the primary source of abjection, an abjection that had its source in the body and could only lead back there. This is a circularity, I argue, that killed/kills. In what follows, I consider each of these examples in greater detail. Then, at the close, I consider again the drive to mastery that is the principle function of the death drive. I consider this in relation to Edelman’s slogan for queer negativity: *no future*. I consider these figures, and the archiviolithic force that wends its way through them, in light of Aboriginal futurities/non-futurities and (post)colonial Indigenous sexuality.

Colonial Language-Games and Trickster Sexuality

In *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, Cree Canadian poet, playwright, and novelist Tomson Highway (1998) writes: “The most explicit difference between the North American Indian languages and the European languages is that in Indian (e.g. Cree, Ojibway), there is no gender. In Cree, Ojibway, etc., unlike English, French, German etc., the male-female-neuter hierarchy is entirely absent” (i).²⁸ So, the Indigenous child

²⁸ *The Kiss of the Fur Queen* is a novel (1998) that discusses the shattering legacy of residential schooling in Canada. Highway himself attended Guy Hill Indian Residential School. The book is based loosely on

arrives in the colonial world (like) a sexual trickster. This sexuality is open-ended, adaptable, non-linear, and not yet incorporated into the Oedipal order: unruly, dangerous, het-erogenous, multiple. As pivotal and important a figure in North American Indian mythology as Christ is in the realm of Christian mythology, the trickster goes by many names and guises, is capable of performing multiple simultaneous subjectivities. Trickster is the embodiment of play. As Highway explains the role of the trickster, it is pedagogical: to teach about the nature and existence on the planet Earth, straddling both the consciousness of man and that of God, the Great Spirit (i). Born into the Cree language, Highway's observations on the trickster in 'the North American Indian languages', point to important colonial-biopolitical logics that view language as the roadmap to gendering rubrics that actualize individuals into subjects of sexual difference. In so doing he underscores Ludwig Wittgenstein's polemic in his concept of language-games, that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or a form of life. Further, he provides insight into the Euro-American understanding of what Judith Butler (1994) succinctly calls, "the structure of language, the emergence of the speaking subject through sexual differentiation and how language subsequently creates intelligibility" (69). For Wittgenstein, words have meaning depending on the uses made of them in the complex multiform activities of human life. Thus saying something in a language is analogous to making a move in the game.

Colonial language-games addressed, with force, the chaotic open-endedness of Indigenous sexuality and Indigenous forms of life. Indigenous languages were unilaterally prohibited in residential schools, a necessary mechanism of gendering students into French/English subjects/subjectivities. These colonial language-games suture(d) gender to sexuality, foreclosing the ludic dimensions of sexuality and the agentive capacity for gender fluidity/play. This linguistic ordering along the axis of gender/sexuality secures the symbolic position of masculine and feminine according to the law of non-contradiction. It inscribes in Indigenous psyche the Law of the Father, securing the patriarchal structure of church and

Highway's family history and focuses on the events that resulted in Highway's brother René Highway's death of AIDS. In the novel, two young Cree brothers from Eemanipiteepitat in northern Manitoba are sent to a residential school. Their language is forbidden and both boys are sexually abused by religious figures. However, a wily trickster figure watches over the brothers as they actualize their dreams of becoming artists.

nation, and organizes familial relations beneath the Master Signifier of the masculine (*Our Father who art in heaven...*). Accordingly, Aboriginal women who had not been married in the Christian faith were, in many instances, denied access to their children. Particularly in the early days of the IRS, marriages were arranged for graduates of the IRS with the explicit aim of severing kinship ties thereby unmooring sexuality from Indigenous family orders, making it available for biopolitical modes of management—constructing Euro-Christian families whose only ties were to the Canadian nation-state and the Christian churches. One of the most violent outcomes of residential schooling is that Indigenous children who attended residential schools from a young age became unable to communicate with their families—particularly older generations who, traditionally, played vital roles in guiding Indigenous children into the nuances of their cultures and spiritualities. Relatedly, coming of age rituals were likewise prohibited. For young women this meant transitioning into adult sexuality without the cultural rites, rituals, and narratives that traditionally accompanied this maturation. For girls, menstruation often became a scene marked with fear and shame, a scene of bodily betrayal.

Colonial language-games included re-naming practices in which every student who attended IRS was stripped of her/his Indigenous name and given a Western name. In some instances, particularly later in the IRS history, students who enrolled in the schools already possessed European names. If, however, they did not, they were re-named by school officials, a linguistic form of violence that severed familial histories and social order and interpellated children into an entirely new and foreign lineage, orphaning them from their own. Daniel Kennedy, born to the Assiniboine people, recounts: “In 1886, at the age of twelve, I was lassoed, roped, and taken to the Government School at Labret. Six months after I enrolled, I discovered to my chagrin that I had lost my name and an English name had been had been tagged on me in exchange” (173: 18). Until he had gone to school his name had been Ochankuga’he, meaning ‘pathmaker’, a name that honored a trek his grandfather had led through an historic prairie blizzard (173:19). Ochankuga’he/Kennedy continues: “The school interpreter told me ‘When you were brought here, for purposes of enrolment, you were asked to give your name and when you did, the Principal remarked that there were no letters in the alphabets to spell this little heathen’s name and no civilized

tongue could pronounce it. ‘We are going to civilize him, so we will give him a civilized name,’ and that is how you acquired this brand new whiteman’s name: Daniel Kennedy” (173: 21)²⁹. On his first day at school Ochankuga’he/Kennedy writes: “In keeping with the promise to civilize the little pagan, they went to work and cut off my braids, which ... according to the Assiniboine traditional custom, was a token of mourning—the closer the relative, the closer the cut. After my haircut, I wondered in silence if my mother had died” (173: 22). Ochankuga’he/Kennedy’s narrative bears forth a notion of the cut in which language and action makes meaning and, in this case, severs contact. It shows us how grief and loss press were cut right into and onto the Indigenous child’s body, inscribed directly into flesh as though it were a substrata or blank surface awaiting colonial writings: a bodily *terra nullius*.

Sexuality is rooted in kinship, which is rooted in language. Indeed Claude Levi-Strauss famously rewrote all anthropology as/into a structure of semiotics. To ‘civilize’ a ‘little heathen’ is a deeply linguistic itinerary: to eradicate the sexual ambivalence/multivalence its arrival in colonial language, via Indigenous language, indicates. It is to eradicate the trickster from the Indigenous child’s lexicon of experience, from their psyche, to leave instead the indelible stamp of sexual difference. This is a mark that cuts all the way through language and onto the skin, and the bodily ego. As Butler (1988) points out, discrete genders are part of what humanizes individuals in contemporary culture (522). I suggest we can substitute ‘contemporary’ for ‘(post)colonial’ without sacrificing any of the phrase’s facticity. Sexual difference is the colonial roadmap children were/are given to interpret their bodies. If trickster sexuality is the latter, the biopolitical imperatives of colonial biopolitics demand the former. By forswearing trickster sexuality, Indigenous children are barred from accessing Indigenous cosmologies which predominately feature the trickster—the hero of Indigenous mythology just as Jesus Christ is the hero figure of Euro-Christian mythology—playing a fundamental role in the act of creation. Trickster is the limitless potentiality for sexual difference (Rubin’s sexual difference) beyond sexual difference (psychoanalytic

²⁹ As a motivation to private donors, churches often offered to christen Indigenous children with the names of those who had donated substantially to the mission. Particularly in the early days of the IRS, many European church members had a namesake—a linguistic descendent—at one of the Canadian Indian Residential Schools. In this way, Indigenous children were encouraged, by the very artifact of their ‘name’ to trace their lineage to European family structures and naming practices.

sexual difference) that cannot fit in colonial onto-epistemology. Indigenous sexuality, then, is made to stand as difference, as perversion³⁰/animality that must be humanized into rubrics of sexual difference distributed around the phallus as primary signifier. Children must be gendered, and this gender must be laminated to coordinating binary sexualities. Indigenous sexuality must, at all points, be disciplined away, must be eradicated. The total annihilation of Indigenous sexuality is impossible, with Indigeneity itself exceeding attempts to do away with it (i.e. bodies are still, through epidermal markers etc.) marked 'Indigenous'. Thus, indigenous sexuality becomes a site of the death drive, a site at which violence re-doubles in the face of the inevitable failure to eradicate.

As libidinal force, sexuality is already at work in the child, an easy entrance way into the dynamic process of subjectivity and subject-formation. As Laplanche (1976) observes: "Sexuality is indeed designated as the "weak point" in psychological organization (30). Once it is unmoored from family and kinship structures, sexuality is available, open. The cutting of Ochankuga'he/Kennedy's hair is a striking instance of kinship re-ordering, an orphaning which, in a matter of moments, reordered familial orders, linguistic markers, and gendered categories. It also re-writes the signals of heteronormative bodily markers—boys have short hair, girls have long hair. Boys wear pants; girls wear dresses. In the early days of the IRS girls were stripped of the warm leggings traditional to Indigenous winter dress. The wool and cotton dresses they were given to replace the leggings were insufficient to the Canadian winter weather. In some instances, girls contracted pneumonia and died.

Sexuality, Family, Taboo

The orphaning of Indigenous children reordered their ties with family external to the IRS, but it also significantly rearranged their relations with siblings and cousins attending the same schools. Upon

³⁰ The concept of perversion points from sexuality outwards, to broader concepts of psychic and social life. From Laplanche: "We shall consider the term perversion and the kind of movement operative within its very concept. Perversion? The notion is commonly defined as a *deviation from instinct*, which presupposes a specific path and aim and implies the choice of a divergent path. This is so clearly the case that a glance at any psychiatric textbook reveals that its authors admit a remarkable diversity of perversions, concerning the entirety of the field of "instincts" and according to the number and classification of the instincts they adopt; not only sexual perversions but also, and perhaps above all, perversions of the moral sense, of the social instincts, of the nutritive instinct, etc". Laplanche glosses this as, "perversion of the functional" (44).

entrance into the IRS, after the hair-cutting and the re-naming, girls and boys were separated and prohibited from speaking to one another. The gaze between siblings/family relations of the opposite sex was likewise prohibited and monitored for any signs of transgression. Children who violated this dictum were severely punished. The fear that boys and girls, even of the same immediate family of origin, would leave their beds at night to seek out the opposite sex was so great, that principles throughout the long history of the IRS nailed shut the doors to the fire escapes that led from second- or third-floor dormitories to the ground floor. Windows were also nailed shut as a precaution against clandestine/prohibited student encounters. It was simply assumed that such encounters would be sexual. The practice of locking or nailing shut the fire escape doors effectively trapped children in the dormitories and, in the instance of fire, with no way out, they died. This practice was so prevalent that upon the rare instance of health inspections of residential schools, letters of outrage were written to the Department of Indian Affairs demanding that principles be forced to remove the nails.³¹ The principles, in turn, argued that if they were to make the fire escapes accessible, children would use them to enter the dormitories of the opposite sex leading to impropriety—sex—and, by extension, the dissolution of civility, authority, and order. The school principles/principals won out over the health inspectors. The doors remained locked or nailed shut, students continued to die in fires.³²

The prohibition that governed the relations between students was sexual. It realigned family and kinship bonds rendering all relations (i.e. between sister and brother) sexual. This organization severed the ties between opposite-sex siblings and erected between them the incest taboo, enforced so strictly that even the gaze between siblings became a site of potentially dangerous sexuality and sexual deviance. A great number of testimonies of survivors of residential schooling report the experience of this prohibition

³¹ For example, in 1925, The Indian Commissioner for the Prairies, W.M. Graham wrote in a fury over the habit of the principal of the Anglican school at Brocket, Alberta, of nailing windows shut. “It is almost criminal,” he wrote, “and it shows the class of man we have in charge of the institution” (481:107). In 1930 he discovered that the school at Fort Alexander, Manitoba, “the floors the fire escape poles run through [were] surrounded by a trap door with a hasp, staple and padlock on.” (108).

³² At least thirty-seven schools were destroyed by fire between 1867 and 1939. In addition, at least thirty-two out buildings were destroyed. There were at least forty-eight additional recorded fires. It is suspected or proven that at least 26 of these 117 fires were deliberately set. (TRC: 466).

and the trauma it caused. When Isabelle Knockwood's little brother was caught running away from the Shubenacadie residential school, in Nova Scotia, his head was shaved and he was publicly strapped. She was unable to comfort him and reports that inability as a continuing site of trauma (TRC Vol. 1 165). The relation between opposite-sex siblings thus sexualized, students were doubly orphaned: from their families outside the residential school, and from opposite sex family relations inside the residential school.

Sexual Abuse: The Cycle of Abuse and/as the Circularity of Abjection

Sexual abuse in residential schools was rampant. Indeed, it is not a stretch to say that these practices indicate the IRS' ethos. Fontaine's interview with the CBC in which he reveals that of the twenty boys in this particular class every single one of the twenty would have experienced some form of sexual abuse exemplifies the wide-spread nature of these practices. To list just one more example, which illustrates how prolific abusers were, in 1995, in the settlement of a class-action law suit against Arthur Plint, who sexually abused students at the Alberni residential school in British Columbia, Justice D.A. Hogarth ruled: "So far as the victims of the accused in this matter are concerned, the Indian Residential School System was nothing more but a form of institutionalized pedophilia, and the accused, so far as they are concerned, being children at the time, was a sexual terrorist" (TRC Vol. 2 422). Plint pleaded guilty to eighteen counts of indecent assault between 1948 and 1968 and was sentenced to eleven years in jail. In 1997 Plint pleaded guilty to an additional seventeen charges of abuse arising from his years at the school. Because of the nature of the crimes and their lasting impacts on children in the IRS, the full extent of sexual malfeasance/abuse practices in the IRS will never be known. Many former victims chose not, or were unable, to come forward. Many have died. Still others had gone on to abuse further generations of IRS students in what contemporary discourse calls 'cycles of abuse.'

Student victimization of students constituted an unspoken, but very real, residential school reality. Parents were unable to hold their children legally from the system, and they were prohibited from acting in their child's interests. When they did intervene they were ignored. School and government policy regarding Canada's First Nations was to dismiss complaints and downplay any incidents involving

children and school officials. The Federal Government did not want First Peoples to feel a sense of empowerment over their circumstances, their histories, their sexualities, their futures. This was a direct effort on the part of the federal government to weaken Aboriginal claims on sovereignty. Taking action as a result of Aboriginal lobbying was very strongly discouraged. Thus, the prevalence of younger or smaller children undergoing sexual bullying by larger/older children was largely ignored. In January 1940, a father withdrew his son from the Anglican school at Cardston, Alberta because “the older boys were using him as a woman” (ibid 456). The police who investigated the claim reported that the boy’s father “took a very antagonistic attitude, claiming that his boy when being questioned was afraid of older boys who were present when they were being accused.” The officer additionally noted that that father, “although he speaks English, is very ignorant and has no sense of decency which was quite apparent by his actions” (ibid). The officer concluded that “nothing serious had happened” and that the claim was largely an exaggeration. The boy returned to school (ibid 457). In 1956, the vice-principal of the Shubenacadie School reported that a sixteen-year-old boy had sexually abused younger boys at the school on at least six or seven occasions. It appeared he had been doing so for at least four years (ibid 457). The TRC could find no evidence that the school provided any assistance, support, or treatment for the boys known to have been assaulted.

What do we make of these repeating patterns of abuse, in which students who themselves had been abused went on to, themselves, become abusers? Certainly student victimization of students was, as the TRC report of the topic points out, “an element of the broader abusive and coercive nature of the residential school system” (ibid 459). The TRC is also, I believe, correct in stating that, “the betrayal of students by their peers has contributed significantly to the schools’ long-term legacy of continuing division and distrust within Aboriginal communities” (ibid 460). “The failure of the IRS to protect students from such victimization,” the TRC report of student victimization of students concludes, “even from among themselves, represents one of its most significant and least-understood failures” (ibid). What are we to understand of these ‘failures’—what do they indicate or represent?

My argument is that the cyclicity of the abuse indicates a moment in which Indigenous sexuality emerges explicitly as a site of negativity, a site of non-futurity—a site of the death drive. This is a facet in daily life that repeats without positive value. It is non-generative, indicating a form of social non-viability. As they intervened into Indigenous sexuality, Indian residential schools operated as machines for producing monotonous day-to-day sameness, producing intractable patterns of lack—lack of food, of sanitation, care and kindness, resources, education, etc.—which, over and over, (attempted to) evacuate all possibility for agentive sexual expression, futurity, optimism, difference, hope. In fact, it seems like the only thing it allowed for were the aggressive dimensions of sexuality. My central claim is that archival objects such as the statistically significant number of abused students who in turn abused other students is not incidental to the colonial project. The cycles of abuse, in fact, served by perpetuating the colonial project. The point here is not that Indigenous lives did not matter. Quite the opposite, what I am arguing is that these child bodies and Indigenous lives served the political project of the colonial nation as it emerged from Empire. I am arguing that it is precisely at the point of sexuality—what Freud calls the kettle logic of the mother, the holding together the sexually of the innocent child with the sexual child whose sexuality requires punishment in the same child body—that we can see ‘the Indian’ and ‘the child’ break apart into its components: the diseased obsolescence of the Indian and the innocence of the child.

The opposition of these iconic figures is productively fundamental to the politics enacted in the formation of the nation. Politics, as Lee Edelman (2004) explains it through Lacanian psychoanalytic terms, “names a space in which Imaginary relations ... compete for Symbolic fulfillment, for actualization in the realm of language to which subjectification subjects us all” (7). He continues: “Politics ... names the struggle to escape a fantasmatic order of reality in which the subject’s alienation would vanish into the seamlessness of identity at the endpoint of the endless chain of signifiers lived as history” (8). The struggle central to the zone of politics is a struggle for language and recognition. It marks the attempt to stabilize time, and to suture meaning to signifiers, to hold them still and formalize them into a narrative. What politics names is the temporalization of desire, what we call a teleology. The

death drive, intractable, inassimilable to the logic of interpretation or the demands of meaning-production, indicates the destabilizing force of what persists outside or beyond the order of signification. The failure of residential schools to curb the rampant sexual abuse of students by students amplified the larger colonial project of the making of Indigenous sexuality in every way opposed to social viability, to evacuate it of any/all positive content, to make of it a death-driven project with no future.

The Sexual Abuse of Boys: Homosexuality and the Law

Because of the very large quantity of materials regarding the sexual abuse of boys by men in the IRS, an analysis of the unique topography of this history is vital to any project that seeks to link Indigenous sexuality to the colonial project. In doing so, it is important to note that homosexuality was illegal in Canada until 1969 when it was decriminalized by future Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau who, acting as Justice Minister, famously stated: “There’s no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation.”³³ Prior to this, in the British North America era, same-sex sexual activity between men was a capital crime that could be punishable by the death penalty. There is no surviving record of any executions and political figures were reluctant to enforce the law. The death penalty was eventually repealed and a broader law involving gross indecency between men was often enforced in the late-19th century. During the early to mid 20th-century, the law often portrayed homosexual men as sex offenders. Everett George Klippert (1926-1996), who admitted in 1960 to having sex with multiple men was sentenced to life imprisonment.³⁴ The status of homosexuality, both legally and on the register of socio-

³³ CBC Archives: Trudeau: ‘There’s no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation’. <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/omnibus-bill-theres-no-place-for-the-state-in-the-bedrooms-of-the-nation>. Dec. 6, 2016.

³⁴ Klippert was the last person in Canada to be arrested, charged, prosecuted, convicted, and imprisoned for homosexuality before its legalization in 1969—the reforms that led to Canadian decriminalization of homosexuality were a direct result of the Klippert case. In 1960 he was convicted on eighteen charges of gross indecency and sentenced to a four-year imprisonment. In police questioning on another matter (an arson to which he was not found guilty) Klippert voluntarily admitted to having had recent consensual homosexual relations with four different adult men. He was arrested and charged with four counts of gross indecency. A court-ordered psychiatrist assessed Klippert as “incurably homosexual” and he was sentenced to “preventative detention” (indefinite detention). The day after Klippert’s conviction was upheld on appeal, NDP leader Tommy Douglas invoked Klippert’s name in the Canadian House of Commons, stating that homosexuality should not be considered a criminal issue. Within six weeks, Pierre

cultural norms, is of relevance to instances of child abuse in the IRS as—particularly in the 1939-1971 era—sexual abuse involving a man and a boy was viewed as homosexual activity, not as abuse. Since consensual sex between adult males was prohibited, records of child abuse in this era often made no distinction between homosexuality and pedophilia. In the case of Martin Houston, a dormitory supervisor at Grollier Hall³⁵, a Roman Catholic residence for 240 Aboriginal public school students in the community of Inuvik in the Northwest Territories, the charges for sexually abusing an unknown number of boys between 1960-1962, the charges were buggery and gross sexual indecency. David Searle, a lawyer in private practice who prosecuted Houston on behalf of the federal government—an event which it must be stressed was exceptionally rare—recommended that, to ensure that “single, male, homosexuals were not hired as supervisors, only married couples should be hired to work in these positions.”³⁶ The focus on homosexuality conflates both pedophilia and pederasty with homosexuality, homosexuality operating here as a universal signifier for any kind of inappropriate or deviant sexuality. The notion of consent, even between adult males, is foreclosed. Additionally, this focus on homosexuality also suggests that homosexual abuse of children was viewed as being worse than abuse of a heterosexual relationality. Indeed, although the TRC reports of the 1939-2000 era (2015) indicate that while male and female

Trudeau presented the *Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1968-69* (Bill C-150), an omnibus bill which decriminalized homosexual acts between consenting adults. The law passed. Klippert was released from prison in 1971. See: Kinsman, Gary (1987). *Regulation of Desire in Canada*. Montreal: Black Rose Press.

³⁵ Many of the people who were convicted of sexual abuse between 1939-2000 were dormitory supervisors. “They oversaw student activities from the moment students woke up until they went to bed ... A supervisor’s power and presence were all-encompassing. Abusive supervisors were able to use their authority to manipulate student behaviour, usually by employing a mixture of threats and bribes. They were usually provided quarters in the same building as the students they were supervising. Students might be under the same supervisor’s authority for a period of two or three years” (TRC Abuse 1940-2000. pp 415). This person escorted students to meals, directed their chores, was “responsible for their personal hygiene, oversaw their recreation and study time, took them on outings, and saw them to bed. They also administered discipline” (ibid). Their access, in short, was unfettered and their power over students absolute. Confronting an abusive supervisor many years later at trial, one former student said: “I was your slave, your puppet, for almost three years.” See: “Ex-residential School Worker Convicted of Abusing Boys,” CBC News, 5 November 2013, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/saskatchewan/ex-residential-school-worker-convicted-of-abusing-boys-1.2415810>.

³⁶ TRC, ASAGR, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, David Searle to Gordon Robertson, 23 October 1952. [AANDC-886831]

students were abused at equal rates, male students were compensated at the most serious and damaging category of abuse at a greater rate than female students (411). Further, non-preferential adults engaged in sexual acts with male and female children, an occurrence that was not unusual.³⁷

If we stay for a moment longer with the case of Martin Houston, we will find at least two additional points that are suggestive within the context the larger argument of this chapter. First, upon his arrest Houston told police that in his youth he had been sent to a reform school. There, he said, “the other lads had committed indecent acts on him” (ibid 434). Then he had attended St. John’s Junior Seminary, which, despite its name was not a seminary but a private high school for Aboriginal students, run by the Oblates on the Fort Alexander Reserve. He was at this time twenty-years-old. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) investigation conducted after Houston’s arrest in 1962 concluded that while he was a student at St. John’s, Houston had engaged in “homosexual conduct” (ibid 434). Significantly, the report is unclear as to whether or not Houston was being abused by either staff or students, was abusing fellow students, or was engaging in consensual sexual relations. However, as the TRC report observes, “the RCMP concluded that Houston was known to have instigated and carried out acts of gross indecency and buggery with at least three Indian youths, two of whom were 15 at the time and one of whom was 18 years of age at the time” (ibid). The prosecutor, David Searle, believed that if a proper investigation had been carried out prior to Houston’s hiring, his “previous homosexual conduct would have been easily uncovered” (ibid). The cycle of abuse Houston’s case clearly indicates seems to have been lost both on the RCMP in charge of investigating the case, and on the prosecution. What the instance of Houston’s prosecution did make clear, at least to Searle, is that there were no background checks performed on prospective employees seeking work in the IRS. Indeed, as I have elsewhere marked, the wages on offer were of such a paltry amount that recruiters working on behalf of the IRS were repeatedly unable to attract a competent staff. The matters of sexual acts involving students were almost never brought to the police and even less often prosecuted. Typically, teachers or staff were invited to seek employment

³⁷ For instance, Bruce Donald Haddock, a former employee of the Port Alberni School in British Columbia, charged in 2003 of sexually assaulting male and female students during his tenure at the school in 1948.

elsewhere—rarely did their record of malfeasance follow them, and in an overwhelming number of cases, known sex offenders were rehired at other residential schools, recirculated in a contained zone of non-futurity. The matter of sexual impropriety involving Aboriginal students was simply not viewed as a grave enough matter to besmirch the reputation of young, bright (white, male) teachers. One cannot help but note that Houston, outstanding in the very fact that his case was ever prosecuted, though designated “Non-Treaty” at his high school, was not a white Euro-Canadian teacher or member of the clergy. His mixed Aboriginal heritage simply recapitulated the marker of Indianness as sexually deviant, dirty, reprobate.

Not all forms of what the TRC has taken the lead in retroactively naming “abuse” that occurred in the IRS were sexual in nature. Though the sexuality latent in the corporeal aggressivity and drive to violence, humiliation, and excess in the management of children in these institutions is undeniable. Here I offer two representative anecdotes and offer ways we might interpret these instances under the rubric this chapter advances.

Rewiring the Intensity of Sensation: The Fort Albany Case

In 1992, former students of the St. Anne’s School at Fort Albany in northern Ontario—a school which the TRC describes as having the worst cases of abuse of all of the residential schools in Canada—organized a reunion that attracted 300 people. Thirty of them spoke to a special panel about the physical and sexual abuse they had experienced at the school. The report of the panel stated: “Of the 19 men who gave testimony, 10 were sexually abused. Almost all of them were physically abused in a variety of ways, including strapping, being made to sit in the electric chair, being made to eat their vomit, being made to kneel on concrete floors, locked away in dark basements, being wrongfully punished for things they did not do etc. etc.” (441). One of the panel organizers, Mary Anna Nakogee-Davis, later told the media that she had been sexually abused by a priest when she had been a student at the school (441). The report continues: “Several people talked about the electric chair that was used in the girls playroom. It seems odd how an electric chair can find its way into a Residential School; however, it seems to have been

brought to the school for fun. Nevertheless, all the people who remembered the electric chair do not remember it in fun, but with pain and horror (441).

Freud posits that the erotogenic (areas productive of sexual stimulation) includes not simply every cutaneous region, but every organ, including internal ones. He is eventually led to the position that every function and, finally, every human activity can be erotogenic. As Laplanche reads Freud's theory of sexuality, "the 'source' of sexuality can be as general a process as the mechanical stimulation of the body in its entirety; take, for example, the rocking of an infant, or the sexual stimulation that may result from rhythmic jolts, as in the course of a railroad trip; or the example of sexual stimulation linked to muscular activity, specifically to sports ... Such is also the case for such general processes as affects, notably "painful" affects; thus, a suddenly emergent state of anxiety will frequently trigger a sexual stimulation ... painful affects as an "indirect source" of sexuality" (22). As it pertains to sudden pain, Freud (2011) writes: "Sexual excitation arises as a concomitant effect as soon as the intensity of those processes passes beyond certain qualitative limits" (22). Laplanche explains that we thus see the priority accorded, "not to the source in its strictly physiological sense, but to the source in its so-called "indirect" sense, as in an 'internal source' which ultimately is nothing but *the transcription* of the sexual repercussions of anything occurring in the body beyond a certain qualitative threshold ... any function, any vital process can 'secrete' sexuality; any agitation may participate in it (22).

The argument here is that even abuse at residential schools that was not sexual in the sense of genital interaction, it was sexual in nature nonetheless. I call this the sexual non-sexual. In statistically overwhelming numbers the physical abuse incurred by children at residential schools was shockingly violent (i.e. the above example of the electric chair). Why this excess? My argument is that these forms of excessive abuse/punishment evince the death driven impulse to anchor the Indigenous child to her/his Indigeneity at the point of bodily pain/mortification/humiliation. Through excessive physiological stimulus the child's focus was concentrated in/on her/his own body, which she/he experienced as *the* locus of pain, humiliation, and sexual mortification. Because of the sexual excitation that accompanies physical agitation, the body and its sexual capacities and energies were cast as the primary source of

abjection. For the Indigenous child, experiencing gratuitous physical punishment, the logic/structure of this punishment is: I/my body is bad so I am being punished. The punishment itself recedes leaving the body as the cause/source of the pain—my body hurts me and so I attempt to flee my body (i.e. running away, setting a fire), resulting in further corporeal punishment. Once again, we are confronted with a circularity that traps the Indigenous child 1) in her/his own body; 2) in a temporality that offers no positivity and no future.

This abjection has its source in a body that, through the circularity of ideological misrecognition is read as dirty, deficient, diseased, illegitimate etc. The punishment the child endures has its source here in her/his body, in what her/his body lacks—or has in excess, i.e. too much ‘Indianness’. And it ends here, in a bodily humiliation such as having to carry urine-soaked bedclothes through the public cafeteria before the other pupils, teachers etc. (my body has betrayed me by urinating while I slept). Or it ends in bodily pain such as the electrical jolts from an electric chair. The most insidious and violent feature Elaine Scarry notes in the structure of torture is the ability of the torturer to turn the victim’s body against her/himself. What this looks like is: *I am no longer aware of the electric chair itself, I am only aware of the pain in my body. In this moment I stop being aware of the instrument of torture at all. I am only aware of my body, how I am trapped inside its confines, how it is hurting me.* This tearing of the mind from the body, this forced enacting of Cartesian dualism is, as we think it through the body, a scene of shocking violence. The forced betrayal of the child by her/his body, the turning of the body of the child against her/him-self while trapping her/him in a body written in pain is a circularity that kills.

Sexual Traffic(king): Sexuality, Death, Archives

Confronted by the taboo combination of child and sexuality, performance scholar and literary critic Carol Mavor observes, many critics refuse to “see”. In Foucauldian terms, she continues, “participants in the tradition of modern sexual discourse feel the need to discuss sex in a way ‘that would not derive from morality alone but from rationality’” (10). For Foucault, rationality itself has been elevated to a moral-ethico imperative in biopolitics. Such views render children silent and inert, denying them sexuality and the freedom to express it. This does not mean that children are therefore without

sexuality, but that their sexuality cannot be spoken, or heard. They are the luxe surface for our engravings. In the space of this silencing, Mavor argues, they are “transmogrified from wicked things into beings of goodness and godliness” (10). This transmogrification is a matter of tremendous affective and physical labor, and its social, cultural, and political importance cannot be overstated. Further, in the turn to the child as a model of goodness and purity we, the other Victorians/the (post)colonials “infantilize history by charming our own pasts”(3). For Mavor it is no accident that the modern cult of the child developed and rose hand-in-hand with photography, that ‘the child’ and the photograph were commodified and fetishized along side one another. Each, for Mavor, mythically keeps time still, innocent, untouched. Mavor’s comments on the erotic child of the Victorians suggests that the reason modernity considers the child to have no sexuality is that to confer sexuality upon a child, to grant the child sexuality, is to confront death: both in the violence of the mythic past, as well as the looming marker of fleshly finitude. “If there was no death,” she asks, “why would childhood hold its appeal?”(6). Further, she suggests, we can understand the appeal of understanding children—especially little girls—as without sex is that it is avoidance of death. “For sex,” she stated, “is *always* connected with death” (emph. added *ibid*). This cleansing of the bodily child of sexuality is the response to an unruliness, a psychic and physical darkness, that confronts the orderliness of Victorian sociality with the anarchical force of chaos. It must (*must*), therefore, be mastered. This drive to mastery, we know, is a fundamental operation of the death drive.

What can we say about Indigenous sexuality, Indigenous bodies, and/as the archive of colonial writing? What can we say about the interpellation of Indigenous sexuality as available raw material, as a surface upon which to narrate the recapitulation of loss, a loss/negativity that renews itself—for instance—in the missing/murdered bodies of Aboriginal women and girls? What we might call the marks of abuse and abjection, the scars of abuse—psychic, corporeal—residential schooling has written, attempts that spoke the desire to eradicate indigenous forms of life, have themselves become the archive(d) traces of Indigenousness/Indigeneity the way we read it today: backwards, as trauma, as the site of an originary woundedness. We can think of these representations of Indigeneity as the re-

presentations of the representations of the very thing (Indigeneity) colonial institutions sought to eradicate. The practices of these institutions sought to hide or place under erasure this unruly, intractable thing, ‘Indigenously’, by adding more marks over top of it—re-writing the child body and the child psyche in the language of trauma, abuse, what I have called enshatterment. Each line of force that left scars on the Indigenous child’s body re-doubled/re-inscribed it as Indigenous. One can never hide something by adding more marks to it. Doing so only makes that which one is attempting to cover over more visible, intensifying, amplifying its presence. This function of fevered overwriting that repudiates its own aim—total disappearance or annihilation—is a function of the death drive, the anarchy drive, the archive fever. When annihilation proves elusive/impossible, the death drive can only reach partial satisfaction. In its aim towards total satisfaction (annihilation), it settles instead for violence. This, incidentally, is the logic of genocide.

In her book on hunger and childhood, Emma Donoghue (2016) writes, “a child’s body is a record of everything that has happened to it” (21). In other words, bodies are archives that shelter many other forms of archives, written and overwritten, repressed, tamped down, each containing temporalities and lines of force. A vital contribution of Derrida that advances the interpretive work sparked by Spivak’s provocative claim that *death is a text*, is his insistence that writing includes all signs, traces, mnemonic devices, inscriptions, marks and sensations. This is a significant expansion of writing that bears weight in conversations on subaltern speech and the interpretation of subaltern death. It also opens in suggestive and important ways the agentive possibilities for forging lines of flight from positions of domination and abjection—i.e. from within the institutionalization of Indigenous childhood. The Indigenous child residents of the IRS did not write theory in the way that we in the academy expect to see and understand it. Indeed, theory is the privileged domain of those who can speak, whose speech is even desired. In subsequent chapters I will argue that Indigenous children in the IRS did indeed produce discernable writing in the form of bodily writing, what Derrida might call in an expanded sense ‘arch-writing’. The surfaces available for this inscription was the wild surface of frozen water and untamed topography, they wrote in the language of incineration and in the violence with which they marked each other. The death-

marked passage of their interpellation into colonial subjects, an interpellation that made Indigenous sexuality a site for capitalization, domination, and violent bodily marking—like the earth—continues to underwrite the disappearance as if into nothingness of Aboriginal women and girls. Indigenous childhood, meanwhile, in the form of high infant mortality rates and lower than average life expectancy and quality of life indicators include literacy and health, continues to open, precariously, precipitously, towards non-futurity.

What this chapter has sought to establish is the embodied archive of violence that subtends the post/colonial nation-state. This violence indicates a shift Foucault's identifies as being from 'territory' to 'population' in the emergence of biopolitics, and the biopolitical imperative that sees sexuality as the potential for a population's growth and regulation. As Indigenous lands were annexed and occupied, Indigenous bodies—the bodies of children in particular—were recruited as available substratum upon which colonial onto-epistemologies could be authored. In Lacanian psychoanalytic terms, the annihilation of Indigenous forms of life indicates the aim of colonial world-making. The goal of this world-making is the stabilization of civil Canadian society. In terms of this goal, the continual re-presenting of Indigeneity is, in fact, useful, necessary. In the lexicon of the death drive, which props itself or surfs upon existing vital life forces (instincts), the reiteration over and over to "kill the Indian" creates the archive of an impossible telos (Kill the Indian in the Child). The circling around the obstacles that arise on the path to achieving this telos is a function of the death drive, whose mechanism is to double-down around sites of failure with an enjoyment that exceeds pleasure. Unable to master the unruly sexuality of the Indigenous child—an unruliness which we now understand to be so diffused throughout everyday life (remember Freud's response to the charge of 'pansexuality' was the rejoinder that although not everything is sexual, sexuality can be found/can arise in anything) that it only ever eluded attempts to regulate and tamp it down. Frustrated at failure, yet intensely enjoying it—enjoying in the psychoanalytic sense rather than simply the colloquial sense, though they are in many instance imbricated—the drive to mastery satisfies itself with intensifying violence. This is the structure of Fort-da, the child's game that Freud assures us, is in no way the domain of the gifted, the wise, or the precocious. This is the genocidal logic that, after all,

underwrites and helps make logical the affective daily labor of killing an un-killable foe to save and hold sanctified the sovereign innocence of the life that shelters it.

CHAPTER THREE

Bodies out of Time: “the Indian”, “the Child”, and the Racialized Logics of Futurity

The Indian Problem: I want to get rid of the Indian. I do not think as a matter of fact, that the country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are unable to stand alone ... Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian that has not been absorbed by the body politic. (Scott 55)

The anthropologist proclaims himself to be in service of science, to be nothing more than the executor of the laws of nature and reason. He uses the taxonomic cover to hide his relentless appetite for the Time of the Other, a Time to be ingested and transformed to his own. (Fabian 104)

One little two little three little Indians, four little five little six little Indians, seven little eight little nine little Indians, ten little Indian boys. Ten little nine little eight little Indians, seven little

*six little five little Indians, four little three little two little Indians,
one little Indian boy...*

On New Year's Day in 1937, four boys run away from the Lejac Indian Residential School.³⁸ Instead of following the railway, they walk across Fraser Lake, bound for the Nautley Reserve—"straight out towards the light of the village" (Milloy142), across the vast and planar flatness of the frozen water. By the time they are found, frozen on the lake: one boy has lost a rubber and sock; his foot is bare. Three are lying huddled together. All are dressed in light summer clothing and only one is wearing a cap. Roughly twenty-five meters away from the others, the fourth boy is found with his coat folded under his head like a pillow, lying on the snow as though asleep ("Coroner's"). The boys' names are Maurice Justa, Allen Patrick, John Jack, and Andrew Paul. On New Year's Day in 1937, Allen is nine years old. Maurice and Andrew are eight years old; John Jack is seven. A newspaper article in the *Prince George Citizen* published a few days later (January 7, 1937) on the findings of the coroner's report, adds that no one had attempted to go after the boys, even though it seemed quite clear where they had been headed, even though it was cold—thirty degrees below zero, Celsius—and getting colder, even though the reserve was too far for the boys to reach on foot in winter conditions. The article adds that the remains were not discovered until the end of the next day, when the boys were found, quite literally, *frozen in time*, together on the open surface of the lake.³⁹

In the course of my research into the IRS, I came upon the newspaper article on the boys' deaths by chance, in an online repository of historical newspaper archives. The digitized page on which the story is printed is difficult to read; the print is so faded and the typography so effaced there are points at which

³⁸ The Catholic-run Lejac Residential School was named for one of the founders of the first residential school at Fort James, and drew from a community of the Nadleh Whut'en First Nation of the Dakelh (Carrier) people. Located roughly eight miles from the Nautley reservation whose community—Nadleh Village, or in English parlance, Fort Fraser—is based near the Canada National Railway line in the Nechako Country region of Central British Columbia.

³⁹ See: "Coroner's Jury Hears Recital of Indian Tragedy" In *Prince George Citizen*. 7 January 1937, <http://pgnewspapers.pgpl.ca/fedora/repository/pgc:1937-01-07/-/Prince%20George%20Citizen%20-%20January%2007,%201937>. (Viewed 4 September April 2015).

the story seems to disappear, as though it has been pushed down into the digital page or the glowing space behind it. It emerges a few millimeters down the slender column of text before receding again. The words “tragedy” and “verdict” are clear, and: “School Authorities Should Have Acted Sooner After Absence of the Boys Noted,” and the headline, “Coroner’s Jury Hears Recital of Indian Tragedy: Four Little Boys Frozen to Death on Their Way Home from Lejac Indian School.” (I hear a song trailing through this precarious text: *one little two little three little Indians, four little Indian boys...?* The song reaches toward completion. I hear it as a song sung to children, or by children, a circular chanting in some schoolyard, anywhere in the (post)colonial North Americas. Floating, a-topic and untimely, as if out of memory, it carries with/in it some essential, mythological, idea of Indianness. The processional, child(ish), projective saying, *one little, two little, three little Indians, four little Indian boys*, rattles through the sober sonorousness of the headline and rebounds, forming its own circularity, its own recitation, its own completion). The term in the headline, “Recital,” partitions the event and bundles it away, into ‘Indian territory,’ unclaiming the tragedy as it displaces it, making it seem essentially, inevitably Indian: already other, already lost—already a story of disappearance. The black-and-white headline turn of phrase, the hearing of the recitation of tragedy, seems resigned; The phrase “recital” suggests that its audience—the Coroner’s Jury—had known in advance the event they were to see/hear was “tragic,” a sad but as-if inevitable story of misfortune. I imagine the men, for almost certainly they were all (white) men, filing out of the hearing having ruled that, “more definite action by the school authorities might have been taken,” that, “corporal punishment, if practiced, should be limited; and that a better understanding would exist between the pupils and disciplinarians if the latter were English speaking.”⁴⁰ Ultimately, no charges

⁴⁰ At the inquest, it came to light that Indian agent R.H. Moore had discovered that, in fall 1936, Roman Catholic Bishop Buno, against the wishes of the principal (Fr. McGrath) had appointed two priests from France as the school disciplinarians. Neither spoke English and neither McGrath nor the students spoke French. Moore had believed at that time that that the excessively forceful behavior of the disciplinarians was responsible for an increase of runaways from the school, which he called “an *epidemic* of runaways” (emph. added “Coroner’s”). According to the TRC final report, Moore had instructed McGrath to remove the disciplinarians and replace them, fearing that the truancy problem would get out of hand. It was only at the inquest that Moore realized the principal had not made the changes, “since he did not believe he had the authority to countermand the Bishop’s order” (TRC 595). This particular kind of power slippage, this ambiguity between state and Church authority, was very common throughout the history of the IRS, to

were brought and the deaths—the official cause of which was ruled to have been, “from exhaustion and consequent freezing,”—was ruled “unavoidable given the evidence” (ibid). Three inches to the left, the headline reads: “Stalemate is Reached in Spanish Civil War with Franco at Gates of Madrid.” Adolf Hitler’s name looms with remarkable clarity just inches left of the “Indian Tragedy.” It is, after all, 1937. The strange heterotopic vertigo of old newspapers pulls me in. I’m struck, as I so often have been throughout this research, by the proximity of violent calamity and bodily loss to stories about beef, the weather, the shipping of grain. As Franco breaks against the walls of Madrid, and the Second World War beckons from across the horizon of Europe, as “Hockey Season Opens in Prince George,” and, “Farmers of the Interior Begin New Year with Renewed Hope.” I can’t help but hear an old song trailing through the mix of losses past and yet to come, combined with the ephemera of everyday life: *one little two little three little Indians, four little Indian boys four little Indian boys...*⁴¹

As I situate the account of the runaway boys here, their deaths resonate along the lethal frequency of *cold*, and seem to me to speak to the very heart of the paradox of the IRS, while at the same time playing out the unruly libidinal will to power of children, whose sudden, recalcitrant lines of flight can have such urgent need and incommunicable motive. To me, these lines of flight—i.e., running away—run parallel and in opposition to the language games of adults and adult speech and speech acts, those complex, materializing domains of speech in which children are so routinely, so deftly outmaneuvered by the world-making/world-breaking interpellating speech-force of adults. This state of affairs must certainly have been amplified for the students at the Lejac Residential School, trapped between the official English of school life, the French of the school’s disciplinarians, and the students’ native Babine-Witsuwit’en and/or Nadot’en-Wets’uwet’en—Athabaskan dialects spoken by the communities into which they had been born, the Dakelh (Carrier) people of Central Interior British Columbia. The impressions I

the very great detriment of the students, their lives and communities.

⁴¹ This scrap of song is from a nursery rhyme called “Ten Little Indians.” Certainly I remember some part of the song from my own childhood. What I had not recalled is the ways in which the song never arrives, never *goes* anywhere. As the song is sung, the number of Indian boys increases from one to ten, and then decreases backwards from ten to one, and so on. Forwards and then backwards until, one assumes, the singer tires or the game stops.

carry from this story, of cold and flight, recalcitrance and death, galvanized the dissertation project; they provoked my first writings on the IRS, an essay that reads the runaway boys through and against the *quo animo* of the IRS (Young, 2015), that sticks to the materiality of clothing and bodies, not *just* as a mythos, but as (a) history with its own material texture, its own dimensions and durabilities, its own line(s) of flight. The current chapter extends and develops this early foray.

The current chapter, on the paradoxical warrant to kill in the name of life, instantiated in the *quo animo* of the residential schools—“Kill the Indian in the Child”—takes as its point of origin the narrative fragments embodied by historical accounts of the event of these four deaths, accounts that were in fact quite rare, as rarely did matters in the IRS receive any media attention at all.⁴² The details these fragments offer—the (suggestively scant) inventory of clothing the boys had been wearing,⁴³ a list itemized and recorded in newsprint—is indexical of the ways in which what we know comes to stand in for the many important details that now fail to enter fully into signification. Because the deaths of these Aboriginal children were not reported or investigated in their singularities—for instance, we do not know which of the boys was found apart from the others and are left to infer that it must have been the youngest and likely therefore smallest and weakest, the seven-year-old, John Jack—but rather were taken up as more instances of Canada’s “Indian problem,”⁴⁴ the impetus for this flight, in light summer clothing, across the

⁴² Historian John Milloy makes this very claim in his book, *A National Crime*. See Milloy, John. S. *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879-1986*. Winnipeg: U of Manitoba P, 1999. Print.

⁴³ Milloy records the finding of the boys’ remains thus: “When Harry Paul saw his son on the ice, the boy was wearing summer clothes, no hat and one rubber missing and his foot bare. Another found his boy lying face down with his coat underneath him ... He was the only one with a cap on. He had running shoes but no rubbers.” For more detail, see transcripts of interviews, 2 and 3 March 1937 National Archives of Canada [henceforth N.A.C.].

⁴⁴ The relationship between the “Indian Problem” and the Residential Schools is connected poignantly by Duncan Campbell Scott, the deputy superintendent general of the department of Indian Affairs from 1913 to 1932. In a 1920 testimony to the Special Parliamentary Committee of the House of Commons convened to examine Scott’s proposal to amend the sections of the Indian Act that focused on enfranchisement, Scott stated: “I want to get rid of the Indian problem ... Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department. That is the whole object of this Bill.” See: N.A.C. RG 10, Vol 6810, File 470-2-3 (7) pp. 55 (L-3) and 63 (N-3).

frozen ice remains unknowable. What we *do* know: a bare foot, weather so extreme it seemed to make the escape untenable from the outset, clothing utterly inadequate for the season, a boy who made his coat into a pillow—“*the little chap had taken off his coat, made a pillow from it, and lay down on the trail to die*” (“Coroner’s”). These sedimented details now stand in for what we do *not* know: an inventory of abuse and injury, configurations of experience, and forms of embodiment disappeared by white adult colonial speech and language games, and which, resultantly, remain open. What we (think we) know circles around the contours of what we do not, outlining absence. Everything between the newsprint words seems to fall away, the unwritten or unclaimed falling into/towards disappearance and loss; the words themselves stay, digitally preserved in perpetuity. Saving and loss, saving through loss, loss through saving, saving *as* loss—the paradoxical and decentering trouble at the heart of all historiography.

Through an interpretive engagement with the archival fragment, what follows reads the figure of the runaway as one whose act of flight/bodily refusal makes visible the colonial politicization of the Indigenous body as anachronistic, as bodies *out of time*. Returning to the *quo animo* of the IRS using psychoanalytic theory as reading practice, I consider elements of the death drive alongside biopolitical thought to conceptualize what I call the chronopolitical mechanisms through which “the Indian” is pried from “the Child.” My aim in doing so is, at least in part, to establish that time is always implicated in politics, often in ways that are insidious, that operate beneath the register of political debate and the functioning of the juridical—ways that are deeply ideological and world-making. With respect to the paradoxical logic of the IRS—whose paradigmatic structure is ‘sacrifice to save’—“the Indian” is pried from “the Child.” My argument in the current chapter is that the abstracted latter bolsters a white form of futurity, while the corporeal boundedness of the former indicates a doomed teleology that is made to unfold, over and over, outside of history.

Political Time, Political Space: Spatial and Temporal Histories of Indian Residential Schooling in Canada

“Winter is always with me,” Jane Cardillo writes, in an elegy on winter and death in northern Canada. Her prose moves through a killing landscape that took with it her son.⁴⁵ Winter sticks like barbs in the skin. It is a disorienting thinning of the air, a rendering of light that burns as it reflects off of snow, while the cold also burns. To situate the northern geography, a frozen lake in the winter is not a mirror. Instead, it is huge cleaves and ruptures and hills of thickly hewn ice. It is spindrift and stinging crystals. In framing this writing, it is important to emphasize that the space we today call ‘the outdoors’ is a dynamic unfolding. It is a mistake to constitute these spaces merely as landscape—a moving screen that passes us by, impressions of silver halide on a paper substrate. The ‘outdoors’ came after colonial writings rearranged the land, carving civilized spaces and good farmland from bad soil and Indian Reservations, the world from the so-called wild. The distinctions are confounding and arbitrarily upheld, but they are distinctions that matter. Colonial expansion drove Indigenous Peoples off their autochthonous soil. In the early days of the IRS, in the 1870’s and 1880’s, Aboriginal people were forced onto reserves—parcels of land colonial interests deemed unsuitable for white settlement and cultivation. In 1885, following the North-West Rebellion⁴⁶—an unsuccessful uprising by Métis and associated Cree and Assiniboine First Nations of the District of Saskatchewan against the government of Canada, groups

⁴⁵ Cardillo’s article on her son’s death appears in *The Globe and Mail* (Atlantic Edition). See: Cardillo, Jane “My Winter Child.” *The Globe and Mail*, 1 Feb 2017. <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/facts-and-arguments/the-snow-queen-and-i-share-a-most-preciouspossession/article33848080/> (accessed 1 February 2017). Cardillo’s narrative does not take on Indigeneity but rather frames loss around the particular killing capacities of Canadian winter, whose agency to take life she personifies, naming it “The Snow Queen”.

⁴⁶ The North-West Rebellion (1885) was a response to government failure to honor treaty agreements promising First Nations compensation for land appropriation in the form of relief following the failure of the buffalo hunt in the late 1870’s. The government also failed to provide promised farm implements to Indigenous groups hoping to shift from hunting to farming. The threat of starvation that followed the collapse of the buffalo hunt throughout the 1880’s became an instrument of government policy. These conditions, in conjunction with the government failure to address Métis land rights precipitated an armed uprising in 1885. The TRC writes: “The First Nations involvement in the North-West Rebellion was limited in large measure to the acts of individual people driven to the edge of desperation by harsh and punitive government policy ... While privately acknowledging that the Cree actions were the result of hunger and desperation (the product of harsh government policy)” (126). First Nations were portrayed as traitors with the aim of suppressing First Nations governments. This portrayal was used to justify the abolishment of tribal systems. Bands the government deemed “disloyal” were disbanded and their treaties nullified; annuities were cancelled; horses and cattle were confiscated and sold. (127)

driven into crises of disease and famine by harsh and punitive government policy—the federal government, acting through Indian Affairs, intensified restrictions on Aboriginal mobility. They did so by prohibiting Indigenous people from leaving their reservations for any reason without permission of an Indian Officer. This structure was known as the ‘pass system,’ and required Indigenous people to obtain written permission from an Indian agent in order to leave the reserve.⁴⁷ Enforced at great detriment to Aboriginal livelihoods, the system ultimately failed and Indigenous communities were left to find their own way out.

Simultaneously, as residential schools failed to follow through on the promises delivered in the Numbered Treaties (1871 and 1921),⁴⁸ children staged their own kind of exit. Attendance at day or residential schools was made compulsory under the *Indian Act* (1876) for all First Nations children. Because day schools were so few and far between, most of these children were designated to residential schools. But the legal ruling that Indigenous children were required to attend residential schools did not mean that students willingly went, or stayed. Since the system’s inception, truancy was a chronic

⁴⁷ The pass system was put in place in 1885 to control the movements of First Nations people. It required all First Nations people living on the reserve to get written permission from an Indian agent when they needed to leave their community. If caught without a pass, they were incarcerated or returned to the reserve. Assistant Indian Commissioner Hayter Reed introduced the system in August 1885, writing: “I am adopting the system of keeping the Indians in their respective Reserves and not allowing any leave them without passes—I know this is hardly supportable by any legal enactment but we must do many things which can only be supported by common sense and by what may be for the general good. I get the police to send out daily and send any Indians without passes back to their reserves” (127:151). The system was enforced on a capricious, ad hoc basis into the 1940’s.

⁴⁸ The Number Treaties (or Post-Confederation Treaties) are a series of eleven treaties signed between First Nations and the reigning monarch of Canada between 1871 and 1921. These treaties came in waves. The first wave, numbers 1 through 7, were key in advancing European settlement across the Prairies, facilitating the development of the Canadian Pacific Railway between 1871-1877. The second wave, from 1899-1921 was concerned with mineral extraction. By signing the treaties, First Nations strove to address their immediate concerns, which included the education of Aboriginal children, and establish the foundation of their nation-to-nation relationship with the Canadian state. In implementing the treaties, the federal government failed to follow through on promises to pay remunerations for lands appropriated, and to honor Aboriginal governments. The government also failed to provide safe, adequate access to education for Indigenous children. The structure of the IRS was not what Indigenous leaders had agreed to. The failure of the IRS was a longer arc contributed to evenly by the federal government’s determination to have as cheap an Indian policy as possible, and the churches’ drive to enroll and convert as many children as possible. As the TRC final report glosses the IRS, “[these factors] meant that the schools were sites of hunger, overwork, danger and disease, limited education, and, in tens of thousands of cases, physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and neglect” (131).

problem. The residential schools founded by Roman Catholic missionaries in New France in the early seventeenth century collapsed, in large measure, because the students ran away. The same problem confronted the Methodist-run schools of southern Ontario in the 1850's. Even after the government adopted laws compelling parents to send their children to residential schools, many families resisted. The introduction of truancy policies in 1894, structured on the model of the pass system, was an intervention aimed at retaining students. Under these policies, children who refused to attend school could be detained and sent to school by force; children who ran away were also considered "truant" and could be returned to school against their will. After the 1920 amendments to the *Indian Act*, truant officers had the right to enter and search any place where they believed there to be a truant child. Students who were caught off school grounds could now be arrested without a warrant and returned to the school, while adults caught encouraging their truancy could be fined or jailed. While the pass system was enforced extra-legally (it had no actual basis in law) and on an ad hoc basis, truancy policies were written directly into the *Indian Act*, effectively marking Aboriginal child bodies illegal outside the boundaries of the schools.

Furthermore, students who ran away from school multiple times could also be charged under the *Juvenile Delinquent Act* and sentenced to a reformatory until the age of twenty-one. A boy who ran away several times from the Mount Elgin school between 1937-9 was charged with "truancy" and "being incorrigible". The arresting officer suspected the boy's mother of encouraging his truancy, describing the boy as having come from "a very poor and filthy kind of Indian" (TRC Vol. 1 582). The boy was punitively transferred from the school to a reformatory. His slippage from student to inmate was as smooth as glass.

Throughout their history, the schools relied heavily on coercion to maintain enrollment. Indeed, as institutional forms, they were little more than penal institutions. A boy who was found and returned to residential schools in Nova Scotia multiple times in the 1930's was ultimately sentenced to spend two days longer at the school for every day he had been absent, a ruling that reveals the extent to which lawmakers and enforcers viewed the IRS as carceral institutions. Additionally, although the act of running away itself was not illegal, virtually all students were wearing school-issued clothing when they ran away. In 1894, the North-West Mounted Police annual report stated: "In several cases the pupils who have

deserted have been charged with the theft of their clothing which is the property of the government. This has had a salutary effect on checking desertion from these institutions” (“Annual”).

Despite these intense/coercive, punitive measures of control/deterrence, as the school system continued to offer abuse, danger, neglect, and hunger instead of safety, education, support, and adequate care, students continued to run away. A form of repetition in reverse, these runaways returned to the land (land which their people had formerly held) as fugitives. Disoriented, enervated by fatigue and malnutrition, and underequipped for self-propelled travel, many were unable to find the bodily writings, the footsteps in the snow, that might lead them home. This metaphor is not a flight of poetic fancy, but rather describes a spatial politics of unhoming, a figure which indexes the extent to which the political authority concentrated in the schools radiated outwards, re-scripting both the landscape and the bodies that traveled through it. This politicization of space *and* of the body goes hand-in-hand with, indeed, *extends from*, the/a politicization of natural life which is/was axiomatic of colonial rule in Canada.

The politicization of natural life is a biopolitical first principle. The zone of the Indian residential school, isolated and remote, concatenated conditions of precariousness whose technologies—of starvation, of sickness, of neglect, of abuse etc.—exposed child residents, not simply to harm, but to death. Indeed, within the IRS, ongoing exposure to death was the norm. This fact, that exposure to technologies of death was normal, is not, I argue, indicative of a longitudinal kind of system failure. Nor was it the incidental outcome of hapless administration, both of which are narratives offered in the TRC final report of the IRS. Rather, my argument is that the IRS instantiated rare zones in which the politicization of natural life—the production of life *as political*—is rendered visible. Furthermore, as active sites in the production and reproduction of political life, the IRS capacitated/enforced/recapitulated the manufacture of a form of life virtually indistinguishable from the laws governing it. A paradigmatic biopolitical operation, the manufacture of politicized life/life as political secures the ongoing renewal of social relations that conjoin the personhood of some to the disposability of others. This disposability is a disappearing act that does not entail an absolute vanishing, but instead makes visible the placing under erasure of certain bodies under the law, making this erasure/disposability the predicate for the well-being

and safety of other bodies. The law emerges here as the governing mechanism that guarantees the ongoing regeneration of the social relations of disposability and survival on one hand, and, on the other, the subordination of both sets of bodies—the ‘good’ bodies that constitute the body politic, and the ‘bad’ or ‘lacking’ bodies placed under erasure—to the law *in the name of the greater good*. In this way, at least part of what the Aboriginal child runaway-fugitive shows us is the indistinguishability of law and life, such that life becomes what Giorgio Agamben (1998) calls, “the threshold in which law constantly passes into fact and fact into law. The indiscernibility of life and law effectively contributes to a normative crisis, for here it is no longer the case that rule of law bears upon or applies to the living body, but, rather, the living body becomes the rule and criterion of its own application” (173). This undercuts recourse to the transcendence or independence of the law as its source of legitimacy. The law refers to bodies—as illegal, as legal as long as appropriate documentation is obtained, as legal only within strictly partitioned zones—while appearing to refer to transcendental ideals or truth. And bodies refer to the law, as any North-West Mounted police constable stumbling upon an Aboriginal child runaway between 1894 and 1996 might tell us. Such a body, beyond the zone of the residential school is not simply doing something illegal: this body *is* illegal.

So far, I have illustrated that the zone of the Indian residential school, isolated and remote, concatenated conditions of precariousness whose technologies—of starvation, of sickness, of neglect, of abuse etc.,—exposed the child residents who passed through the institutions, to death. This is a spatial politics. But it is a politics that is underwritten by a certain configuration of time into time-zones such that indigenous people do not share fully in the colonial present—indeed, the zones to which they are relegated (the school, the reserve) spatialize time and temporalize sovereignty. The singular grammatical and spatial unity convoked within/by the nation-state, against which tribal sovereignty is viewed as a threat, operates as an ongoing colonial imposition that denies Indigenous people’s histories, sovereignties, and access to self-governance. Colonial ideologies view indigenous people as *time out of joint*, anachronistic remnants of the past that continue to irrupt, inconveniently, into the present. As I interpret the scene in which the remains of Maurice Justa, Allen Patrick, John Jack, and Andrew Paul are found, in

which they enter colonial archives, I write that they appear *frozen in time*, together on the open surface of the lake. With this tropological construction, I connect the particular killing cold of the Canadian winter with the specific language of bodies frozen on a blank and empty field of icebound water. This figure, *frozen in time*, marks an operation that is bound up in signification, just as it is in materiality. On the one hand, there are material bodies frozen in an indeterminate space between the time-zone of the Indian village—a zone that is designated to play out the doomed non-futurity of “the Indian”—and the time-zone of the school, a zone that demarcates the bright futurity that belongs to “the child”. On the other hand, the figure *frozen in time* indicates the temporal position of the Indian, the imperatives demanded of Indianness to stay self-same, recognizably cohesive in temporal non-progress in order to remain “authentic.”

In emphasizing this figure, my aim is to formally introduce a critical consideration of the politics of time into an analysis of bodies, space, and politics. Explicitly advancing time as an analytic is not to argue that time and space are fundamentally distinct or opposed, or even that time ought to be considered over and above spatial politics. Rather, it is to suggest what critical political analysis, particularly the analysis of biopolitics, and its aggregate geopolitics, have repressed, the register of time. This perhaps has more to do with a recent preoccupation with spatiality rooted in the resistance against the historical subordination of space in western intellectual thought (Soja 11, Klink 675) than repression *per se*. It might also be attributable to fealty to the writings of Michel Foucault (1998), who claimed that “the present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space” (229), a statement that followed his injunction (*Power/Knowledge* 1980) to “write a history of spaces” (149). Nevertheless, the argument I wish to advance here is that time is always implicated in politics, often in ways that are insidious and that often operate beneath the register of political debate and the functioning of the juridical. My argument is that a more responsive, more sophisticated analysis—particularly of the interlacing of colonial politics and the ongoing suppressions of Indigenous sovereignty—requires a serious consideration of what I, following Johannes Fabian, shall here call chronopolitics.

Chronopolitics, the politics of time, offers an analytic framework to consider what we might call “political time.” The uses of time as metaphor and organizing principle, including acts of prediction, narratives of teleology, theories of development based upon historical analogy and periodization, are largely under-interrogated in contemporary political analyses. Indeed, in the field of geopolitics, they are effaced almost entirely. Accordingly, the ideological deployment of time in the interests of politics persists, made all the more effective by this critical oversight. In this chapter, I argue that time matters. I do so in order to activate the important polemic that any attempt to locate the kind of death and dying the Indian Residential School System inaugurated within discourse, geography, and political thought necessitates a focused analytical engagement with chronopolitics. Looking at the *quo animo* of the residential schools in this way, chronopolitically, one can engage the two different registers of time the mandate holds in tension: the (a)political time of “the Indian,” and the political time of “the child.” Such a perspective is necessary when one wants to understand what I call the paradoxical double-time demanded of “the Indian,” which, as a population, is marked by Canadian law and policy for inevitable bodily decline and erasure, and simultaneously, paradoxically, ongoing renewal within the field of signification. Accordingly, the central focus of this chapter will be how to understand the logic through which this paradoxical move is made possible and persuasive. What kinds of logics, temporal or otherwise, I wonder, does it draw upon and, in turn, bolster?

The Indian Residential Schools were biopolitical institutions; as such they participated in the production of politicized life. Central to Foucault’s elaboration of the epistemological shift towards biopower is the function of race as a crucial mode of categorization in the sorting of populations into those worthy of life from those unworthy of life. My inquiry in this chapter accordingly asks how race maps onto politics through the organizing principle of time. What role does this triangulation have in the forming of social categories so durable and so pervasive they warrant unilateral, non-partisan, sustained killing?

My objective in asking these questions about time, politics, and the role of race in biopolitical formations of governance is to show the ways the seemingly contradictory gesture toward and away from

Indianness coalesces meaningfully with—is indeed conditioned into possibility by—principles of liberal political philosophy and their co-constitutive relations with colonialism. The central claim of the chapter is that the logic that constituted the-Indian-in-the-child as a believable conceptual object is fundamentally chronopolitical. In other words, the formation and durability of opposing cultural categories of self and other, citizen and Indian, rests upon a politics of time. These politics, I argue, are so pervasive in Western thought they function almost invisibly, so foundational as to seem entirely natural. My argument in this chapter is that, on the level of signification, “the Indian” was so conceptually easy to separate from “the child,” because in traditions of Western thought the two terms are already understood to exist in different temporalities. This distinction is a durable Western trope—inherited from, and solidified by, European anthropological traditions—separating *us* from *them*, and *here* from *there*, along an axis of time: then/there/other, versus, now/here/ourselves. This is the logic through which educators and policy-makers made interpellative claims that indigenous people were/are “primitive,” or in need of “civilizing.” My objective in asking these questions about time, politics, and the role of race in biopolitical formations of governance is to show the ways the seemingly contradictory gesture toward and away from Indianness coalesces meaningfully with—is indeed conditioned into possibility by—principles of liberal political philosophy and their co-constitutive relations with colonialism. The central claim of the chapter is that the logic that constituted the-Indian-in-the-child as a believable conceptual object is fundamentally chronopolitical. In other words, the formation and durability of opposing cultural categories of self and other, citizen and Indian, rests upon a politics of time. These politics, I argue, are so pervasive in Western thought they function almost invisibly, so foundational as to seem entirely natural. My argument is that, on the level of signification, “the Indian” was so conceptually easy to separate from “the child,” because in traditions of Western thought the two terms are already understood to exist in different temporalities. This distinction is a durable Western trope—inherited from, and solidified by, European anthropological traditions—separating *us* from *them*, and *here* from *there*, along an axis of time: then/there/other, versus, now/here/ourselves. This is the logic through which educators and policy-makers made interpellative

claims that indigenous people were/are “primitive,” or in need of “civilizing.” Historically, these claims have fed and been fed by the mythic romance of the premodern noble savage.

Circling back to the remnants of Maurice Justa, Allen Patrick, John Jack, and Andrew Paul, we can begin to read the traces of these politics in the spatial configuration of their bodies, in their arrested fugitivity. At the time the remains of the boys were found, at 5PM January 2nd, they had travelled eight miles and were found within one mile of their village. When we read this fugitivity through the lived political commonsense in which it originated, we can gain valuable insight into the biopolitical paradigm that bore it out. The biopolitical commonsense understands life as an objective and measurable factor, a collective reality that can be conceptually and practically separated from concrete beings and the singularity of individual experience. Characteristics, morphological similarities, and behavioral traits are understood and treated as if they are facts rooted in biology. For instance, the characteristics of “the Indian” as “shiftless, indolent, and inert” were understood as *inherent* traits of the “Indian race”—traits that needed to be regulated, managed, and stamped out for the good of the greater population.⁴⁹ By the biopolitical calculus of relative value, the lives of First Nations were simply viewed as less valuable than the lives of the white mainstream/norm. Justine English (2003), commenting on the indifference of white society to Indigenous life, charges that even in the contemporary moment, “any time a Native is murdered ... it’s just another dead Indian” (English qtd. in Goulding). Here English is speaking directly to the colonial insouciance that allowed a serial killer named John Martin Crawford to kill no less than three, and likely as many as six, Indigenous women before he was caught. His ultimate capture, trial, and sentencing in 1996 went virtually unnoticed by the Canadian press and public. In addition to a prior conviction of manslaughter—also of an Indigenous woman—he is now serving three concurrent life sentences for serial murder in almost utter obscurity. His biographer, journalist Warren Goulding, points

⁴⁹ For more information on the so-called “Indian problem,” see: Mosby, I (2013). Administering Colonial Science: Nutritional Research and Human Biomedical Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools, 1942-1952. *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 46(91): pp. 145-72.

out that Crawford's name should be as notorious as serial killers Paul Bernardo and Charles Ng.⁵⁰ Yet, few people have heard of him.⁵¹ One of the women Crawford killed was English's sister, Mary Jane Serloun. The three other women he is convicted of murdering are Eva Taysup, Shelley Napope, and Calinda Waterhen.

Through the interpretive lens English offers, the analytic of *just another dead Indian*, the deaths of Maurice Justa, Allen Patrick, John Jack, and Andrew Paul do tell a story about biopolitics, at least part of which is the indifference to Indigenous life that accounts for the fact that the boys were not followed, that a search party was not mounted until near the end of the second day—remembering here that the temperature was minus thirty degrees, that it was night, and that one of the boys was only seven years old. Another part of the story is the relationship between this apathy and the racist antipathy embedded in the biopolitical principle of the norm. As I have argued throughout, the IRS is not an instantiation of Indigenous lives *just simply not mattering*. As institutional forms, they are complicit in the internal racism of permanent purification that Foucault (2003) tells us “will become one of the basic dimensions of social normalization” (62). This normalizing function of racism does not limit itself to establishing a dividing line between healthy and sick, worthy of living or not worthy of living. Rather it searches for “the establishment of a positive relation of this type: The very fact that you let more die will allow you to live more” (255). Racism and the norm work in co-purpose, facilitating a dynamic relation between the life of one person and the death of another. As Thomas Lemke (2011) has it, this conjoining “not only allows for a hierarchization of ‘those who are worthy of living’ *but also situates the health of one person in a direct relationship with the disappearance of another*” (emph. added 42). The imperatives to die more, to disappear more, while remaining markedly present as a racially legible body, converge upon Aboriginal

⁵⁰ Paul Brenardo is a Canadian serial killer and rapist. Along with his equally notorious wife, Karla Homolka, Brenardo was convicted of serial rapes in the east-Metropolitan Toronto city of Scarborough and the rape and murders of Tammy-Lyn Homolka, Leslie Erin Mohaffy, and Kristen Dawn French. Charles Ng is believed to have raped, tortured, and murdered between 11 and 25 victims in California. He was extradited from Canada to the US in 1985.

⁵¹ See Goulding, Warren. *Just Another Indian: A Serial Killer and Canada's Indifference*. Toronto: Fifth House, 2000. Print.

children, generations of children whose libidinal energies were seized upon by disorienting, reorienting imperatives: annihilate and assimilate, sacrifice and save, civilize and eradicate. As these paradoxical couplets tip towards ellipses, the itineraries they index become increasingly obscure. Internal ideological contradictions, they are placed on the body of a child who, now burdened with the impossible, is called upon to perform the labour of holding together two mutually exclusive possibilities. She/he is called to act in defiance of the law of non-contradiction. To do as colonial imperatives demand, the Aboriginal child must negotiate his/her embodiment in tense relation to the law of the excluded middle. Aristotle claimed that it is impossible that there should be *anything* between two parts of a contradiction, and the impossibility of this landscape “between” brings to mind an indeterminate space of intense cold, white laden skies, and growing darkness. If Aboriginal children were called to live in an impossible space between two parts of a contradiction (killing and saving for instance) in which *there should not be anything*, does this mean they were called to live as nothing? As I consider this question, I hear in it the echo of Emily Dickinson’s poem: *I’m Nobody! Who are you? / Are you Nobody too?* What, I wonder, are the material costs to personhood and subject formation—the subject of language not only in the grammatical sense but in the sense of having a body that is seen, and voice that can access power—of living as *Nobody*?

The biopolitical story that I read in the traces of the deaths of the four children with whom this chapter begins is an important and compelling narrative. It points tellingly to white indifference to indigenous life, while at the same time drawing attention to the fundamental antipathies to Indigeneity encysted within biopolitical principles of the norm. So, Indigenous life *does* matter, if only as a site for the renewal of the relations of disposability and social death in the interests of the norm. From this perspective, the call to annihilate the Indian other, the interpellative call to live *as nothing*, is, simultaneously, an expression of optimistic (white) futurity, a gesture toward the postcolonial ‘good life’; who says that racism does not have its own form of optimism? Additionally, in describing/analyzing the deaths of these four runaway children, I have described what I call their fugitivity. In doing so, my aim has been to signal the impossibility of something like escape. Because of the saturation of colonial

biopolitics, the Aboriginal child body—marked (as) illegal outside of the parameters of IRS where it was ready-to-hand/available for abuse, torture, technologies of death—could not escape conditions of political life, she/he could never become ‘escaped’. In collecting the bodies of those children who had run away from school, officials continued to interpret these acts of recalcitrance/bodily refusal, not as resistance to policies of aggressive assimilation, but rather as further proof of the backwardness of the Indian.

The claim, of primitive peoples in need of protection or civilizing, is an ideological cornerstone of colonial politics. Discursively, these claims justify and bolster the biopolitical apparatuses—such as the residential school system—through which power was concentrated on populations deemed *backwards*. This chronopolitical logic is echoed throughout the postcolonial world, in the interventions of the Western world into the so-called third and fourth world. And, in a world in which citizenship is increasingly imagined to be global, impacts of these temporal politics are amplified by both scale and technological efficiency. Colonial commonsense and its corresponding biopolitical aggregates continues to govern the threshold logics through which certain forms of life are conceptually sectioned off from those whose lives are worthy of protecting. The logic that understood/understands “the Indian” and “the child” to be practically separable is the same logic that understands the Indian to be killable, a death that is deemed positive, even *necessary*, something that would/will make life in general *better, healthier* for the body politic. This commonsense is a going concern—both locally and globally.

Biopolitics, Ideology, and “Indian” Time

The process of converting time into space is part of the modern (geo)political imaginary. Not only is the slicing up of the globe into various blocks of space part of the writing of colonial politics, so too is the organization of these blocks into “primitive,” “backward,” “modern,” and “advanced” temporal zones. This in fact is not converting time into space, but making both and ordering of political power. Time can be linearized, but only at a loss. Accordingly, the writing of the colonial other, from its roots in Western anthropology, has historically placed the native other in a time different than the present, which is occupied by the writing subject. Anthropologist Johannes Fabian (1983) calls this the denial of coevalness—a term that becomes the gloss for a situation where the non-European other’s hierarchically

distancing localization suppresses the simultaneity and contemporaneity of contact/the ethnographic encounter. The temporal structures so constituted in this way place anthropologists and their readers in a privileged timeframe, banishing the non-European other to a stage of lesser development. This situation is ultimately exemplified by the deployment of such essentially temporal categories as “primitive” to establish and demarcate anthropology’s traditional object. The discipline’s neo-Darwinist evolutionary doctrine—constituted at the intersection of scientism and Enlightenment belief in progress, as well as colonial ethnocentrism—in turn codified anthropology’s temporal orientation. As readers of Darwin know, none of this is found in Darwin’s original writing, but rather is a colloquial interpretation. In this way, contemporaneous ‘scientific’ categories like “savage,” “barbaric,” and “civilized” signified stages of historical development. This approach to time and the other not only illustrates how geopolitical discourse and the forms of colonialism that it has helped legitimate continue to be aided by a notion of universal human progress, but also draws attention to the temporalities that are erased under the continuing expansion of Western modernity. Flat, linear, teleological perspectives on time and development leave no space for divergent temporalities, ways of viewing the past, or alternative ways of imagining the future. This is a problem Mark Rifkin (2017) addresses in his book, *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination*, arguing the need for “not just a more expansive or inclusive version of ‘history’ or the ‘present’ but an examination of the principles, procedures, inclinations, and orientations that constitute settler time as *a particular way* of narrating, conceptualizing, and experiencing temporality” (emph. added ii).

As both Rifkin and Fabian emphasize, political space and political time are ideologically construed instruments of power. For Fabian, many/most critics of imperialism are prepared to admit this with regard to space, as it has long been recognized that the imperialist claim to occupy ‘empty’, undeveloped, underused space for ‘the common good of mankind’ should be taken for what it really is: “a monstrous lie perpetuated for the benefit of one part of humanity” (144). He argues, however, that with respect to the uses of time as political instrument of ideology and domination, most critics remain oblivious. He writes, “we remain under the spell of an equally mendacious fiction: that interpersonal,

intergroup, indeed, international Time is ‘public time’—there to be occupied, measured, and allotted by the powers that be” (ibid). In the epigraph with which this chapter commences, Fabian comments on the cannibalistic nature of colonial time, arguing that colonial-imperialist expansion fuels, and is fueled by, a “relentless appetite for the Time of the Other” (104). He argues: “the expansive, aggressive, and oppressive societies which we collectively and inaccurately call the West needed Space to occupy. More profoundly and problematically, they required Time to accommodate the schemes of a one-way history: progress, development, modernity (and their negative mirror images: stagnation, underdevelopment, tradition). In short, *geopolitics* has its ideological foundations in *chronopolitics*” (emph. in original 144) and tells us less about time and space than it does their occupation and use, their experience and structured position. For Fabian, the mechanisms of Western epistemology delineate processes by which the primacy afforded to a series of first order principles that are true everywhere are elided with the laws of nature, becoming one and the same. Science is the language of this epistemology, and the Western subject its executor. In a closed loop, this system is repeated over and over (all over the colonial world), a repetition that performatively re-produces the Western scientific man as the world’s interpreter. The time of the other, of the observed, meanwhile, is a time of which the Western writer/scientist—by virtue of his access to the first order principles through language (e.g., science, ethnography, statistics)—is able to stand outside; the subject of his study, meanwhile, the other/object to his self/subject, is relegated to a time that is not the now of the writer, or his reader that is, itself, an other time. In making this point, about the impossible demands placed by Western scientific ethos on its other(s), Fabian activates the story of the Western anthropologist, a figure that stands in for any taxonomic scientist whose object is the other. In this narrative, the scientist emerges already placed in a diagram of what Fabian calls “relations of order” such that he is “upstream, up the temporal slope” (103). Yet, Fabian continues, his posture is to accuse, by questioning, the other who is accordingly positioned “downstream.” His posture is to act as if the two were engaged in a game allowing moves in both directions. Fabian writes: “He acts as if there were a give and take; as if what is valid in the time of the other (there and then) could be made visible in the time of the scientist (here and now)” (103). As it is, the avowed aim of taxonomic discourse to

establish relations that are always and everywhere valid: the story must end with the scientist absorbing historical time into his own. For Fabian, this story illustrates an ideology of relations, a game that defines its own rules. A crucial strategy in this game is to place the players on a temporal slope before the game even begins. What this element of the allegory usefully points out is that the premise by which the time of the other is *not* the same as the time of the scientist is not demonstrated. Rather it is simply postulated, assumed to be true from the outset, and then transcribed in such a way as to affirm/validate the assumption. In other words, for Fabian, an evolutionary view of relations between self/subject and other/object is anthropology's point of departure, codified into its formal structure, mode of analysis, and style of writing and corresponding practices of reading, not its result. Fabian concludes this lesson in Western orthodoxy by stating that a taxonomic approach inserts itself effortlessly into anthropology's evolutionary perspective, whose ostensibly achronic stance turns out instead to be what he calls a "flagrant example of allochronic discourse" (104)—allochronism understood here as a discourse that places the other in a time other than the present of the writing subject with the implication that *they* are what *we* used to be like.

Of singular importance to my argument here is the emphasis Fabian places on the consumptive ethos of the western taxonomist, what Fabian calls "his relentless appetite for the Time of the Other, a Time to be ingested and transformed into his own" (104). This drive is impelled, for Fabian, by the search for logics that establish relations and rules that are universal, applicable everywhere, like laws. The time of the other must be consumable by the logics and rules that govern the world of the colonialist. Indigeneity was, and in many respects is, conscripted to a "downstream" location on a timeline along which Western epistemologies and corresponding aggregates of politics and sociality continue to advance. Indigeneity, meanwhile, by continuing to exist at all, is only allowed the option of repeating itself. Additionally, the temporality of colonialism necessitated a forward moving economic mobilization of everything as resource. A central component of Canada's so-called "Indian problem," especially as it was addressed by Duncan Campbell Scott, the Deputy Superintendent General of the Department of Indian Affairs from 1913 to 1932—which, not coincidentally, was the height of the Indian

Residential Schools in Canada—was economic non-viability. “Indians” were seen as a drain on resources through medical expenditure government subsidization, rather than contributive members of the economy and, by extension, the body politic. As Scott viewed the “Indian problem,” it was not the proper act of governance to “continuously protect a class of people who are unable to stand alone” (Scott). The metaphor of ‘standing alone’ is as chronopolitically charged as it was/is spatial, designating a temporality of the Indian that, as long as Indians remain Indian together as a population or, in his terms, “class”—which is a legal term of segmentation tied to rights—relegates them to a position outside of the body politic.

Certainly, however, the ‘body politic’ is not an entity that stands alone or is even asked to do so. Convoking the body politic takes energy, resources, constant bolstering, and involves the ongoing disciplining of all manner of different bodies. Scott’s objective, through the aggressive policies of assimilation he advocated, was to continue the IRS’s violent assimilative processes until, as he stated to the Special Parliamentary Committee of the House of Commons (which was convened to examine his proposal to amend the sections of the Indian Act that focused on enfranchisement⁵²), “there is not a single Indian that has not been absorbed by the body politic” (55). Differently stated, Scott’s stance on the problem that the Indian posed to the political was to consume until ingested the time of the other. By eradicating the other/the Indian, the time of the other/the Indian could be subsumed within the body politic, transformed into the political time of the (rising) nation. I am reminded here of the refrain with

⁵² Enfranchisement is a legal process for terminating a person’s Indian status. Voluntary enfranchisement was a key feature of *Gradual Civilization Act* (1857) and assumed that Indigenous people would be willing to surrender their legal and ancestral identities in exchange for Canadian citizenship. If a man with a family enfranchised, his wife and children would automatically be enfranchised. In the 1850’s the government shifted a policy aimed at creating separate ‘civilized’ and ‘Christian’ self-sustained Aboriginal communities on reserves to policies of aggressive assimilation. The new policy sought to assimilate Aboriginal people into Euro-Canadian society and gradually eliminate the reserves. This was to be done through a process called “enfranchisement”. Under the provisions of the *Act for the Gradual Civilization*, an Indian male who could read and write in either English or French, was free of debt, and was of good character could receive all the rights of a British subject, fifty acres of reserve land, and a share of funds. Between 1857 and 1876, only one man was voluntarily enfranchised. The government did not interpret this lack of response as an indication of the strength of Aboriginal attachment to Aboriginal identity. Rather the government blamed the failure on Aboriginal people to seek enfranchisement on the influence of their leaders. This increased government hostility to Aboriginal government.

which the chapter begins, the children's song that counts up and down between one and ten *little Indians*. Never does the song arrive at zero or no *little Indians*. Rather it repeats until it wears out, and the singing dies away.

On the level of language, Scott's use of the word "class" is a suggestive synonym, standing in for the term we might today expect to hear: race. By invoking class rather than race, Scott signals a dynamic and powerful element of the form and function of race in biopolitics, as well as signaling the dominant metaphors and imperatives of the market and capitalist market (e)valuations. Biopolitically, the features of race and racism operate strategically, as much an invention of these forms of politics as a technique of stratification and control. In Foucault's conception of biopolitics, the concept of race initially describes a specific *historical-political* division, and does *not* designate biological signification. In this way, it aligns more closely with what we today might call class (though it is also race, gender, ability, etc.). As Foucault explains, in place of the historical-political thematic of war, the modern biopolitical era introduces the evolutionary-*biological* model of the struggle for life. Based on pop-Darwinian descriptions of natural selection along the lines of morphological similarities and traits, emerging dynamics of racism furnish a technology that secures the function of unilateral killing in the name of life. Biopolitical governance aims toward a horizon of futurity in which life is sublimated, in which there *is* no state-sanctioned killing, no *need* for punishment. Indeed, modern biopolitical formations of power can only authorize killing as that which makes life in general better. What this means is that politics' is a knowledge, not of the norm, but of the range of its variations. The center point is much less interesting for power than a population's range and variations. In relation to the norm, life, understood as "society," must be defended by exposing to death those who are deviant, those who are other. On the topic of this somewhat abstract and contradictory logic, Foucault (*History of Sexuality* 1980) writes: "How can a power kill, if it is true that its basic function is to improve life, to prolong its duration, to improve its chances, to avoid accidents, and to compensate for failings? ...It is ... at this point that racism intervenes" (254). In other words, the arrangement into higher, lower, ascending and descending races makes it possible to establish a line between who must live and who must die.

Foucault explains the emergence of this logic by tracing it back to the nineteenth-century in which there emerged an idea of a society that is biologically monist. Scott makes visible this ideology in his recruitment of what he calls the “body politic”—a single body operating in unity, towards the same ends. In this notion of racial difference, society is understood not as a plurality of races competing for survival, but as a single race (or body politic) that is no longer threatened from without, from external threat, but from within. The result is what Foucault calls, “an internal racism of permanent purification” (62): a racist platform that renews itself constantly by making racially marked otherness—such as indigeneity—re-produce itself, over and over, outside of the forward moving progress of history, society, and politics.

The second function of racism in Foucault’s biopolitical model goes even further. It does not limit itself to establishing a dividing line between those worthy of life and those worthy of death; rather it searches for the establishment of a positive dynamic between the death of the bad race and the lives of the good race, situating the health of one person in direct relation to the disappearance of another. This positive dynamic furnishes the ideological foundation for identifying, excluding, combating, even murdering others, all in the name of improving life. “The fact that the other dies,” writes Foucault, “does not simply mean that I live in the sense that his death guarantees my safety; the death of the other, the bad race, the inferior race, is something that will make life in general healthier” (255).

It is perhaps obvious, but bears underscoring, that Scott’s rhetoric, the image he projects of an Indian “class” that must/should “stand alone” outside the body politic could only fail. By the time the “Indian class” was asked to “stand alone” outside the purview of the federal government, traditional hunting grounds and herds had been decimated. Disease and malnourishment were already rampant. Aboriginal leadership had been severely and strategically weakened by the federal government, and generations of Indigenous children had already been taken from their communities of origin and reduced to the barest shadow of bare life. The outsider status of the Indigenous class was worked out spatially in the sense that residential schools and reservations were deliberately built apart from white settlement. As Scott demonstrates, to the extent that Indigenous life could not seem to “stand on its own” without

government support—support which the federal government had promised to give in exchange for land acquisition when it signed treaties with Aboriginal governments, treaties it has consistently refused to honor—Indigenous life was understood to be doomed. Scott’s logic seems to be: because Indigenous life is already (and always) doomed, it *must* therefore be assimilated. This move to assimilation manifests as a kind of forceful ‘help’ in the face of undue protection, and class is thus erased in all its valences except as caste—a signifier that brings together race and class along with a historical sense of inevitable tautology (the Indian cannot “stand alone” because he is Indian) into a stabilized hierarchy by which the marked body of the non-European native other is always constituted against the body politic.

This racist ideology disguised as Darwinism is driven to a homeostasis that contains difference within it is, to a very large extent, a more viable state project than the attempt to holistically eradicate the difference of the other. In nineteenth and twentieth-century Canada—an epoch shaped by colonial politics and emerging forms of nation-building centered on a collective futurity—the chronopolitical *we/other* opposition was fundamentally racialized: *we* indicated whiteness, while *other* indicated racial difference. Racial difference is here understood as “a class of people” (Scott 55) unified through their morphological similarities and perceived shared traits, and who, together, presumably were unable to stand “*outside* the body politic” (ibid, *emph. added*). The metaphor of standing “outside” the body politic is, I point out, as inherently temporal as it is spatial. The temporality of the body politic here convoked is a temporality of the here/now that also claims linear progress towards the future. The temporality of the Indian—whose position is distinctly outside the here/now—is a circular time that, in the colonial imagination, repeats itself in a closed loop. Not only is Indigenous time perceived to be circular and outside the body politic, it is outside of history. The interpellative call to die with which the Canadian Indian Residential School System legitimizes its objectives and ethos, therefore, recapitulates a subjectivity that has been trapped, already, temporally, within the field of signification, and the dense network of intersubjective relations these ideological structures suture and render legible. As a way of elaborating upon this, perhaps abstract, argument, pointing both to the materializing force of language, as well as the structural mechanism(s) whose circularity produces the effect of subject as ideological misrecognition, I offer the following story:

In 1942 government researchers visiting a number of remote reserve communities in northern Manitoba, found people who were hungry, “beggared by a combination of the collapsing fur trade and declining government support” (Mosby 147). They also found a demoralized population marked by, in the words of the researchers, “shiftlessness, indolence, improvidence and inertia” (ibid). In a potentially paradigm shifting moment that must have come close to epiphany, the researchers suggested those problems—“so long regarded as *inherent* or hereditary traits in the Indian *race*” (ibid, *emph. added*)—were in fact the results of malnutrition.”⁵³ Importantly, and vividly illustrative of my argument in this chapter, and the project overall, instead of recommending an immediate increase in support, the researchers determined that isolated, dependent, already malnourished people would be ideal subjects for tests on the effects of different diets and nutritional interventions. Plans were developed for a longitudinal study to be conducted “on a limited number of Indians” (ibid) including Aboriginal children in residential schools in British Columbia, Ontario, Nova Scotia, and Alberta—tests which, through large-scale and coordinated efforts, greatly exacerbated already existing conditions of starvation and malnourishment by further withholding much-needed nutrition. Thus, “hereditary traits” in the “Indian race” were, through mechanisms of biopolitics, further inscribed in both bodily and discursive practices—concretized more immutably into Indian-ness with every rotation of the circular reasoning that characterizes ideological misrecognition.

This kind of strategic, repeated exposure to prolonged conditions of near or actual physical death marks the indigenous body for inevitable decline and erasure. Cultural theorist Lauren Berlant describes this as a condition of “slow death,” which she defines as, “the physical wearing out of a population and the deterioration of people in that population that is very nearly a defining condition of their experience and historical existence” (754). Thus, through material and signifying practices, Indianness is laminated more concretely onto death and finality. Correspondingly, the Indigenous body is marked as

⁵³ “Furthermore,” continues the report, “it is highly probable that their great susceptibility to many diseases paramount amongst which is tuberculosis, may be directly attributable to their high degree of malnutrition arising from lack of proper foods.” See Mosby, Ian. “Administering Colonial Science: Nutrition Research and Human Biomedical Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools, 1942-1952.” *Histoire Sociale/Social History*. 46.91 (May, 2003): 145-172.

anachronistic, a relic, an embodiment out of time whose configuration of experience *is* slow death.

Simultaneously, Indianness is renewed continually in the field of signification, performatively reproduced as “shiftless”, “indolent”, and “inert.” Through biopolitical techniques of control and regulation, the so-called Indian race was trapped simultaneously in two temporalities: slow death and circularity, neither of which afforded it a future—through a strategy of control that is fundamentally chronopolitical.

Whiteness, the Child, and the Logics of Futurity

Against the politicized topographies and temporalities of indigeneity and race, I now move into a consideration of the contributions of psychoanalytic theory to the questions of politics and time presented thus far. The kinds of questions psychoanalysis is interested in asking, the registers upon which it performs analysis, and its unique emphasis on temporality, language, and difference provide an excellent conceptual apparatus through which we might begin to trouble/problematize stable, taken-for-granted oppositions between psychic and social, personal and political, self and other. Freud’s interest in time is evident in his work on the uncanny, and in his inaugural work on what we might now call trauma studies and conditions we now call post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). For Freud, this theory of hysteria introduces a provocative temporality in which traumatic events reoccur, flashing up in perfect replication of themselves, as though happening again and again. In his diagnosis of so-called shell-shocked soldiers returning from World War I, Freud was keenly aware that time did not always progress along an even plane. Though Freud’s analysis of trauma is captivating and critically rich, it is not within my purview here to take on the full extent of this scholarship. Instead, what is most salient to my analysis are the capacities of psychoanalytic theory to move critique outside and beyond prevailing notions of time and narratives of progress that *only* mean moving forward. This chapter writes from a stance that views it as imperative that scholarship reaches beyond, and thinks outside, the paradigms that invented it. Psychoanalytic theory, with its idiosyncratic temporal logics—particularly in conjunction with Foucauldian theory—offers a productive and robust way to critique the continuing primacy of normative disciplines whose chronologies have historically warranted a politics that kills in the name of life. Such an approach allows us to hold in productive tension any definition of “the political” as stable and finite,

with—as in the case of liberal political philosophy—the legally constructed “person” as its primary epistemological unit. This conceptual capacity of psychoanalysis, in turn, allows us to politicize a form of life and modality of corporeal personhood hitherto constructed as what, in Bataillean parlance, we might call colonialism’s *accursed share*—colonialism’s pure waste. Additionally, psychoanalytic notions of the death drive, whose proper movement is explicitly circular, allows us to begin to locate the child within logics of futurity, onto which is laminated a kind of indelible whiteness. For the purpose of my analysis I engage Lacanian psychoanalysis, limiting myself to a consideration of the structure of the drives and to a Lacanian conceptualization of language, and its role in the formation of self and the suturing of the psyche to sociality.

Freud, as Teresa De Lauretis (2008) emphasizes, elaborated the death drive between the First and Second World Wars, in a Europe living “under the shadow of death and the threat of biological and cultural genocide” (1). Situating her analysis of the death drive in the contemporary moment, De Lauretis points to this contextual, historical darkening, writing: “I wonder whether our epistemologies can sustain the impact of the real ... If I return to Freud’s notion of an unconscious death drive, it is because it conveys the sense and the force of something in human reality that resists discursive articulation as well as political diplomacy, an otherness that haunts the dream of a common world” (9). Using psychoanalysis as reading practice, Freud’s suspicion that human life, both individual *and* social, is compromised from the beginning by something that undermines it, works against it, is (darkly?) generative. The death drive indicates a tension bordering psychic and libidinal relations, which marks Freud’s radical break with Cartesian rationality and points to a negativity that counteracts the optimistic affirmations of human perfectability. This dimension of radical negativity cannot be reduced to an expression of alienated social conditions, nor is it entirely something the body does on its own. Theorized as the destruction drive, the antagonism drive, or sometimes, simply “the drive,” it is impossible to escape. In psychoanalytic theory, therefore, particularly in the clinical setting, the objective is not to overcome the drive, but rather to come to terms with it, in what Slovenian Lacanian psychoanalytic theorist Slavoj Žižek (1989) calls “its terrifying dimension” (4). It is a fundamental axiom of Lacanian psychoanalytic theory that attempts to

abolish the drive antagonism are precisely the source of totalitarian temptation. Žižek writes: “The greatest mass murders and holocausts have always been perpetrated in the name of man as harmonious being, of a New Man without antagonistic tension” (5). So it is that one of Canada’s greatest atrocities—the genocide of its First Peoples—took place in the name of Canada itself, that sought progress and unification as a single body politic with claims on a shared futurity. The fulfillment of this destiny relied upon the negation of the other, the bad race, the dangerous race, the race that stood outside the purview of the norm and had no share in its time-zone, the ones called to live in the between space—as *nobody*. As the relatively more benign civilization policies failed to convert Aboriginal forms of life into separate but civilized, Christian communities on reserves, the federal government intensified its tactics. Policies became more aggressive. As these more aggressive policies (such as enfranchisement) also failed, the federal government intensified its tactics once again, escalating the stakes and the strategies towards the horizon of assimilation. This ‘doubling down’ in the face of failure is a primary trace effect of the death drive, and indeed, it is not unreasonable to argue that the federal government Indian policy has, since confederation, been death driven. Because the aim of fully eradicating the otherness of the other can only fail—in Freudian parlance, it cannot be mastered—the trajectory of the aiming turns in a circularity, orbiting around that which can never be had: perfection. Caught in death drive circularity, the aiming towards the objective (i.e. a unified body politic) authorizes, and indeed recruits, escalating violence in the interest of—finally—closing the open. For Žižek, this compulsive ‘doubling-down’ in the face of failure to arrive at the impossible horizon of perfection tips towards totalitarian temptation, which, he tells us, is implicated in the drive to unify a singular body politic, *a new man without antagonistic tension*.

The drive aims for the return to a moment of unity before the intrusion of language and the entrance of the subject into what Lacan calls the Symbolic—the universe of symbols in which all human subjects share. Because this economy of signifiers operates through a modality of difference by association, on the premise that language does not reflect or carry within it universal *a priori* meaning, spirit, or Truth, signifiers are always and already sliding along a chain of signification that is never truly fixed. Rather, for Lacan, meaning is constructed through quilting points, durable concepts that affix ideas

to their signifiers and which, in their durability, structure entire fields of meaning. For Lacan, subjects are formed by their entrance into this system of sliding difference from a pre-linguistic state retroactively constructed through nostalgic affective associations with unity, perfection, and completion. The loss or lack occurs in the imaginary, the order of presence and absence, and is formalized in the symbolic. This is experienced by the subject as a loss of that to which she/he can never again return, but for which she/he perpetually yearns, and toward which she/he perpetually moves. The circularity of movement toward this impossible horizon is precisely the movement of the drive. It is my argument that the concept of “the Indian” is a quilting point through which the field of politics in Canada is sutured into signification, a durable concept that organizes the meaning of nation, citizen, sovereignty, and subjecthood. Further, the hypoxic vision of national unity and a harmonious white(ned) citizenry is a movement propelled by the drive, a circularity impelled by the belief that what is lacking in the present can be made good in the future—an imaginary that activates/harnesses a kind of libidinal energy that is, by its very nature, inexhaustible.

It matters, in the instance of the Canadian Indian Residential Schools and their mandate, that before child subjects enter into the structuration of language/the Symbolic, their bodies are already marked as disprized, object, inscribed into the signification for, and, I argue, *as*, loss itself. As I have argued above, reading through psychoanalytic theory facilitates a conceptualization of subject-formation that includes the role of signification in the contouring of subjectivities. This analytic rubric is importantly brought to bear in my analysis of “the child” the Canadian Indian Residential School System announces into presence: a child fundamentally and constitutively tied to a death whose temporal structure is always deferred, always impartial, always unfolding, and yet always still to be. Indeed, even in circumstances in which her/his mode of being in the world is *not* a deliberate practice of making-spectral, “the child” remains a notoriously ambivalent, slippery signifier. This plasticity—differently stated, this over-abundant availability of “the child” as concept—takes on an interesting significance within political thought, functioning not as that which is politicized, but as the signifier in whose name the political mobilizes itself. In this way, the child functions as the absolute outside to political thought

and the logics of its temporality, functioning instead to condition its possibilities and organize, from beyond its borders, its spatial and temporal limits. An example of this conceptualization of the child as signifier—and certainly one of the more provocative articulations of this phenomena in the contemporary neoliberal moment—is the polemic Lee develops in his monograph *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. For Edelman, the Child—in its conflation with the kind of futurity toward which the teleology of (neo)liberal discourse is mobilized—is not simply important to contemporary politics, but is that which “serves to regulate political discourse [itself]” (ii). Indeed, as Edelman points out, “the figural Child alone embodies the citizen as ideal, entitled to claim full rights to its future share in the nation’s good, though always at the cost of limiting the rights ‘real’ citizens are allowed. For the social exists to preserve for this universalized subject, this fantasmatic Child, a national freedom more highly valued than the actuality of freedom itself” (ii).

In Edelman’s polemic, it goes without saying that the figural child is a white child and that children of colour, children of mixed heritage, *Indian children*—within the Ideological State Apparatus of the Indian Residential Schools—far from carrying the over-abundant significance Edelman so adeptly parses, signify on only the most spectral of registers. This child, I argue, as a kind of spectral(ized) partial subject, instantiates a subjectivity simultaneously over-exposed to the political and over-determined by the word of the law, while barely accorded even the status of bare life. This is a subject that is hailed into a circularity of misrecognition in a relationship with death that is virtually inescapable. This relationship with death is the suture that connects this subject to the social. Edelman’s argument does not address racialized formations of self-hood, but is no less relevant to the argument I seek to develop here. Indeed, it is perhaps all the keener in what it omits—which is the child of color. This omission points to the level of signification and the way in which the whitened child is effortlessly lifted from the problematically raced body—the body whose racialized status is found problematic. This fantasy of purification through signification speaks, in ways that are eloquent and disturbing in equal measure, precisely the fantasy of the Canadian Indian Residential School System: that the body of the Indian could be left behind in a transcendent movement away from the vexatious quagmire posed by the Indian body toward the realm of

what Kantian philosophy calls pure spirit, the realm of whiteness, purity, and hypoxic visions of what Edelman calls, “a national freedom more highly valued than the actuality of freedom itself” (ii). This fantasy of corporeal abandonment points to the latent desire of Western philosophical thought that seeks, through the disavowal of bodily finitude and a fetishization of the *logos*, access to purity of form, a fantasy that relegates, leaves trapped, the sometimes racialized, sometimes feminized other, mired in flesh and finitude from which it is allowed no escape. The Indigenous person, we remember from Hegel’s *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, is imagined as always already outside the teleology of history, already extinct. This way of understanding difference, through the rubric of historical progress, remains central to liberal and neoliberal political thought, economic practices, and policies in the current moment. Prising the child away from the Indian, meanwhile, continues to have important implications in the way we imagine colonial forms, not only of life, but also of death.

Bodies Out of Time: The IRS as Time-Zone and the Production of Bare Life

The history of settler-colonialism and the biopolitical violence it instantiated is a history of loss, and the history of residential schools in Canada is one of its many archives. The interpellative call to die with which the Canadian Indian Residential School System announces itself recapitulates a subjectivity that has been trapped, already, by and within the field of signification, and the dense network of intersubjective relations it sutures/renders legible. It is the task of our moment to think beyond the understanding of Indigeneity as that which is outside teleology, as the absolute outside of history and politics, as that which has always been dead/extinct, which positions Indigenous subjects as calculable sums that can be erased to complete a fantasy of national wholeness and completeness. To do so, I argue, we must take seriously not only the materializing force of language as it is embodied in entities such as the law, but also the uneven effect of language in carving bodies and contouring subjectivities, the effect of language as structure itself. Such analysis not only helps us place into question the grounds for political struggle, but gives us the tools to critique the all too often uninterrogated differences, which are so often constructed as the oppositions and exclusions upon which the very existence of the political *as such* can be thought. These differences (or, oppositions and exclusions) include oppositions of temporality from

spatiality temporality, apolitical “Indian time” from the political time of the body politic, as well as the body politic from its limits, what biopolitical thinker Giorgio Agamben calls zone(s) of exclusion. The zone of exclusion is central to the organization of biopolitics, which has been taken up most famously by Agamben as spatial in its logics—Agamben argues that the concentration camp is, “the hidden paradigm of the political space of modernity” (*Homo Sacer* 123). The metaphors at the center of biopolitical theories, even in instances that are explicitly spatial, are (also) distinctly temporal. Indeed, even for Agamben, the concentration camp does not designate a concrete historical place of a defined spatial unity. Instead, it symbolizes and fixes the border between what Agamben calls “bare life,” and political existence. Accordingly, for Agamben, the spatial metaphor of the concentration camp does not refer only to the Nazi death camps or contemporary and historical sites of detention, but rather any space in which “bare life” is systematically produced. Yet, what *is* “bare life,” if not a state of suspended animation outside the designated boundaries of the political? I argue that in Agamben’s writings on sovereign power and “bare life,” the spatial metaphor that designates the camp as that which organizes the production of “bare life” is stretched to the point of becoming untenable by the way in which, in the modern era of politics, “bare life,” formerly on the margins of political life, shifts to its center. “Bare life” as a strictly spatial designation does not make sense in this configuration, but requires a chronological supplement. For, although its position has shifted, Agamben still means “bare life” to indicate a threshold, the limit that bars *homo sacer* from the political. This configuration is less, I argue, a spatial relationship than a temporal one, a chronopolitical one. The time of the *homo sacer* hangs suspended at the center of political time, thereby proving its limits. In other words, the time of the zone of exception is measured out in its difference to the time of the political—for example, the temporality of slow death in distinction to the forward-moving temporality of the body politic; the (a)political time of the Indian, versus the political time of nation. I find it significant that even within Agamben’s explicitly spatial figuration of the political and its limits, there is a register of time that undergirds both positions: the forward moving, cohesive, temporal structure of the political, and the apolitical, ahistorical circular time of the *homo sacer*, whose relationship to death is a continued exposure unto death, a hanging possibility that effectively *freezes him*

in time.

Let us now circle back to New Year's Day in 1937, to a kind of death I would argue is arrested between singular and plural (four deaths becoming one, and then a part standing in for a larger whole: all of the children who died in the Canadian Indian Residential Schools). One thing a story like this does—about the boys and their flight across the frozen lake, their death(s), the way their names look on the page next to their ages, and the fact of the missing boot and sock, the rough specificity of those twenty-five meters of distance—is introduce into contemporary political thought not a single theory of “the body,” or some programmatic questions about bodies, but the singularity of the absence of these and other similarly marked child bodies from a conversation on biopolitics and colonial violence and governmentality; an intrusion that insists that this kind of disappearance is more than an instantiation of an early Canadian liberalist game of *fort-da*. What we see so clearly demarcated in the empty spaces within (colonial) memory and archives surrounding these deaths, within the politics and practices of cruelty, violence, and excessive neglect that conditioned their possibilities, is the spaces between the boys from one another, between their bodies and home, from the absence of a sock and a boot, of appropriate winter clothing, of mittens or scarves. What we come to know through the material and semiotic remains of *these* boys is that their bodies (and perhaps the others whose deaths these deaths followed, the ones that followed after) had already been disprized as loss itself. Further, dying in the perpetual liminality between one home and the other, in their march across the frozen surface of Fraser Lake, the boys—Maurice Justa, Allen Willie, John Jack, and Andrew Paul—performed a traversing of the distance, in signification, that separated “Indian” and “child,” freezing to death in the impossible distance between. I have argued that the temporal structure of “the child” and “the Indian,” the zone of exception within which they are partitioned away from participation, or even legibility, within the political, tells a compelling story about the rise of liberal political thought and its inflection onto—and reliance upon—settler-colonialism and the logics of empire. This conjuncture, rather than evincing a radical break between liberalism and contemporary neoliberal aggregates of sovereignty and citizenship, provides a narrative of exclusion present in the current moment and the way, particularly in Canada, we continue to think about multiculturalism at the

expense of interrogating the cuts and exclusions that inform the ways in which we think (about) difference. Indeed, on the logics of multiculturalism, and the exclusions and violence it perpetuates on the bodies and cultural practices conscripted to be its other, Žižek writes, “multiculturalism is a racism which empties its own position of all positive content ... but nonetheless retains this position as the privileged empty point of universality from which one is able to appreciate (and depreciate) properly other particular cultures” (*The Universal Exception* 171). For Žižek, “the multiculturalist respect for “the Other’s specificity” (ibid.) is the very form of asserting his/her own superiority. What is provocative about this passage is that the multiculturalist occupies a temporality of universal timelessness. Others are assigned temporalities and corresponding practices, which the multiculturalist, from his/her position of smooth space-time, appreciates—in so doing, bolstering his/her own claim to universal, modern time. This is perhaps an intensification of colonial chronopolitics, an increased efficiency due at least in part to technological advances that allow the multiculturalist privileged access to consumption, to ownership over the gaze, to the kind of increased mobility that make his/her experience of time and space seem smooth and non-specific (i.e. one airport looks like all the others; one “exotic” cultural practice seems indistinguishable for another). In this way, indigeneity is a category that adheres, coming to stand in for diverse peoples and practices, so indelibly laminated to terms like “primitive” or “anachronistic” the postcolonial imagination can barely distinguish the difference. Indigeneity: performatively renewed in signification over and over, frozen in time, like a child who is never allowed to grow up.

The temporal structure of empire is a future that is never fully realized, but rather that unfolds as an ever-burgeoning newness mobilized toward the imagined horizon of a unified citizenry. This is a temporality that carries its history with it, dramatizing the story of its own genesis, and the conditions of its continuing possibility, on the corporeal and figurative stage of Aboriginal bodies. My claim is that these deaths are suggestive of the violence held at the center of contemporary Canadian liberalism, the (ongoing) racial violence through which the Canadian social-political imaginary of multiculturalism and post-racial politics is predicated. Foundational to these politics, I further contend, is a dramatization of the social contract overcoming the state of nature as *the* enactment of the New World. This is a repetition that

acts to conceal the pernicious and persisting kernel of originary injustice around which the liberal democracies of empire constitute themselves—a centrifugal motion so tropologically powerful and durable it is as if things could never be (imagined) any other way. As if the spaces between bodies on the snow were “just the way it is,” as if this kind of death was/is all there ever *could* be, a kind of death so recognizable it seems always to have been there.

Precarious Bodies, Tenuous Historiographies

My argument in this chapter has been that, on the level of signification, “the Indian” was so conceptually easy to separate from “the child,” because in traditions of Western thought the two terms are already thought to exist in different temporalities. This distinction is a durable Western trope—solidified by European anthropological traditions—separating *us* from *them*, and *here* from *there*, along an axis of time: then/there/other, versus, now/here/ourselves. The story I read in the traces of the deaths of the four children with whom this chapter begins points not only to the imperatives and complexities of taking such bodies into account, but also to a generalized, durable indifference to indigenous life, to the fundamental antipathies to Indigeneity encysted within Canadian biopolitical principles of the norm. I have argued that from the perspective of white (post)colonial politics, Indigenous life *does* matter “in itself” and also, peculiarly, as a site for the renewal of the relations of disposability and social death in the interests of the norm. From this vantage, then, the call to annihilate the Indian other, the interpellative call to the native other to live *as nothing*, is a death driven chronopolitical expression of (white) futurity, a gesture toward the postcolonial ‘good life’. This is a fantastic horizon of colonial self-erasure—by which I mean that in this fantasy of the future, the traces of colonialism will have disappeared and a/the uniform white society (body politic) will seem always to have been there—to/in which the Aboriginal person has no share.

I have further argued that the Indian Residential Schools are biopolitical institutions that participate in the production of politicized life. They are rare zones—rare, because rarely is the production of political life so nakedly evident—in which we are able to see the dense imbrications, the indistinguishability of law and life, such that life becomes what Giorgio Agamben (1998) calls, “the threshold in which law constantly passes into fact and fact into law” (173). For Agamben, the

indiscernibility of life and law effectively contributes to a normative crisis, “for here,” he writes, “it is no longer the case that rule of law bears upon or applies to the living body, but, rather, the living body becomes the rule and criterion of its own application” (174). The IRS, although they were material zones (much like the concentration camps, with material concrete barriers and outer limits: fences, doors, grounds, windows, and fire escapes) the forms of power and the kinds of criteria for sovereignty their material presence inaugurated, were not escapable. Leaving the school grounds did not free the child body from the power that emanated outwards, that re-scripted space, and ghettoized Indigenous bodies into time-zones out of joint with colonial/settler-time. In describing the fugitivity of runaway Aboriginal children, I have signaled the impossibility of those children of ever becoming ‘escaped’—of ever standing either within the body politic or of standing alone. In this account the icebound lake in winter provides a mythical deathscape that returns us to the tenuous or precarious location(s) of Indianness and the bodies of Indigenous childhood, bodies in (just as they are construed to be outside of) political time and political space.

The journalistic telling of the deaths of Maurice Justa, Allen Patrick, John Jack, and Andrew Paul in the *Prince George Citizen*, on January 7, 1937, is so scant that it unwittingly foregrounds the unwritten. The words themselves stay, digitally preserved in perpetuity, while the unwritten, unclaimed, falls into/towards disappearance and loss. Saving and loss, saving through loss, loss through saving, saving *as* loss: these are the terms of trouble at the heart of all historiography. How do we write loss? How, as Peggy Phelan (1993) charges in her book *Unmarked*, do we “write towards disappearance” (148)? If the end refers us to the start, it brings us here: Four boys run away. They walk almost eight miles towards the Nautley Reserve, across the frozen lake. On New Year’s Day in 1937. Fraser Lake. Straight out towards the light of the village. When they are found one boy has lost his shoe and sock. *Children are always losing things, aren’t they?* Our writing always escapes this/their loss, displaces it. *One little, two little, three little...* As though asleep. *One little chap* has made his coat a pillow and *curled up on the trail to die*. His foot is bare. Within a quarter of a mile from home. *Two little, three little, four little...* The boys’ names are Maurice Justa, Allen Patrick, John Jack, and Andrew Paul. On New Year’s Day in 1937, Allen

is nine years old. He and his friends ran from the Lejac Indian Residential School. Out across the vast and planar flatness of the frozen water. Maurice and Andrew are eight years old. The remains are found at the end of the next day. *Four little Indian boys*. Frozen in time. From the *Prince George Citizen*: “Indian Tragedy.” As I situate the account of the runaway boys here, their deaths resonate along the lethal frequency of *cold*, and seem to me to speak to the very heart of the paradox of the IRS, sacrifice to save, enshrined in a headline: “Four Little Boys Frozen to Death on Their Way Home from Lejac Indian School.” While at the same time playing out the unruly libidinal will to power of children, whose sudden, recalcitrant lines of flight can have such urgent need and incommunicable motive. John Jack is seven. To me, these lines of flight—i.e., running away—run parallel and in opposition to the language games of adults and adult speech and speech acts, those complex, materializing domains of projective saying in which children are so routinely, so deftly outmaneuvered by the world-making/world-breaking interpellating speech-force of adults. *No charges were brought*.

In the chapter that follows, I advance more traces of this historiography that will partially supplement the more theoretical argument, showing how it is actualized in the writing (or un-writing) of history. Centered on a moment of archival aporia, the following chapter engages an account in which school officials dispose of Indianness differently, in heat rather than cold: The account with which I will be concerned attests to the incineration of a newborn. The testimony—whose status vis-à-vis archival practices of verification and authentication is uncertain—is attributed to Irene Favel, a survivor of the Muskowekwan Indian Residential School near Lestock, Saskatchewan, between 1940-49. From the incendiary and precarious starting-place Favel’s testimony offers, the chapter asks: what do we do with a kind of archival fragment so incendiary it seems to be torn, not from an archive/from archives, but from history itself? What do we do with a record of burning which, itself, seems to go on burning, that seems, still, to writhe, unclaimed/unclaimable? In the movement between this chapter and the next, I can only mark the extent to which the archival record delimits the signification of the Indigenous, leaving me in the quandary of repetition, turning towards the performative—repetition with a difference, gesture and action with material, materializing effects—that I hope prevents the work at hand from reifying the problem, the

very problem the song I have considered throughout this chapter points to: the mythologizing quality of colonial and postcolonial representations of Indigeneity as a bodiless abstraction, a swirling ahistorical bricolage of dislocated hyperbole and a-topic non-specificity. The following chapter writes into the problematic the song instantiates, the generative lethal circularity that, ambiguously, implicates *all* Indigenous bodies while referring only to itself. Sung on any schoolyard anywhere in the North Americas by and to (post)colonial North American children anytime after contact-conquest, the song is as simple as destructive as Toni Morrison finds the 1940's reading primer *Fun with Dick and Jane* in her novel *The Bluest Eye*: *One little two little three little Indians, four little five little six little Indians, seven little eight little nine little Indians, ten little Indian boys. Ten little nine little eight little Indians, seven little six little five little Indians, four little three little two little Indians, one little Indian boy. Onelittle twolittle threelittle Indians, fourlittlefivelittlesixlittle Indians, sevenlittleeightlittleninelittle Indians, tenlittle Indian boys. Tenlittleninelittleeightlittle Indians, sevenlittlesixlittlefivelittle Indians, fourlittlethreelittletwolittle Indians, onelittleIndianboy. OnelittlewolittlethreelittleIndiansfourlittlefivelittlesixlittleIndians, sevenlittleeightlittleninelittleIndians,tenlittleIndianboysTenlittleninelittleeightlittleIndianssevenlittlesix littlefivelittleIndiansfourlittlethreelittletwolittle IndiansonelittleIndianboyOnelittlewolittlethreelittle IndiansfourlittlefivelittlesixlittleIndianssevenlittleeightlittleninelittleIndianstenlittleIndianboysTenlittlenin elittleeightlittleIndianssevenlittlesixlittlefivelittleIndiansfourlittlethreelittletwolittleIndiansonelittle*⁵⁴

⁵⁴ I have selected this mode of scrambled transcription in referential homage to Toni Morrison's violent mis-transcription of the reading primer *Fun with Dick and Jane* in her novel *The Bluest Eye*. Morrison blurs and warps the text. A passage from the primer reads: "Here is the house. It is green and white. It has a red door. It is very pretty. Here is the family. Mother, Father, Dick, and Jane live in the green-and-white house. They are very happy." This Becomes: "Here is the house it is green and white it has a red door it is very pretty here is the family mother father dick and jane live in the green-and-white house they are very happy" Finally, this passage reads: "hereisthehouseitisgreenandwhiteithasaredooritisveryprettyhereisthefamilymotherfather dickandjane liveinthegreenandwhitehousetheyareveryhappy..." This erosion of the text away from its taken-for-granted center, for Morrison, deconstructs some of the lethal differences between the conditions in which the storybook characters live their mythological, happy, and lovely family lives, and the conditions of hardness, neglect, and violence in which her protagonist Pecola and her family comes undone, the corrupted center of which shatters Pecola in a way that cannot be borne out through the reading primer. For me, the children's song operates in much the same way, masking with its simple and cheerful meter the violence at the heart of settler-colonialism, and the violent social relations between Euro-Canadian

CHAPTER FOUR

Somewhere a Child is Burning: Signification and Death in the Canadian Indian Residential School System

We must always have
a place
to store the darkness (Agha 1991)

This chapter situates loss at the center of the archive, considering what, according to Anjali Arondekar (2009), “circulates *against* the consoling mystifications of ‘papers’ and the verifiable certainties of archival discovery” (emph. added 4). Invoking Gayatri Spivak’s (account of the) Rani of

settler, and Ingenuous person. See: Morrison, Tony. *The Bluest Eye: a Novel*. 1st Vintage International ed. New York: Vintage International, 2007. Print.

Sirmur,⁵⁵ Arondekar argues, “One can grasp, precisely not to fix” (ibid). In my reading(s) of the account that opens this chapter, I am interested in how we can grasp precisely not to fix a fragment of IRS history. Accordingly, how might figurations of death emerge not as objects of knowledge or events that can be made fully re-present but as dense affective sites that have mythic and temporal as well as kinetic force? In the account I offer here, living flesh burns to ash and cinders fall; the sonic substance of erasure lingers like the smell of smoke on the wind; between the record and what it indexes, bodies twist and shiver. Conceived as a meditation on what I provisionally call ‘the conjunction’ of signification and death, death understood here in the corporeal/material sense as well as psychoanalytically, this chapter frames an analysis that interrogates whether, and how, death and signification meet, if and how they exceed one another, and to what effect(s). In doing so I ask, how might an analysis of such conjoining proceed if the object of analysis is, by its very definition, subterranean—constituted by excess on one hand and lack on the other? The aggressive lethality I aim to trace appears to me to be present or observable only in the swatches of absence it leaves in its wake. Like scraping a finger through the dust, what is evident afterwards is a peculiar trail of absence, a furrow, a blaze, a path or clearing where the force of *nothing* twists and flexes; where we seem, nonetheless, to feel the heat of fire or the stirring of air indicating the presence of *something* passing through. My aim here is to chart the violent, destructive, generative forces that cut through language, carving it into pieces, without losing sight of the confluences of power in/as

⁵⁵ Spivak’s essay on the Rani of Sirmur is centered on her historical research into the Queen of Sirmur, a figure Spivak argues is present in archives because of the commercial/territorial interests of the East Indian Company. Caught between patriarchy and imperialism, the Rani of Sirmur, having been separated from her husband by imperial interests, declares her intention to be a *sati*, to self-immolate on her husband’s funeral pyre. Spivak’s analysis in this account intersects other works in which she considers what she calls “the extraordinarily paradoxical status of the British abolition of *sati*” (1988). While a petition to imperial authorities for the empowerment to prevent the Rani from carrying out the act of *sati*, the eventual outcome drops from the colonial archives. In the wake of this archival absence, Spivak explains that her intention in the essay is therefore to inspect “soberly the absence of a text that can ‘answer one back’ after the planned epistemic violence of the imperialist project” (251). She states at the end of the text that her concern has been with the fabric of representations of historical reality, arguing: “A careful deconstructive method, displacing rather than only reversing oppositions (such as ... between colonizer and colonized) by taking the investigator’s own complicity into account ... does not wish to officiate at the grounding of societies, but rather to be the gadfly who alone may hope to take the distance accorded to a ‘critical’ ‘thought’” (272). See: Spivak, Gayatri. “The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading Archives” In *History and Theory*, Vol. 24.3 (Oct., 1985), pp 247-272.

language capable of both marking and *unmarking* bodies, of carving bodies into pieces, making charred cinder of living flesh. Both, it seems, are borne out in the archiviolithic. *Mal d'archive* (archive fever), that sickness unto death for and towards archives, in which archives always signal more than the records which constitute them, that death driven destructiveness that destroys as it advances, leaving nothing of itself behind—although this is not to say it leaves *nothing*.

In framing this analysis, I am reminded of the performance piece by Cuban-born artist Ana Mendieta in 1978, when she burned through the title page of Mircea Eliade's *Rites and Symbols of Initiation* with a branding iron formed in the shape of her own hand. In the chapter titled "Fire" in her book on (the unlocatability of) Mendieta, Jane Blocker (1999) describes the piece:

The burn goes deep; the first five or six pages are reduced to feathery black ashes where the palm of the iron hand pressed down hard. The imprint of the fingers appears more slender, and its touch is less harsh, but it has scorched a few of the title's black letters. The cover of the book has been torn from the binding to reveal the vulnerable white leaves that are now warped and curled at the corners. The smoke from the fire has defiled the leaves; they appear dirty, battered, and fragile. It is hard to get through the density of meaning encoded in this gesture of branding. A brand is meant to claim ownership, to stigmatize, or to signify the contents of a vessel. It disintegrates like words, burns yet loses its hold like names. It is a self-effacing mark, Derrida's cinder. (29)

What resonates for me in Blocker's description of Mendieta's burnt book piece is the way in which, for Blocker, Mendieta's brutality seems to render the book a living thing. Mendieta has removed the cover and burned the pages *as if* they were skin and flesh. In so doing, they become vulnerable, fragile, an animal body branded to claim ownership, to stigmatize, and yet, as pages rather than flesh, the pages consume the brand, even as fire consumes them—both become "cinder." The destructiveness of this act marks inert pages as living, in and by their destruction, by *unmarking* them. At the same time, Mendieta's living enfleshed hand becomes a mythic thing, with the force of heat, burning without consuming the

flesh it indexes, a burning brand that “disintegrates like words, burns yet loses its hold like names ... a self effacing mark” (ibid).

In the second chapter of this dissertation, I suggested that colonial sexuality creates its own archives, while at the same time burning them to the ground. The present chapter considers one such instance, a kind of burning that seems to press a smoldering hole through the center of colonial archives, especially those ordered, neatly, around Indian residential schooling in Canada. If Mendieta’s burned book offers an analogy, the records on Indian residential schooling are the defiled pages; they are the violently marked body for which Mendieta’s ruined book stands in. Like the hand/brand Mendieta used to burn Eliade’s book, the burning this chapter considers *goes deep*, it has its own mythic force. Like the meaning the gesture of Mendieta’s branding encodes, its density is hard to get through. As I read Mendieta’s burning hand, it projects a kind of fantasy: it operates *as if* touch could literally singe flesh, at the same time bridges the analogic/symbolic representation of a burning hand with the almost unrepresentable aggressivity within the touch of the social bond. It asks us to recognize the inscriptive force of destruction, and confronts us with the capacities of violence to ‘bring to life’ as it annihilates, performing the annihilating force of worlding. In the account this chapter considers, school officials (it is uncertain though implied that these officials include at least one nun, while the presence of at least one priest is also implicated) swaddle a newborn Aboriginal infant in nice, pink clothes, carry her to the school furnace, and throw her in. The arc of the act is, itself, aporetic, as is the telling. The testimony is attributed to Irene Favel, a survivor of the Muskowekwan Indian Residential School near Lestock, Saskatchewan. The event in question took place some time between 1940-49, the interval in which Favel attended the Roman Catholic-run boarding school. The account is as follows:

There was a young girl, and she was pregnant from a priest there. And what they did, she had her baby, and they took the baby, and wrapped it up in a nice pink outfit, and they took it downstairs where I was cooking dinner with the nun. And they took the baby into the furnace room, and they threw that little baby in there and burned it alive. All you could hear was this little cry, like “Uuh!”, and that was it. You could smell that flesh cooking

(Annett 2012)

The account of this immolation/incineration burns. This burning leaves its own imprint, its own ash feathered fingers in flame on/into the form of (an) absent body/bodies, the contours of which are as detectable as a form cut or torn from the defiled pages of a deformed book, a fragile, battered omission. The missing body, whose outline suggests the contours of a kind of durable present absence, a continuing absent presence, presses the question: how to account for that aching remaindered sound (“*Uuh!*”), the smell of “flesh cooking”? How does one conjugate monstrosity, reconcile the overflowing signification of pinkness, the soft pinkness of those swaddling clothes, the excess of the act of swaddling like ritual before sacrifice? How do we bridge what we (seem to) have with what can never be recovered—for instance, the why-how-to-what-effect(s) of the event, in which an event is one moment in time containing many others? How do we reckon with the persistent drive—which is produced and reproduced in continuing patterns of violence throughout the (post)colonial world—to mark the other into otherness by obliterating, marking by erasing?

As it enters these pages, here, the burning child presents a horrific image. It confronts us with an ongoing spectacle we can neither fully reach nor expunge—a perpetual burning that somehow fails to consume or extinguish. In my research into the history of the Indian Residential School System, in the midst of testimonies of violence, abjection, and privation, I encountered Favel’s strange and singular story. I discovered this testimony online, on a website that calls itself ‘The International Tribunal into Crimes of Church and State’ (www.ITCCS.org). The website is authored by Kevin Annett, a former minister in the United Church of Canada. Annett has written widely on the topic of residential schooling; his condemnation of what he calls “the mainline Christian Churches” who oversaw their daily operations is unmistakably vitriolic. Looking into Annett’s writing, I discovered that in 1997 he was placed on the Discontinued Service List by the United Church Presbytery judicial panel for failure to comply with “the lawful directives of the Presbytery” (decision). One of the many charges Annett faced in 1997 is causing calculated harm to the United Church with the intention of bringing it into disrepute. The judicial panel excerpts some of Annett’s writings, which read as follows: “My closest definition of evil is that which

causes blind destruction; by this measure the United Church is an evil institution” (decision). And: “There are lots of skeletons in the United Church closet, quite literally. At least three children were killed in the Alberni and Ahousat schools, and probably more. We’d like to know where their bodies are, and how the church got away with murder for decades.” (ibid). Finally: “There is something very evil and sick at work in the United Church. Native people have been telling me this for years, especially those who witnessed rapes, beatings, and murders in the United Church-run residential schools on the west coast. Now I know the pain of our First Nations. I too am abused without cause” (ibid). The abuse to which Annett refers here, one is left to infer, is his removal from ministry by the United Church of Canada’s Presbytery judicial panel.

The United Church responded to Annett’s accusations publicly, stating: “No evidence tendered to us recorded any attempts on the part of the pastoral charge, Presbytery or the Conference of the Church to ‘cover-up’ facts surrounding the period of the operation of the federal residential schools on Vancouver Island” (Decision). The statement concludes: “Evidence which was submitted indicated that the RCMP [sic] were following up every allegation of wrong-doing with the full cooperation of church officials. Statements from police indicated that no murders had been uncovered and that this information has been reported publicly” (ibid). The transcripts and subsequent press release from Annett’s hearing indicate a litany of bizarre behavior, increasing hostility toward parishioners as well as the governing body of the United Church of Canada, and a refusal to recognize the authority of his Presbytery. Reading written statements made by Annett himself, alongside the written testimonies of the parishioners with whom he served, he seems erratic. His writing is inflammatory and accusatory and he offers no evidence to support any of his claims—claims that, at the time, nine years before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was convened, seem incendiary, to say the least.

From 1997, Annett’s troubles with the church continued. In 2001 the United Church of Canada’s British Columbia Conference issued a release from Rev. Debra A. Bowman to parishes throughout the province. The missive begins: “Periodically you or members of your congregation may receive information that comes from Mr. Kevin Annett or people associated with him. It is almost impossible to

predict the particular twist of any piece so I will offer responses that address some of the permutations of charges he has leveled against the United Church” (Bowman). What follows is a brief acknowledgement of, and apology for, the involvement of the United Church in the federal system of Indian residential schools. Writes Bowman: “The church acknowledges our part in a society that has been unjust, abusive, and racist” (ibid). She then continues: “Occasionally Mr. Annett charges that the church has been involved in murdering children, secret burials, medical experimentation, and pedophile rings ... To date the RCMP report that he has offered no substantive evidence” (ibid).

What is striking, now, is that the work of Ian Mosby (2016), and the recently released reports by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2008-2015), corroborate many of Annett’s general claims. Mosby, for instance, has published amid international attention on longitudinal nutritional experimentations undertaken by the Federal Nutrition Division on students at what he calls “Indian boarding schools” (Legacy). According to Mosby, neither the students nor their guardians consented to the studies—some of which were predicated upon the knowledge that this population was chronically malnourished and in many cases exhibited signs of vitamin and mineral deficiency. Mosby’s research proves that in the 1940’s and 50’s, scientists working under the federal nutrition division conducted a study into the effects of fortified white flour on iron deficiency anemia in at least two residential schools. According to Mosby—whose findings speak eloquently to the biopolitical imperatives of the era—students in the experimental school quickly developed iron deficiency anemia, a state of being the scientists did not correct throughout the five-year study as doing so would have been to void the validity of the experiment⁵⁶. As to Annett’s charges of systemic sexual misconduct, the widespread culture of sexual exploitation in the school system is also now a matter of record. Bowman’s point, that Annett failed to produce any evidence to support his claims (i.e. the operation of what he calls “pedophile rings”), does

⁵⁶ Throughout the course of the study, students were prevented from receiving urgently needed dental care that scientists were afraid might nullify the results of the study. As Mosby explains, the conclusions from the study were, in the view of scientists, “disappointing”. There was no added nutritional value to the fortified flour, and in fact, scientists speculated that the experimental flour is most likely what caused the anemia in the first place. More studies of this nature, they concluded, were needed. See: Mosby, Ian. “The Legacy of Nutritional Experiments in Residential Schools” *UBC*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZTccdBHatU>. 12 November 2014. Viewed 1 April 2017.

continue to resonate. His online presence is bizarre, and more than a little bit self-aggrandizing; his writings are bombastic and hyperbolic. To date, Annett does not appear to have the support of any recognized Indigenous groups or leaders.

I find myself on an archival path that I can neither grasp nor fix, and yet that I pursue in order to grasp without fixing. Looking deeper into the testimony Annett attributes to Favel, I find that Canadian Indigenous studies scholar Lisa Monchalin's recently published book, *The Colonial Problem: An Indigenous Perspective on Crime and Injustice in Canada* (2016, University of Toronto Press), reiterates the testimony. In doing so she makes reference to an interview that aired in July 2008 by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). Annett's online publications cite the same interview. In attempting to view the original CBC footage, I was not able to find any such interview, in CBC digital archives or online. In the passage in Monchalin's book in which Favel's testimony is referenced, the author writes the following: "Even further atrocities were forced upon other children in residential schools. *Some were used in pedophile rings organized by clergy, police, and government officials.* Female children who had been impregnated by men in authority were forced to have abortions, and some were also involuntarily sterilized" (emph. added 128). The phrase "pedophile rings" repeats verbatim Annett's claims, which Bowman in turn invokes in her correspondence with the United Church parishes. Intriguingly, in citing the codex of crimes in residential schools she lists in the above quoted passage from her book, Monchalin cites Andrea Smith's monograph, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*, published in 2005⁵⁷. In the account Smith provides of sexual violence in the Canadian Indian

⁵⁷ Currently, Smith's status vis-à-vis the Indigenous studies community is troubled by persistent and contradictory claims made by Smith to Cherokee identity by both enrollment and descent. In July 2015, seven indigenous women scholars from a number of different indigenous nations, communities, academic disciplines, and geographies addressed Smith's self-acknowledged false claims and lack of clarity on her own identity, writing that such claims "perpetuate deeply ingrained notions of race—black, white, and Indian—that run counter to indigenous modes of kinship, family, and community connection" (Open Letter). The statement continues: "When she and others continue to produce her as Cherokee, indigenous, and/or as a woman of color by default, they reinforce a history in which settlers have sought to appropriate every aspect of indigenous life and absolve themselves of their own complicity with continued dispossession of both indigenous territory and existence" (ibid). See: <https://indiancountrymedianetwork.com/news/opinions/open-letter-from-indigenous-women-scholars-regarding-discussions-of-andrea-smith/> 7 July 2015. (Accessed 1 April 2017).

Residential School System, considered within a larger context of legacies of sexual violence in the postcolonial world, Smith (2005) writes the following:

In 2001, a report issued by the Truth Commission on Genocide in Canada maintained that the mainline churches and the federal government were involved in the murder of over 50,000 Native children through this system. The list of offenses committed by church officials includes the murder by beating, poisoning, hanging, starvation, strangulation, and medical experimentation. Torture was used to punish children for speaking Aboriginal languages. Children were involuntarily sterilized. *In addition, the report found that clergy, police, and business and government officials were involved in maintaining pedophile rings using children from residential schools.* (emph. added 40)

The Truth Commission on Genocide is an online report that appears in PDF. The website for The Truth Commission on Genocide can be found at <http://hiddenfromhistory.blogspot.com/>. *Hidden From History* is the title of Kevin Annett's self-published book. The website for The Truth Commission on Genocide is his website. The citational circularity is striking here; accounts of the event seem to swirl above the event itself. All the while, original documentation of Favel's testimony remains elusive. Searching online repositories of film footage, all I can locate is a one minute and twenty-one second clip on youtube in which a woman called Irene Favel repeats the testimony of the infant's murder. In the video the woman pictured is bathed in a cold, blue light. There are a series of quick cuts between her face down to her body and gesturing arm, which swings towards the camera when she says the words: *they threw that little baby in there and burned it alive*. When the camera pans to her face, she moves her tongue forward in her mouth in such a way that the footage appears altered, as though edited. This tick repeats as her voice floats atop black and white images of a nun and some small children. The footage is of really poor quality; the voice is out of synch with what Favel is supposed to be saying. It even seems as if this might be a film of a film. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) logo flickers and darts in and out of the bottom left side of the screen. The testimony's status as transparent event—a thing that actually happened and can be traced through archival practices of verification and authentication—is uncertain.

Now, as I write this chapter, while an archivist at the CBC searches for any footage that might anchor Annett and Monchalin's citation of Favel, Monchalin's citation of Smith's citation of Annett, Favel's testimony and related claims—all which seem to, but may not, originate with Annett—appear to hang in space, tremulous and terrible.

Despite the indeterminate provenance of Favel's testimony—in fact, I think because of it—her words enter my analysis here with mythic force. Marking the coupling of generativity/inscription with annihilation/loss, my account here begins with ash, with the certainty that ashes cling to the opening words of this chapter. The epigraphed opening lines of Favel's account do not move evenly from the surface of one page onto the next in seamless/machinic transcription: they pass through a body first, the writing body, my body. When I breathe the words of Favel's testimony, I feel them slide, gritty, into my lungs—an encounter with the absent Other (the Other's absence) and a bodily acknowledgement of the Other's partial presence. The violence of the account is so viscerally present in the absencing to which it bears witness, I feel as though it sticks to the surface of my living skin. The writing of it is the tending of an ashgarden.

The provenance of the account, and the violence it brings to bear, marks a space of impasse and doubt. It is aporetic. Suggesting an immeasurable distance between archival reading and the archival 'object', it stages what Arondekar calls “an unrepresentable search for an impossible object” (xi). It enacts archival aporia. Re-turning from or out of history or out of what Shahid Ali Agha (2009) renders in poetic verse, *someplace to store the darkness* (a place, he says, “you *must* have”)⁵⁸, the account turns us toward the unlocatable, that which can neither be fully absorbed nor totally expunged. Like melancholia, it sticks in the throat. Unable to verify or nullify its veracity, it implicates an a-topic untimeliness, a traumatic, circular kind of temporality in which subjectivity is superseded by the return of that which cannot be repressed. Within this register it is unclear precisely *what* comes back. In the space of re-turn opened by trauma, the critical task at hand is crafting an approach to reading: how does one take up what

⁵⁸ Agha writes, some lines later. See Agha, Shahid Ali. *The Veiled Suite: The Collected Poems*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2009.

is so undeniably so very difficult? The difficulty of the story poses a challenge, as well, to writing—for how does one (circum)scribe the terrible? How does one reach into the death-marked heart of colonial darkness? How does one begin to write the aporetic? Accordingly, the fundamental questions in the work at hand are: 1) What do we do with a kind of archival fragment so incendiary it seems to be torn, not from an archive/from archives, but from history itself? 2) What do we do with a record of burning which, itself, seems to go on burning, that seems, still, to writhe, unclaimed/unclaimable? 3) What does this fragment mean, and perhaps as important, how does it mean in the context of the IRS and its archive(s)?

Pursuing these lines of inquiry, I explore the aesthetic and political dimensions of reading a moment of intense and complex affective suturing. I engage psychoanalytic theory as a reading practice, following Spivak's feminist deconstructivist approach to reading death *as a text*. In doing so, I am concerned with marking some of the ways in which Favel's story signifies as a complex condensation of multiple absences configured in unfixable genres: the burnt scrap, the narrative testimony, the achingly resilient sound within a sound ("*Uuh!*"). Following Peggy Phelan's call in her book *Unmarked* (1993) to "write into disappearance" (148), I am trying, in this chapter, to work through the historical and corporeal, the traumatic(ally) (incomprehensible) violence this story marks by parsing its signifying status(es). I understand what I offer as a provisional scaffolding for a text that ultimately eludes all genre, all attempts at capture, that marks the colonial archive (especially the archive around Indian residential schooling in Canada) just as searingly as Mendieta's hand sears Eliade's book, that opens aporia, that is aporetic. Just as Blocker considers Mendieta's burning book symbolically, what I notice in Favel's account are twinned registers of historiography—opposing modes of representation, what Blocker calls, a "contradictory message of claiming and annihilation" (135). I am not invested in recuperating or redeeming this archival fragment as much as I am concerned with interpretation, as the kind of work that brings Spivak from the violent unspeakability and partiality of the story of her great-aunt's death, through the paradoxical status of the British abolition of widow sacrifice, to an account of subalternity (always already constituted through lack) as excess: as that which always exceeds social theory's category 'the other,' as well as attempts to make it signify.

In what follows, I parse the signifying statuses of Favel's story. Indeed, by considering the difficult and uncertain provenance of the testimony I have already considered its signifying status as a transparent happening, as a thing that actually happened, whose presence can be traced in/through archives and textual accounts of the past. This foray into The Factual has uncovered something of a citational whirlpool, an aporetic circularity, a kind of indeterminacy that points to archival collapse/failure/fever. The kind of breakdown this approach uncovers gestures to the very tenuous status of oral history and testimony vis-à-vis the masculinist rules of archival forensics—standards and protocols of verification and authenticable certainty, wherein one reaches to clasp and claim. This 'factual' paradigm privileges (perhaps at times it even fetishizes) the material and the textual, the textual *as* material. The mythic, symbolic force of Favel's story, meanwhile, enters the record ungraspable—it eludes the recuperative gesture by turning the archivist's desire for certainty back on itself. As far as paradigms of verification are concerned, Favel's story signals deep ambiguity that destabilizes/wounds more than bolsters concepts of History as a record of Everything that was. In a wonderful passage in her book *Dust*, historian Carolyn Steedman (2001) calls this vision of the historical, "the great, brown, slow-moving strandless river of Everything" (18).⁵⁹

Reaching towards historical certainty has not (cannot, should not) deliver/ed us to safe shores across the swirling whirlpools and churning chaotic waters—which is precisely the Platonic image of aporia. Accordingly, in what follows I parse other, less strictly 'literal' or 'determinate' signifying statuses of Favel's story. I activate the figural, considering the story of the infant's burning as text. From the perspective of the literary critic, I engage the text aesthetically, tracing, for instance, the sonic substance within the sound, the breath escaping the pursed lips of the infant ("Uuh!"). From this provisional place of analysis, I consider the way the story signifies as religious mythos, as a site at which

⁵⁹ In this passage Steedman is considering, with some irony, some dimensions of *archive fever*. Narrating the kind of archival encounter of the cultural historian, she writes: "Your craft is to conjure a social system from a nutmeg grater, and your competence in that was established long ago. Your anxiety is more precise and more prosaic. It's about PT S2/1/1, which only arrived from the stacks that afternoon and which you will never get through by tomorrow" (18). Steedman's account is a beautiful elaboration of archives as what Lacan calls *objet petite a*, in which archival work is, literally, never complete because it is utterly, by its very nature, incompletable. This is, of course, the definition of *archive fever*.

the paradoxical dictum to ‘sacrifice to save’ works itself out. Finally, I consider the story’s signifying status as archival supplement, indicative of a kind of death driven colonial fantasy. In this approach the irreducibility of the infant is the motor-force that propels intensifying cycles of violence aimed at its erasure. In this final turn I return to consider aporia, against and within or pressing into and thereby disrupting the smooth linearity of the archival.

Impressions in Flame: Signification, Materiality, and the Burning Child

They reclaimed rights to maternal identity; they threw open doors dividing death and birth, sex and birth, sex and death to carnival indistinction. (Pollock 1999)

Literary Crossings of Corporeal Matters

Pulling this work toward me each morning across some dense hours of sleep, I feel the muscular pull of the figurative. Searching for a critical lexicon to parse the compressed annihilatory death marked/death marking testimony, I want to make it figure—in so doing, to read it from across the critical distance of *as/like*. What do we lose when we translate monstrosity into metaphor? More urgently, what do we lose when we don’t? I can’t help but think of Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* here: *the horror, the horror...* some echoes (there are, of course, many others) of the monstrous markings of colonial worldings. In some literary theory course or another, a long time ago relative to the history of my own life, I remember learning how Conrad’s text had been read by critical theorists in the field of literary studies *only* on the register of symbolism, *as if* everything in/of the text was/is metaphor. This approach furnished us, its inheritors, with hypoxic worlds of literary insight, all of which promised that nothing in or of ‘the text’ would/could harm or wound us. This literary treatment offered up the text as a site of pleasure(s) (there to be) taken. Its slick veneer paints over the death-marked text and the unclaimed text-marked-death-marked bodies the text bears across, pulls upward in spirals of hermeneutical interpretation. In so doing, the field of literary criticism risked missing the very obvious possibility that Conrad’s story was less a metaphorical account of colonial ideological world-ma(r)kings and more a literal reporting of events that actually happened—or, at the very least, that it embodies both fields (the metaphorical and the literal) at once. This is an extraordinarily vertiginous place to be: trapped between the horrific world of

the possible event, and the anodyne, distancing world of the literary, whose clever *technes* help us forestall the question *did the event actually take place?* And if it did, what accountability does it imply? What is let 'off the hook' in the turn to the literary? How does it help us to bypass complicity and accountability? *Mis-en-abîme*, I want to shove the whole thing away from my body. However, in rejecting the literary altogether, I feel gripped by some grotesque parody of the cliché that urges: 'don't throw the baby out with the bathwater.'

This is a cliché. It is a banal adage that cautions against everyday loss of "the good." It works its way into my thinking here as a kind of banality I can't help but associate with the casual way in which the baby seems to be tossed into the fire. And yet I don't even want to mention as much, for fear of reifying such easy dismissal; still there is value in the cliché. It entreats us not to throw out the generative or the good along with the bad, and it operates by asking us to presume that these are as easily parsed as babies are from the water they are washed in. Yet, the thing we are entreated not to 'throw away' is not a transparent object; indeed, infants, who seem to stand in for or traffic as some primary epistemological unit of the social, the raw material of ideology and politics, are no more straightforward than any other body. Indeed, I want to argue that they are even more difficult to ontologize. Judith Butler (1993) takes on the difficulty of writing (about the materiality of) bodies when she notes, in the preface of *Bodies that Matter*, "Not only did bodies tend to indicate a world beyond themselves, but this movement beyond their own boundaries, a movement of boundary itself, appeared to be quite central to what bodies 'are'" (x). In navigating the aporia Favel's testimony instantiates, I am looking for *poros* between the literal and the figurative. In doing so I am, once again, reminded of Mendieta's burned book piece, an inert object which she burned into living flesh by transforming her own living flesh into a piece of hot metal, capable of branding forth meaning, a kind of worlding or marking of 'raw material' into signification. In Favel's testimony, a living body is unmarked through burning. The 'world(s) beyond its own boundaries' this body indicated were contained and delineated by pink clothing, trapped violently in fleshly finitude and burned away. In her meditation on Mendieta's hand/brand, Blocker notes, "a brand is meant to claim ownership, to stigmatize, or to signify the contents of a vessel" (29). The slippage that the description of

this act of branding enacts between Mendieta's book and the girl infant in Favel's testimony are painfully, poignantly striking. On the level of the figurative, it is as though the infant is made to embody an unwritten book, blank pages upon which imperial-colonial-masculinist-white-European power might write itself, like the earth, like arche-writing, like organic material or waste. She is tossed like a scrap of bad writing, adorned with someone else's words—pink clothes—crumpled up like paper, cast ritualistically yet carelessly, efficiently away, into fire, burnt, *gone*. Incinerated like/as trash, her unworlding worlds a postcolonial future, her death inaugurates a possibility and futurity for somebody else. The exhalation of breath (“*Uuh!*”) rises into the air like a scrap of paper caught in an updraft, churned and tossed in a confluence of heat, burned and defiled, its ambiguity (as a fragment of sound, “*Uuh!*” can mean almost anything) signaling a remainder that cannot signify for the whole, that can barely gesture towards what has been destroyed, but yet, which persists beyond attempts to *consign* it to flames.

Within the crossings between literary and literal, what, in fact and/or in figure, is a baby? What can we say, here, about its signifying status, the bodily conjoining of sex and sexuality, life, and death, which its body, so very proximal to the aporetic event of birth, so violently and disruptively indexes? In the opening chapter of her book *Telling Bodies Performing Birth*, which she positions within the narrative landscape of birth(ing) stories, Della Pollock (1999) writes the following:

Given the opportunity, women made what is typically left to the margins of the birth discourse ... the primary subjects of their birth stories. In so doing, they achieved alternative, if ragged and fleeting, forms of subjectivity: they claimed affective authority; they reclaimed rights to maternal identity; *they threw open doors dividing death and birth, sex and birth, sex and death to carnival indistinction* ... they subjected themselves, and me, and you, to often unnerving, transforming articulations of memory, discourse, and desire.

(emph. added 7)

Pollock is talking within an historical conjuncture, within a moment in the US in which birth, and narratives of birth, seem to have become the property of medical and masculinist discourses. What her

account of the narrative performance of these m/others indicates to me, here, is the fragility of the partitions between conceptual or semantic objects (death, birth, sex, birth, sex, death) which, under the pressures of narration and birth—in which birth is an object containing both sex and death in turgid measure(s)—are subject to collapse, like the living walls of tissue between vagina/birth canal and anus, the pathway of excess or excretion or waste. Semantically and corporeally, birth is a ruptural violence whose smoothing out in narrative is a bodily performance that claims both subjectivity, in which the claiming is also the claiming of its remainders, and affective authority. The infant claims and marks the maternal body in violent renegotiation of the terms of intersubjectivity. The maternal body writes the infant, who enters the world already marked by the excess of the mother as sign, by an excess of bodily fluids—some, but not all, of which is waste—that are not her own. She/he, the infant, is a marker of sex—that act of copulation that brought her/his life into B/being and the discrete markings of biologically gendered certainty: “It’s a girl!” What Pollock’s accounts of birthing and birthing stories bring to bear are the many (unspoken) openings of birth into death. As I extend Pollock, the bursting or tearing through tissue into the air of the infant-in-birth speaks the vitality, the burgeoning and terrible (terrible because even as it flows through us it is so much more vast and powerful than we are) dynamism of that most indeterminate, excessive, *unclaimable* semantic object: ‘life-itself.’ I risk to suggest that when we talk about “the miracle of birth” we are gesturing towards the moreness, this excess which I am trying to mark when I record the words ‘life-itself.’ In doing so, I don’t aim to suggest that this is something we can, or even want to, reach—though biopolitical regimes certainly stage an attempt to master it. Rather, my aim is to suggest that perhaps within the ruptural space of birth, something like the real can be almost felt or seen, something so excessive it registers only as lack, the violence of its passing through is marked, inscribed, torn as though singed into the maternal body by/through the terrible, excessive force we recognize in/as the life-force of the infant. The excessive bodiliness of birth is, I suspect, not wholly bearable or possible to bear out in language. I suspect that there is a form of inscription that is inscribed into and onto and of the bodily tissue and the fluids of the maternal body that Euro-American language games cannot bear. Perhaps that is why our colloquial, Euro-American narratives of birth appear so

utterly inadequate, rife with aporia, condensed within metaphorical landscapes—storks? really?—that have almost nothing to say about the power of the feminine performative. What troubles me deeply in Favel’s account is the way in which the mother, the maternal body of the mother—we are told she, herself, is a “young girl” (where, I wonder, is *her* mother?)—as well as her labor, is placed so violently under erasure, by school officials and the Euro-modern discourses on birth, both of which have (violently) claimed rights to maternal identity. In doing so, they have stolen her body’s ability to speak and be heard, a redoubling of the social relations that renew (some of) the conditions of colonial and postcolonial subalternity through repeated, repressed/suppressed, scenes of sexual violence.

More remains to be said on the topic of sexual violence and the maternal body, which I shall return to at the close of the chapter, gesturing towards both what has gone before and what is yet to come. At present, I have said a few words on the pink clothes; I have not said nearly enough. I am caught up, marooned in the excess of the ‘pinkness’ that exceeds those pretty-in-pink swaddling clothes, that “nice pink outfit.” For me, this excess is sutured to the aporetic “*Uuh!*”, the sonic substance that remains within the remainder of the sound that sutures the infant’s disappearance with colonial worldings that incinerate the sign of the feminine, the ‘she’ placed under erasure, with the index or echoing of the terror of *terra nullius*. The sound spins into aesthetics, into the material breath of content-less sound/sound as (dis)content, which disrupts and reorganizes forms of sensual expression and libidinal energy in the interest of the maintenance of disposable, eradicable life and the material conditions and power dynamics of available bodies, ready-at-hand sexualities, bodies, lives.⁶⁰

As I perceive it, “*Uuh!*” seems to sing(e) the hymn of the unheard, the subaltern exhale that cannot be heard, which we or I cannot begin to write, or not write, into which the legal fiction or projective saying of *terra nullius* imagines land, and the people on it, as blank bodies, empty vessels. In

⁶⁰ This recalls Phelan’s chapter “White men and pregnancy: discovering the body to be rescued” in her book *Unmarked: the politics of performance* in which she focuses on Operation Rescue—a movement that argues that men must not be secondary partners in reproductive decision making—and the Lacanian disappearance of the mother through visibility politics that isolate the fetus and re-identify it with patriarchy. See: Phelan, Peggy. *Unmarked: the politics of performance*. New York: Routledge, 1993. pp.130-45.

the sound of air escaping from pursed lips, the contours of mouth and lips and the living orifice of sound as pink burns as bodies are branded as round lips are ploughed over as moments after emerging through the liminal living passageway that connects tissues and lives together that echoes the sound of birth panting pain. The sound that is almost not a sound, the aching resilience of breath escaping, for me, frames what Saidiya Hartman calls “the scene of subjection:” banal moments of quotidian performative violence. The scene of subjection Favel’s account confronts us with is one of stolen and forced sexuality and the specific (though certainly iconic of the IRS and colonial world-making in general) scene of sexual violence in which a priest rapes a young girl. The sexual violence continues through the birth of the child—whose life is barely allowed to signify beyond a scorched earth piece of remaindered sexual violence—through and beyond the scene of the infanticide of that baby. It is as if the dense complexity and historical contingency of settler colonialism and imperial *doxa* as it played out in Canada—and, I argue, elsewhere in the (post)colonial world—is *here*, in this scene, and in the fragile, partial, poignant durability of this sound, as if this intake of breath is the respiration of the postcolonial world. The sound connects the scene of primal sexual violence and links the pleasure/*jouissance* of the priest (his “*Uuh!*”) with the sexual conquest/rape of a young schoolgirl (a different register of the sound “*Uuh!*”) with the girl’s bodily labor of birthing (yet another kind of “*Uuh!*”) and the death of the infant, whose body is tossed away in which all that escapes is the memory of a sound containing so many other iterations of itself, a litany of sound, torn, not from pages or records, but from the center of the centerless body. Like the claiming of subjectivity itself, to which Pollock’s work bears witness: “*they threw open doors dividing death and birth, sex and birth, sex and death to carnival indistinction*” (emph. added 29). They—in this case, the bodies of colonial authority, the religious personages responsible for operating the IRS—“claimed affective authority; they [claimed and] reclaimed rights to maternal identity” (ibid).

Still reeling in the remaindered excess of sound, the shrouding of the infant in pink remains somehow unbearably excessive. Covering over the violence of her coming into the world with pink, the swaddling a ritual-like sacrifice, her monstrous death leaving the barest trace of incinerated sound, which Favel pairs with that comforting trope of maternal domesticity, “cooking dinner”—which is what Favel is

doing with the nun as the baby burns, the baby and the dinner comingling under the sign of cooking, something consumable, something that makes the body strong(er), healthy/ier. As the exhale of the infant is swallowed into air, what Favel is subjected to, what she subjects me to, we subject you to, is the smell of that burning image of an infant swaddled in pink, forced back into her bodily container and killed, whose body's opening into worlds beyond itself (perhaps towards something like *pure spirit* or *Being*) is foreclosed. I think about the way Mendieta's hand defiled the pages of Elidae's book, as though touch could burn through flesh, as though the burning hand could remain intact while the paper-flesh it presses into burns to cinder. Thrown away, as though torn from history, "*Ugh!*", as though winded as though wounded as though broken fragile bones struggling or yearning or corrupted or spilled into singed-signed pages and reverberating across *terra nullius*.

Favel says, "And they took the baby into the furnace room, and they/ threw/ that little baby/ in there/ and burned it/ alive..." Before moving away from the strictly literary-aesthetic, let's make some room, at least syntactically, to throw some slashes through the smooth linearity of the phrase on the page, slash through the inevitable-seeming swinging momentum arc of the act of disposal. Let's try to indicate that *throwing her in* to the furnace was also an act of *throwing her out* of the world—to speak through the register of Heidegger/Spivak's concept of worlding—and into the earth, the earth itself, as raw and pink and wet as a baby at birth. She is (a) thrown ~~projection~~ abjection; she is unworlded. Favel says: They ... burned it alive." Like Blocker's burnt book piece, as if this brutality ripped through life-itself and, overwriting the infant with annihilation, burnt her into life, burning her into being-alive in death. Burning into a mythic kind of aliveness that exceeds organic life, travels, life-like, a fission down the backbone of experience, a stolen life burning in someone else's mythology—the burning child whose burning indexes someone else's sexuality, whose burning collides with the sign of the infant king, sacrificed into signification as the guarantor of life eternal in some other location. The hand/brand goes on burning.

Religious Mythos: The Miracle of the Faith and the Logic of 'Sacrifice to Save'

Yet, the durability of the sound, born(e) onwards by Favel and outwards from her and from here, suggests an irreducible remainder, which, though it is the barest outline of sound, persists, signifies,

matters. What I would like to do from this point is to carry some of the residue of this irreducibility into an interpretive account of the fragment Favel offers, investigating by way of psychoanalytic theory, the signifying status of Favel's account as religious mythos. Signifying traditional and recurrent narratives, themes, sets of beliefs and structuring fundamental assumptions, in using 'mythos' rather than 'narrative' or 'account' what I am trying to activate is something that travels along the same register as affect or belief or faith. There is an element of unseeable, unverifiable, yet deeply felt presence. The metaphysical, schematic distinction between presence and absence does not hold here. Rather, what is signaled in religious mythos is the diffusion through something like omnipresence that extends even beyond death. As I employ the concept, the mythos is aesthetic, and works itself through the literal and literary: it tropes and figures, makes allusions. It connects the affective/supernatural with the material.

The literary and aesthetic accounts I have offered so far are necessarily partial. I am discomfited; perhaps you are too. But this is not a project whose aim is certainty, or even arrival. My interpretive engagement with the Christian religious mythos, likewise, does not attempt full capture; nor is it my intention to adopt the stance of a religious studies scholar to analyze the complex assemblage of traditions, discourses, and practices convoked within the signifier "Christianity." Rather, my aim is to track some of the effects and forces at play in Favel's testimony, what the testimony puts into play independent of the literal, verifiable 'truth'. What I want to argue is that the collision of the burning of the immolated infant with the sign of the infant king, leads us toward the Christian account of the sacrifice of the savior whose sacrifice in death holds the promise for eternal life. In my parsing of the signifying statuses of Favel's incendiary testimony, I have indicated correspondence to the religious narrative of 'sacrifice to save'. My aim in doing so is to excavate some of the imbrications of signification and death, to get to a point of a more nuanced understanding of what death means and *how* it means within and informed by Judeo-Christian traditions, traditions whose effectivity in shaping the colonial project must be taken into account. I proceed by turning to the work of French clinical psychoanalyst Serge Leclaire. In his book *A Child is Being Killed*, Leclaire argues that in order to achieve full selfhood and psychic balance we must all repeatedly and endlessly kill the phantasmatic image of ourselves instilled in us by

our parents. Leclaire's claim that each of us carries as a burden an unconscious secret of our parents, a hidden desire that we are made to live out but that we must kill in order to be born, draws on some of the fundamental issues of psychoanalytic theory and underscores a religio-psychic imperative in the destruction of the young girl's baby.

In Serge Leclaire's (1998) account of the burning child, in a paradoxical couplet that holds back more than it reveals, he writes, "The death of a child is unbearable. It fills all our most secret and profound wishes" (2). So much so, he seems to suggest, that it enters as the barest tendril of desire, as a shadow, as a kind of presence-non-presence, which the subject would rather not face. "There is for everyone," Leclaire claims, "always, a child to kill" (2). What kind of death *is* this? What kind of child? Certainly for Leclaire, the register in which the conversation takes place is not merely biological; in fact it is not biological at all. For Leclaire, the child each of us must kill is the projection of the perfect child, the ideal child—in Lacan's sense, an *imaginary* child. This ideal child is a perfect iteration of ourselves; each is unique in the ways it is better than we are. This ideal child is a thrown projection, a pre-iteration of being that is cast into the psychic world of ideal forms into our worldview from the past, and into the future by the lineages of mothers and fathers who came before us and who saw in us a perfection we will never possess. The psychic work here, for Leclaire, is to kill the horrible image, that perfect child whose *imago* is always better and more completely consolidated where we are always already fractured and incomplete, inadequate, constituted by fleshly finitude and that which we lack. We must kill this shadowy *other* child in order to live in psychic balance. This is, of course, no easy thing, for the child always returns, over and over. Leclaire writes, "Psychoanalytic practice is based upon bringing to the fore the constant work of a power of death—the death of the wonderful (or terrifying) child who, from generation to generation, bears witness to parents' dreams and desires. There can be no life without killing that strange, original image in which everyone's life is inscribed" (ibid). The child is magnificent, constituted first in the nostalgic glance of the mother, nostalgia signifying, as we know, longing for that which never was; and the child is terrifying. For Leclaire, "He is already the forsaken one as well, lost in total dereliction, facing terror and dying alone" (3). For Leclaire, killing the perfect projection of the child is

also the hint or move towards apostasy. The child embodies a sacrality that we, imperfect and finite, lack. Indeed, our very constitution is formed around this lacking. Lacanian pessimism might move to suggest that the lack is impossible to reconcile and that the perfect child we are not is impossible to kill. Leclaire, however, is a clinician, whose view is towards helping his patient live in balance and psychic health by doing the work, over and over, of killing the child to save herself/himself.

This imperative to kill the child only we can kill is, for Leclaire, at once deeply necessary and also, simultaneously, to “rediscover” what he calls “the sacred horror” (ibid). The sacredness of the living child, for Leclaire, is embedded in the story he argues we are all already inside, a critical instantiation of what he calls grace. “God himself stops the hand of Abraham: the sacrifice will be carried out, with a lamb in the place of Isaac. The infant-king, the ‘Son of God,’ must be marked with the grace of having escaped the massacre of the first-born so that, when he reaches manhood, the mystery of death and redemption can take place” (ibid). This linkage of the child body to grace is suggestively ambiguous. Through what axis, and by what signifying means, is the infant body grace-marked? And what is grace compared with life? Is it life’s supplement? Its remainder? What does the grace-marked child leave behind? Is it the animal body, the lamb substantiating a part of a life than can be split off from grace and killed—valued only for what it indexes, still a sacrifice, still a death, a substitution that stands in the place of the infant-king, that gives itself over to be killed? From Leclaire’s account of the death of the child, rooted through the twinned registers of saving and sacrifice, we are confronted with the excess that overflows from the child body—particularly at the point at which it intersects with death. In Leclaire’s telling of the story of Abraham, only by exposing the infant body to bodily death/sacrifice does it signify: the infant-king. It is only through this primal scene that the *mystery* of death—differently situated than sacrifice and killing, perhaps—and redemption can take place. This story of the child who is sacrificed into signification subtends colonial ideology.

One of the most striking features of this elaboration of the child is its location, the place it occupies in the subject’s unconscious but also in the way it travels through a psychic network of filiation. This circulation subtends kinship, and as signification it rests upon an origin that is lost and can never be

recovered. Flashing up and seeming to recede again, “in the transparent reality of the child, the Real of all our desires can be seen almost without a veil. We are fascinated and can neither look away nor grasp it” (ibid). For Leclaire the work of killing the ideal child is necessary labor, psychic labor, a vicious circle in which the killing to save can never stop—the lamb must still be killed. That this is the dynamic that drives, and that the things it annihilates it does not annihilate without remainder (the child always returns) suggests a picture of violence that can only repeat, accumulate, and intensify. Using psychoanalysis as reading practice, the instance of throwing an infant into a furnace, an account that cannot be verified within prevailing phallogentric modes of evidentiary validation, indexes a kind of colonial death drivenness that cannot be fully metabolized. The account has been caught up in a network of scholarship for precisely this reason: because the force of ‘the event,’ which we can never reach, is still carries a generative affective charge; it is still producing heat.

Read psychoanalytically, Favel’s story is one which contains multiple layers of negation: a priest and nun dressing an infant in pretty, pink clothes, so that what burns is also the sign of the feminine; an infant who appears in the testimony as the child of a prohibited, sexually violent union, a scene of sexual conquest between a priest and a young Aboriginal girl; an attempt to incinerate an infant child without remainder, beyond the social relations of subjugation both the sex and the burning index. Incinerating the sexual drive and the heretical sexual practice that incited the event of the child’s birth instantiates a dense affective knot that includes the religious discourse of “sacrificing to save” that we can trace to Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross to save humankind. In one religious instantiation this sacrifice saves humanity from sin, of which original sin is one modality, and against which baptism is one ablative/ablutive ritual practice. In certain Christian faith traditions (i.e. Catholic) in baptism the baptized *dies to sin*. Within this tradition, the same tradition as the religious order that ran the Muskowekwan Indian Residential School, the sacrifice of Jesus dying on the cross and thereby saving humanity from eternal damnation is called “the mystery of (our) faith,” an act that is reaffirmed in the deathlife eating ritual practice of communion. After death, Jesus ascends to the throne, in death he (redeems life) becomes the sign of redemption/the redeemer. What the mystery of the faith suggests is a temporality or a closed system in which death and

decay are the conditions of possibility for continued life, for life everlasting. The sacrifice of Jesus is understood to save humankind from the fire that eternally burns but does not consume, that inscribes itself on the living surface of bodies it claims as “bad” or “sinful”. The religious mythos—the mythos of “sacrificing to save”—subtends the IRS, preceding it and structuring the transference of the “Indian problem”—the problem embodied by the excessive Indianness of Indians, their “improvidence,” their “inertia,” their unassimilability—from the purview of the Christian Churches to the secular realm of biopolitics and matters of the state.

This mythos (“sacrificing to save”) underwrites the dictum to “kill the Indian in the Child”. I wonder whether the members of the religious order who swaddled the infant in pink also baptized her. Against the horrific act of incineration this might appear to be a trivial question. And yet, if we consider the legitimating force of an affective guarantee for life everlasting, we can begin to see its seriousness, we begin to see its seriousness. The equivocation of the priest who reasons that incinerating a bit of ‘inconvenient’ life amounts to the guaranteed envoy to heaven—by killing her he saves her soul *and* removes what signifies in his order of reality as the material remainders of a prohibited sexual act—sheds light on the paradoxical *quo animo* of the IRS. This paradoxical confluence of sacrificial violence and redemptive perfection becomes an interchange that has the effective force to legitimate and rationalize nearly any violent practice or lethal behavior. By exposing the mortal bodies of children to death, their baptized souls could be saved while separating ‘Indian’ and ‘child’ along the axis of mortal body/immortal soul. This abstract or supernatural mythos permeated the quotidian, everyday life in the IRS, in which children were, daily, routinely, exposed to forms of violence so excessive by clerical leaders as to seem, now, to be unspeakable, to be the work of monsters. It is helpful to reflect on the transubstantiation—the intersection or traveling between—of the spiritual and material-corporeal that infuses Christian-Catholic traditions, in which the metaphorical seeps into the literal in unexpected, non-linear ways. In this analysis, it is important to mark that within the long violence of the IRS, and the records of violence it produced, there were people in religious orders who sincerely wanted to help, who, galvanized by their faith traditions and the colonial imperatives to save/civilize Aboriginal children,

believed the efforts of the IRS were helpful and necessary and right/good. The burn goes deep. Within the density of meaning encoded in the branding, the *quo animo* of IRS, the oppositions (between right and wrong, evil and Godly, Indian and child) “seem to disintegrate like words” (Blocker 1999 29).

My dissertation suggests the culture around Indigenous residential schooling in Canada is part of a larger colonial culture of the death drive. The movement of this death driven culture is the escalation and intensification of violence in the name of unifying the body politic by eradicating the bad and undesirable qualities or morphological similarities among population groups perceived as ‘facts’ rooted in ‘biology.’ For instance the qualities of “indolence and inertia” were understood as “inherent traits” of the “Indian race.” In policy, we can trace the intensifying violence from relatively benign policies of enfranchisement, a policy in which Indigenous men voluntarily relinquish tribal identities in exchange for some of the rights offered by British subjecthood, to more aggressive “civilization” policies, such as the pass system, to policies of eradication that imagined “getting rid of the Indian” altogether. The sentiment of this last policy is excerpted from Duncan Campbell Scott’s statement in 1920 in which he says, in his capacity as the Deputy Superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs: “I want to get rid of the Indian ... Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian that has not been absorbed by the body politic” (Scott). What this vision of the Indian-less future suggests is a curious move between presence and absence wherein Indians are visible *within* the body politic, but not as Indians who embody any kind of Indianness, as that would make their incorporation/inclusion within the norm/body politic impossible. So Scott’s vision seems to project a kind of Indian without Indianness, which, I cannot help but think, finds its nearest actualization in the nutritional experiments undertaken by the Federal Nutrition Division at residential schools in the 1940’s. Here we have “Indians,” young children who are violently cut off from their cultural referents and origins and held in conditions of corporeal subordination and mortal precarity in service of an experiment on the adding of chemicals (like synthetic vitamins) to food—a study meant to ultimately improve the health and well-being of the body politic. This is the kind of “Indian,” I venture to suggest, Scott had in mind when he suggested that Aboriginal people could remain “Indian” while being simultaneously “absorbed” into the body politic—the kind of subject whose

consent to serve as test-subject is not required, and upon whose body the state could secure its efforts to improve the quality of life of the norm. The social relation between Indigenous person and state is one that writes legitimacy into practices of bodily disposability. This is all done in the name of making life for the body politic/the norm healthier, better.

Inconvenient Life and (other) Matters of the Death Drive

When I think Favel's testimony through the partial, subterranean analytic of the death drive, what I perceive is a working out of the mythic desire for absence without remainder that, I argue, subtends the colonial project of worlding. This is the fantasy that the 'problematic' or 'inconvenient' materiality of the other can be burned away, a self-effacing mark—as though the body of an infant, all the worlds beyond itself towards which her body opens, could be contained in ritual wrappings of pink and incinerated, thrown into a vacuum of cinder and ash and heat, *gone*. 'Inconvenient life' is the provisional name I have generated to describe the dangerous ineradicability, the excessive, enfolded materiality that signals an otherness one wishes she/he might eradicate completely, erasing it *as though* it had never existed. I understand the word 'inconvenient' to open us to a world of associated meanings aligned with the trivial. It is 'inconvenient' to be stuck in traffic, for example. This is a signifying chain I am purposefully activating. Inconvenience is not, at its heart, a particularly violent impulse towards others. But it can become death driven. Death drive, as is its wont, can surf on top of it, seizing upon existing libidinal energies and intensifying them, turning them in on themselves, redoubling. The death drive is so often invisible or barely perceptible (if it is perceptible at all) precisely because of this ability it has to ride silently along on top of some libidinal process that is already taking place. Yes, being stuck in traffic is inopportune, but it is hardly a matter of life and death. So, how do I intend to argue that the 'finding inconvenient' of the life of the other could intensify to a moment of incendiary violence such as the scene Favel relays? The answer is in the relentless aggressivity of the drive, whose movement *only* intensifies, and it is in the irreducible otherness, the otherness of the other that can never, fully, satisfactorily be eradicated or erased.

Children can so often embody the ‘inconvenience’ I am trying to get to here, through their fragile, durable, terrible, miraculous, relentless life-force. Once they are born, they cannot be unborn; someone must *do something* with them: feed them, clothe them, bathe them. Someone must do *something*, even if it is to kill them or let them die. In her/his radically material, perhaps even sudden, liveness, the infant embodies the impossibility of ever *going back* to a time *before*. A baby cannot ever be unbirthed. If we take for a moment, an unwanted baby born of a prohibited sexual union—for example, between a priest and a young Indigenous schoolgirl—the presence of the infant signifies to the religious institution as problem, even as apostasy, the remnants of some crime, as sorrow or as sin. *Someone*, the priest perhaps, the young girl he impregnated, the religious body upon whom this child might bring shame or censure, the school principal who might fear for his job should the rape come to light... might wish the child had never existed at all. It would be so much better, easier, safer, simpler, if she could just be made to disappear as though she had never been conceived. This is a fantasy of erasure that wishes for, and can only be satisfied with, total annihilation: *I wish this inconvenient form of life to disappear entirely, and with it my wish for its disappearance, for I wish my wish for the eradication of this (form of) life to disappear as well*. This is not even to say that this form of fantasy wishes the child dead, or even wishes any violence upon her, it is simply the projection of a longing for erasure and a (re)turn to a time-place (*a better place*, the voice of nostalgia whispers) of the child’s non-existence. This desire is one of the fundamental logics of ethnic cleansing, the desire to erase the bad race from the surface of the world, from memory, from existence, *gone*. From our vantage in the current moment, we know too well the terrible violence, the world-breaking genocide, that fantasy of eradication on one hand, and purity on the other, has wrought. This is the arc that the fantasy of ‘erasing’ what is fundamentally ‘inconvenient’ is capable of playing out when the death drive rides along. As to the example of being stuck in traffic, how many of us have wished, however abstractly, that the other motorists and their vehicles so ‘inconveniently’ blocking our pathway would simply vanish into ‘thin air’? Thin air, of course, does not exist. Bodies *cannot* be disappeared, they can only be ‘disappeared.’

The logistical imperatives of eradication rely on the fantasy of killing without remainder, and refer to a mythic temporality in which it is possible to arrive at a future which circles back through a time *before*—before, for instance, the birth of the unwanted, problematic child. This fantasy is in direct confrontation with the laws of linear time, and with the laws of thermodynamics, which state that energy can neither be created nor destroyed, it can only be transferred. Nothing once made can be erased, and while material bodies can be incinerated and spirited into the air *as if* they have disappeared, something always persists. This fundamental irreducibility allows the aiming towards erasure to draw so enticingly near its goal that, with the drive along for the ride, the frustrated intensity that *almost* eradicated, that *almost* erased the problematic otherness of the other can only satisfy itself in intensifying cycles of violence. If one were to set out to try to erase an infant as though she had never existed, one would necessarily fall short. My argument is that in this instance, this ‘falling short’ instantiates horrific, world-breaking (*unmarking, annihilating*) worlding (*claiming*) violence. Between the defiling furnace and the defiled pages and the hard heat, the burning hand and the scorched air, *cinders fall*, carving pathways of flight through the air. The effects of the residential schooling era linger in cinder-written scenes of worlding, world-breaking violence that flash up in the contemporary, dense sites of violence that stage as untimely aggressiveness that seems so mythical and so familiar and so *inevitable*, that it is as if it has always been there.

The mythic telling of Favel’s disembodied testimony occupies an indeterminate, interstitial space between the impossibly horrible and horribly possible, mediating their imbrication and the (violent, sexual) social relation the event sutures/renders visible. Favel’s testimony shows clergy literally and figuratively writing a kind of colonial present and postcolonial future by (once again, both literally and figuratively) attempting to eradicate the ‘inconvenient’ materiality of indigenous alterity the Aboriginal infant in Favel’s account embodies by incinerating her. This particular act of (un)writing contributes to larger-scale colonial writing efforts by and through which Europe consolidated itself, both as sovereign and subject, by defining its colonies as already lost others. Killing the Indian in the child was always, at

least partially, about killing the Indian: a fantasy of mastery, a complex condensation of multiple absences and displaced presence(s).

The mythic force of Favel's testimony exceeds privileged accounts of archives as records of empirical discovery and verification. It is a telling that centralizes loss; it locates that which cannot be had at the very center of archives and archival practice. For me, the presence-non-presence of this telling neither redeems nor totally refuses our (my?) desire for archival retrieval. The notes and files and evidence and monographs and articles I considered in the process of doing the research for this project are neatly cataloged for future retrieval; I do not quite know what to do with Favel's account, where to file it, how to wrap it up, so to speak. At the start of this chapter I asked what happens to the otherness rendered unsayable, to the irreducible traces that cannot be fully incinerated. The answer, I think, is something untimely, something that rises into the air like cinder and falls like ash, moving into a different kind of saying. In some ways I read the testimony Annett attributes to Favel as a kind of speaking back to, or into Spivak's (1985) meditation on the Rani of Sirmur, in which Spivak excavates archival aporia—reaching into the space in which the Rani of Sirmur still burns, if she ever burned at all—examining the absence of a text that can “answer one back” after what she calls “the planned epistemic violence of the imperialist project” (256). One thing that I think locating Favel does in the contemporary moment, that is to say: after the conclusion of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission released their final report in 2015, is insist that truth and reconciliation are ongoing, because, just like full presence, full redemption is unreachable. In my view, in the context of scholarly work, to struggle with Annett, and to struggle in and through archives towards and away from Favel's testimony, is also to struggle with the problems truth and reconciliation leave open-ended and necessarily incomplete.

This chapter has moved through an account that explicitly connects the incineration of a newborn Aboriginal child with a mythic fantasy of eradication whose mobilizing force is death driven. Thinking Favel's account of the infant through the body of her young mother, I am struck by the over-marked, unclaimed, effaced sign of the Indigenous mother, which opens into a negation of Indigenous womanhood/femininity. The third world woman is a signifier on which Spivak has written extensively,

her work taking on the difficulties in fixing such a signifier as an object of knowledge; I would never intend to do so. Cinder writing is the link between the writings of the present and the violences of the past. Cinder writings, in their excess, overwrite and write over Indigenous women and violence and the contemporary scenes of violence that are, in so many ways, inhabited by the earlier violences of Indian residential schooling in Canada. In the contemporary moment, as well as in the history of residential schooling, even though there were and are physical Indigenous mothers, there was and still is, an excess of orphaning. These kinship-severing practices stem from early coercive means through which the federal government made illegal Indigenous parenting and mandated Indigenous children into residential schools. They extend through to the practices of removal common throughout the 1960's that further severed Indigenous kinship systems and practices of Indigenous parenting (referred to in the contemporary moment as 'the 60's scoop'). In this era, the Aboriginal mother was deemed unfit and children were removed and placed in federal foster systems. Throughout the history of contact, the Indigenous mother—synthesized into/symbolized in a rather careless and ac hoc way that elides all Aboriginal mothering practices into the figure of the Indigenous woman—is a poignant site of de-futuring, erasure, sexual violence, loss, what I call in chapter two *enshattering*. Her persistent living lives against the force of (a) violent caesura.

The figure of Indigenous femininity extends beyond the purview of the work at hand, but in the current moment in Canada, this—*she*—is a site of intense, intensifying violence, towards which the present work opens into in ways that beckon, that insist upon recognition. In the chapter that follows, the concluding chapter of this dissertation, I begin with an analysis that continues the work of the current chapter by illustrating the untimely structure of violence that emerges like heat from the incinerating force of Indian residential schooling, permeating the sign of Indigenous femininity. To be clear, this is emphatically not a moment of archival elision, in which I read one site of Indigenous loss and pain as identical to the next, thereby eliding the plurality, multivocality, and complex intersectionality of Indigenous identities and forms of life in an abstracted, epistemically violent argument on the bodily costs to Indigenous persons and personhood extracted by imperial worldings. Rather, my argument is that in the

contemporary moment the Aboriginal woman in Canada is an intense lightening-rod for displaced/deferred (post)colonial aggressiveness. The psychic, social, personal, and political density and death-driven psychic dimensions of this aggressiveness conjoin with corporeal violence to produce an uncloseable circle effected by the impossibility of eradicating the problematic difference of the other/of 'inconvenient otherness'. The obscure, underground operations of this circularity—to be clear, I am talking here of the death drive—is best made legible/understandable in a mythic moment of incineration that, perhaps, never took place, at least in the way we think of something 'taking place'. In my analysis of the burning infant, I indicated that what remains, particularly in the eyes of the clergy who took part in the event, as well as the young Aboriginal woman (Favel) who witnesses it, are the social relations of subordination indexed by the presence of the infant (sexual domination by the male, imperial, priest—*Father*—of the young Aboriginal schoolgirl) and the burning of the infant (the absolute privilege to kill and to place under erasure any trace of that killing).

In the second chapter in this dissertation, I suggested that we might find a way to think colonial sexuality from both directions—from the archives it creates, and the ones it (simultaneously) burns to the ground. I suggested that doing so impels following the anarchical violence the archive indexes and tamps down, following it most vociferously where it most seems to vanish. In this chapter's account, I have argued that vanishing points in archives and in theory open us towards aporia, places at which there is no single way out or across, sites at which we must orient towards the provisional, the partial—sites that demand that we re-orient away from attempts to recover lost bodies or subjectivities, imagining ways to recuperate them as objects of knowledge. In her book *For the Record*, Anjali Arondekar marks an awareness, stemming from her own research on sexual perversions in nineteenth-century India, of what she calls 'archival aporia,' the sense of an "unrepresentable search for an impossible object" (xi). In the book's preface she writes: "in many ways, the present work [which looks for/at sexual perversions in colonial records of nineteenth-century India] is an attempt to trace and push against the force of archival aporia" (ibid). In one of the book's epigraphs, Arondekar summons Spivak's account of the Rani of Sirmur, a meditation on reading archives in which the cherished object of Spivak's analysis, the Rani,

seems to fall from the archives into an a-topic timelessness; Spivak comments upon, without directly noting, the personally wounding affectivities of this type of erasure. Here, as in “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” Spivak talks about her desire to place her hand against the skin of a woman (in the form of a painting, or in the recuperation of some elements of a lost story) who is gone, as *an act of personal piety*. ‘Where,’ her work on the Rani seems to ask, in a moment of resonance with Blocker, ‘is the Rani of Sirmur?’ This is a question that asks for more than a series of coordinates of bodies in time and space. It is a question that asks/speaks into a confluence of colonial-imperial-patriarchal power that simply did not deem the Rani’s fate significant enough to report. Spivak’s account of the Rani seems to be asking where the Rani is not. She is not in authorized accounts of colonial India, in which her death seems to have fallen out of history, or at least the writing of it. Spivak’s account of the Rani’s absent burning burns like Mendieta’s hand/brand. Why do we still seek truth in archives? The truth of Mendieta’s death, the Rani’s burning, the unnamed, unknowable infant whose incineration this account has, so searingly, attempted to trace, do not have origins or even (past) presence there.

CHAPTER 5

Past Returns: Historicizing Scenes of Everyday Violence

I focused, therefore, on how something as grotesque as the demonization of an entire race could take root inside the most delicate member: a child ... One problem was centering the weight of the ... inquiry on so delicate and vulnerable a character could smash her and lead readers into the comfort of pitying her rather than into an interrogation of themselves and the smashing ... The other problem, of course, was language. Holding the despicable glance while sabotaging it was difficult. (Morrison 188)

What does the exposure of the violated body yield? At issue here is the precariousness of empathy and the uncertain line between witness and spectator. Only more obscene than the brutality unleashed at the whipping post is the demand that this suffering be materialized and evidenced by the display of the tortured body or endless recitations of the ghastly and the terrible. In light of this, how does one give expression to these outrages without exacerbating the indifference to suffering that is the consequence of the numbing spectacle or contend with the narcissistic identification that obliterates the other or the prurience that too often is the response to such displays? (Hartman 4)

Archival Politics: Reaching Towards ‘Un-fixing’

The critical task of this dissertation has been to consider the *quo animo* of the IRS, excavating some of the founding mythologies and logics subtending it, and elaborating some of its effects. In the course of this intensively researched historical project. I have had to contend with the many promises of the archive. I have had to theorize, as the analysis unfolded, a politics of the archive that neither fetishizes its historical formation, nor relinquishes its epistemological possibilities. Such problems and possibilities are at play in any/every archival endeavor; however, they are intensified when one is writing about colonial Canada between the late-eighteenth century and the late-twentieth century. The account this era of chrono/geopolitics yields is defined overwhelmingly by an imperial archive that, as Arondekar points out in the context of British India, “is not a building or even collection of texts, but the collected imagined

junction of all that was known or knowable, a fantastic representation of an epistemological master pattern” (2). This fantastic representation, this complex pastiche of the written and the unwritten—unwritten because it went without saying, unwritten because it could not be said⁶¹—impels an approach to archival search as ‘an unfixing,’ rather than as a recuperative action towards the redemption of a lost but knowable object. To this end, my analysis points to events whose signifying status as transparent happenings is indeterminate. Alongside these, I consider moments that seem to ‘slip’ or ‘overflow’ the archive, that direct us to indeterminate spaces of partial presence and unknowability, and to places in which the intense affective force of horrific violence still lingers, still throws off heat long after the bodies that once occupied these spaces have vanished.

In each chapter, the analysis points to sites of archival fever, failure, collapse. In so doing, my aim has been to direct historiographical writing to consider, for instance, the very tenuous status of oral history and testimony vis-à-vis the forensic rules of archival/historical research: standards and protocols of authentication and verifiability wherein one reaches to clasp and claim. My intention in doing so has not been to suggest that such testimonies are unworthy of consideration or in any way subordinate to written and ‘authorized’ accounts of what ‘really happened’. Rather, I have aimed to suggest alternative ways that such tenuous and fragile, yet potent and durable, accounts—such as the account Favel (seems to) offer(s)—can be analyzed in ways that secure their destabilizing potential. In so doing, I raise the question of which/whose interests are served by a continued cathexis to: 1) recuperative hermeneutics whose (fevered) search for lost bodies imagines that where a body is found a subjectivity can be recovered, and, 2) to scientific definitions of epistemological capture as the gold standard in archival

⁶¹ I borrow this terminology from Ann Laura Stoler’s writing in her book, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Commonsense*, in which she foregrounds the commonsense as the conjunction of the written and the unwritten. Stoler speculates: “Perhaps the unwritten looms large in the making of colonial ontologies themselves” (3). Considering the role of increasingly ideologically embedded racism, she notes that the distinction between “what was ‘unwritten’ because it could go without saying and ‘everyone knew it,’ what was unwritten because it could not yet be articulated, and what was unwritten because it could not be said” (ibid) is vital to an understanding of “imperial dispositions”—“what it took to live a colonial life, to life in and off empire” (ibid). See Stoler, Ann Laura. *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Commonsense*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009.

research and historiographical endeavors. The latter we have certainly inherited from a metaphysics that privileges pure presence and notions of history as linear teleological progress in which non-European native others are constituted through their relegation to primitive or anachronistic time-zones. The Indigenous person, we remember from Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of the World*, is imagined as always already outside the teleology of history, already extinct. It is the important ongoing work of the contemporary moment to actively consider the extent to which we wish to take up this inheritance.

My approach to the scenes the dissertation has presented pursues a form of writing into disappearance or what I will call a performative encounter with that which importantly remains unfixed; each chapter instantiates its own form of writing into disappearance. In the fourth chapter for instance, I am less concerned with establishing the veracity of Favel's account than I am with the terms that structure its non-recoverability. I am not invested either in bolstering or debunking her testimony. Instead of recovering the baby who is disposed of so horrifically as a lost archival body/object, I consider the telling of her disappearance as a sign whose evidentiary/ontological status connects questions of sexuality and colonial worlding with the logistical workings out of the fantasy of eradication through the horribly mundane. A full account of Hannah Arendt's analysis of what she calls "the banality of evil" is beyond the purview of this dissertation. On the other hand, the concept alone resonates in every aspect of this study. What Favel's account leaves us with, in my treatment of it, is the very politically charged notion we in the postcolonial contemporary moment have inherited about the teleology of Indigenous peoples as doomed. It is directed towards a horizon of *inevitable* disappearance. Accordingly, at the center of the postcolonial nation is a horrific vacuum characterized by branding, damaging, destroying, through performative acts that claim through annihilating.

My argument throughout has been that reaching toward historical records does not—and perhaps *should* not—deliver us to safe shores across the swirling waters of archival aporia. Focusing on fragments, rather than stories that suggest archival wholeness, the dissertation has attempted to sustain the tension between the uncertainty of archival labor and the persistent, ethical imperatives of historical research and archival reaching. Activating Spivak's (1988) account of the Rani of Sirmur, in which she

argues that “one can grasp, precisely *not* to fix” (emph added. 251), I have tried to show how any (re)turn to the archive constitutes exacting, crucial labor, both of reaching *and* of unfixing. Doing the labor of archival un-grasping, for me, means keeping alive the idea of archives as fractious spaces of contesting and contestable claims of what was, and, accordingly, what ‘should be.’ Arondekar argues that, “archives are more spaces of catachresis than catharsis” (171). The experience of archives as catachrestic rather than catharsis, which on so many levels they seem to promise, poses a challenge to writing: to resist delivering catharsis through writing about the past, even if doing so might seem to assuage or satisfy the desire of one’s readers. And even if one does manage to resist the pull of the cathartic, while the historiographer might do her best to express the pain of the other in a way that does not fetishize the suffering body or exacerbate existing indifference to its suffering, or deliver an easy rendering of the pain of the other, readers are freely agentive to find/experience indifference, pleasure, or catharsis where they will.

This writerly problem of the agentive reader who engages historical texts with the aim for catharsis, the reader who might respond to the recounting of racialized terror with apathy, or even enjoyment, activates the very tenuous difference between witness and spectator, and is a central concern to this dissertation. Saidyia Hartman (1997) confronts this dilemma in her account of the world-making/world-breaking spectacle of black suffering during slavery and in its aftermaths; her analyses raise an important point that is of immediate value to the work at hand. Calling attention to the effects produced by the recitation of black suffering, Hartman argues that too often such recitations “reinforce the spectacular character of black suffering” (3). For Hartman, this spectacularization of black suffering can serve to recapitulate the already over-exposed racialized body—racialized through precisely the acts of violence and abjection the recitation bears forth—as bodies in pain/privation, bodies always already constituted through white dominance through violence. In framing her book, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-making in Nineteenth Century America*, Hartman writes:

What interests me are the ways we are called upon to participate in such scenes. Are we witnesses who confirm the truth of what happened in the face of world-destroying capacities of pain, the

distortions of torture, the sheer unrepresentability of terror, and the repression of non-dominant accounts? Or are we voyeurs fascinated with and repelled by exhibitions of terror and sufferance? What does the exposure of the violated body yield? At issue here is the precariousness of empathy and the uncertain line between witness and spectator. Only more obscene than the brutality unleashed at the whipping post is the demand that this suffering be materialized and evidenced by the display of the tortured body or endless recitations of the ghastly and the terrible. In light of this, how does one give expression to these outrages without exacerbating the indifference to suffering that is the consequence of the benumbing spectacle or contend with the narcissistic identification that obliterates the other of the prurience that too often is the response to such displays? (4)

I quote Hartman at length here because her project writes into the heart of the representational dilemma I have sought to confront in this dissertation. For Hartman, the mere possibility of the erotic enjoyment—I continue to be struck by her use of the word “prurience” in the passage above—produced through the reiteration of black suffering justifies a turn away from its elaboration. Hartman turns away from a description of the beating of Frederick Douglass’s Aunt Hester in the first few sentences of the book, refusing to reiterate the familiar, violent narrative. She turns away from Douglass’s account and in so doing she invites its presence through absence. Because it is never written, the beating of Aunt Hester haunts the book. There is a singular brilliance at play here, in the way Hartman is able to evoke without committing to text the dense and complicated historical and racializing violence of the beating to which she alludes. Hartman’s argument is that the lethal complexity of this violence plays out less visibly and less sensationally, yet no less potently, in ordinary everyday scenes, some of which are even scenes of enjoyment. Phrased differently, Hartman traces the primal terror and violence subtending slavery to their vanishing points. She stages her critical work precisely at this site of vanishing, in moments in which the violence seems to be barely detectable. In doing so she establishes that the site of only the barest suggestion of presence can prove to be a tremendously potent and generative loci of/for analysis. By attempting to follow the anarchical violence the archive indexes and tamps down, to follow it most

vociferously where it seems most to vanish, I have attempted to write in the legacy of Hartman's rigorous pursuit of the racializing, racialized and lethal violence—lethal because it can at times be so subterranean—that sutures social relations and scripts the everyday. This approach necessarily recruits Spivak's work on subalternity and asks by what terms is access to power through speech, self-representation, and self-recognition cut off. I have tried to point to unexpected ways in which these operations occur by foregrounding the severing of the semantic object of “the Indian in the child” into its composite parts (‘the Indian,’ and ‘the Child’) along a number of axes. Nearly all of these severings occur along the register of everyday speech and everyday scenes, by and through the language and deeds of ordinary people.

This quality of everydayness is of singular importance to the work at hand. One important challenge in the representation of what feels horrifically impossible, has been to stay present with the everydayness of these events within the IRS, the degree to which they were utterly routine. Part of what the dissertation has attempted to foreground is the totally commonplace nature of these goings on. Maintaining the banal quality of these scenes on the one hand, while remaining present with their horror on the other, has proved challenging. There were moments in the writing in which I became I aware that I had stopped feeling nauseated, had stopped feeling surprised, had stopped *feeling* anything. Horror had ceded to the routine. In the same way our bodies grow accustomed to smell, I found I had become inured to the violence in which, through intense durational exposure via research and writing, I was steeped. This effect culminated in a striking moment in which a very valuable reader and interlocutor, in reviewing an early draft of the dissertation's fourth chapter, physically balked at my markedly dispassionate rendering of the incineration of a *baby* in one breath, and the very brutal metabolism of this disposal into the concept of ‘inconvenient life’ which I offered in the next. My reiteration of this life in a way that signaled that I too found her ‘merely inconvenient’ seemed, to this reader, to recapitulate the brutally casual, taken-for-granted way this life was devalued and disposed of when she was tossed like trash into an incinerator.

This moment of writerly collapse points towards an ethics of representation, suggesting to me that the unique challenge of theorizing genocide is maintaining the critical distance that enables one to ‘find interesting’ scenes of almost unspeakable violence, while at the same time remaining open to being moved, even wounded, by them. I have not yet worked the density of this imperative all the way through; perhaps doing so is impossible. As I revisit the moment I describe above, in which my own inability to be horrified was viewed as horrible, in which I became complicit in the horror I was writing about, I am reminded of a passage from Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s novel *The Gulag Archipelago*. Solzhenitsyn (1991) writes: “If only it were so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being” (168). The ethical imperative here entails a rigorous, self-reflexive willingness to remain open to the dividing line that cuts through each of us. Thus I have found the psychoanalytic insight that places aggressiveness at the center of the social bond tremendously useful. So too is the psychoanalytic axiom that pleasure, sexuality, aggressiveness, and destruction are inextricably linked. I have only begun to grasp the ways in which these libidinal forces join. Any future writing on the IRS would need to begin from this difficult, and in many ways intensely uncomfortable and unpleasant, convergence.

In my representation of the pain and abjection of Indigenous children in the IRS, and my account of the different ways in which death is made to hover over the site of Indigenous childhood, the presence of what Hartman calls “the terror of the mundane” (4) has figured largely. In her work, Hartman writes into an almost excessive surfeit of accounts of the slave’s ravaged body, in which there seems to be an overflow of bodiliness—due in no small part, I suspect, to the fact that the slave was constituted in part as *only* body, a body that labors, a body of brute energy without a soul or even, generally, sentience. My work, on the other hand, has been to write into a space of both representational and bodily disappearance, part of the violence that was justified in the name of *saving* the Indigenous child’s soul. This has been to write against, into, and alongside violence and/as loss. It has been a framing of loss in which recourse to the unsayable and therefore unsaid would have served the same interests as those who have always been

served by the conjoining of Indianness with disappearance and death. Accordingly, where Hartman veers away from “the shocking spectacle” (4), I have had to bridge the impossibly horrible and the horribly possible with language and very deliberately deployed theoretical scaffolding, which I have understood all the way along as necessarily provisional and partial. And, where Hartman has done her best to forestall the prurience of her reader, I have done my best to write directly into it, taking seriously the sexuality that is sometimes latent, and sometimes not latent at all, in the scenes themselves, the telling of them, the writing of them, and the reading of them, without obliterating the other. Indeed, in the account I have offered, it is precisely the knotted snarl of pleasure, pain, abjection, and the representation of suffering that is at stake, that I so urgently want to pull apart. I have done this as carefully as I was able. As Toni Morrison straightforwardly writes, in the preface to her novel *The Bluest Eye*, “holding the despising glance while sabotaging it was [and is] difficult” (188).

There is much more to say about the aims and ethos of the project as a whole. There is more to be said about what I have aimed to achieve, the points at which I wanted to write more but could not quite accommodate every insight, so many of which are still only partially formed. It strikes me, however, that a somewhat more linear path might be the most helpful way forward. Accordingly, what I would like to do with the space that remains in his concluding chapter, instead of offering a resolution to the questions and problematics my work here has raised, is to shift from a broad meditation on the work as a whole to a more specific focus on points in each chapter that I have found particularly exciting, vexing, or incomplete, points at which the account I aimed to trace overflowed the writing and seemed to escape. In what follows, I provide a commentary that aligns with the structure offered by the chapters themselves, beginning with chapter 2 and proceeding in numerical order. My aim in doing so is not simply to reiterate what has come before, but to provide a more intimate account of the writing of the body of this dissertation. Moving through each chapter, I point to lines of departure that flow through and from the analyses. I mark them here so that I might return, finding connections and filling out the contours of what currently exists as a series of promising possibilities.

Considering Points of Departure

Chapter 2, “Sovereign Innocence: The Child, Sexuality, and the Death Drive,” begins to unpack the dense conjunction of sexuality and death to understand how sexuality came to be so densely imbricated with the Indigenous child in the IRS, and how this conjunction in turn became so indelibly sutured to death. The chapter was prompted by my research into forms or patterns of abuse in the IRS, in which sexual abuse seemed unusually prevalent. As I conceptualized this chapter, I found myself particularly struck by Phil Fontaine’s CBC interview, in which he discloses that of the 20 boys in his grade three class, every single one of them experienced some aspect of sexual abuse” (“Phil”). The CBC synopsis of the interview points to a moment in which “Fontaine even hints at how he has gone from being the abused to being the abuser” (ibid).⁶² As I looked deeper into the reported instances of sexual abuse in residential schools, I observed that the widespread pattern Fontaine describes proved to be the case across historical eras, denominations (the rates of abuse in Catholic-run schools was not significantly different from rates of abuse in Anglican schools, for instance), geographical locations, and genders. The culture of the IRS seemed to have been a culture of hebephilia and pedophilia. I wanted to understand why, how, to what effect. I wanted to understand how and where the this culture of sexual violence, desire, exploitation, and abuse towards/on indigenous children connected to larger projects of colonial world-making. Accordingly, the chapter is at once about the perpetration of sexual and erotic violence on indigenous children in the IRS, and how that violence is encoded with sovereignty or the imperialist imperatives to obliterate the other in the name of civility, especially to the extent that the “other,” in this case indigenous children, represent a threat to total claim to both nation and land, or “motherland.”

Focusing on the Euro-American imperatives to tame what I call the ‘trickster sexuality’ of the Indian, and the threat its ambiguity and unfixity posed to colonial epistemologies and ideologies, I explored the violent establishment of binary gender structures that ordered indigenous bodies into girl bodies and boy bodies. I began to analyze some of the disciplinary modes of control through which compulsive heterosexuality was first established and then violently transgressed as a mode of violence

⁶² “Phil Fontaine’s Shocking Testimony on Sexual Abuse.” *CBC Archives*, 30 Oct. 1990, www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/phil-fontaines-shocking-testimony-of-sexual-abuse. Accessed 6 July 2015.

that first creates as masculine, and then repeatedly emasculates, indigenous boys, while taking as available the sexuality of indigenous girls. This analysis carried me into a consideration of the ways in which the interruption of child sexuality severs kinship, alienating opposite-sex siblings from one another by sexualizing and binarising/hierarchizing their genital difference. From here, my work in the chapter discusses the ways in which Indigenous sexuality was constituted as unruly and violent, a formulation that authorized intensifying modes of bodily control, for instance: nailing shut windows so that students could not slip into the opposite gender's dormitory. The chapter tracks a moment in Canadian history in which homosexuality was illegal, a dynamic that worked itself out in the IRS through the elision of the sexual abuse of children by abusers of the same sex. Rather than confronting the abusive nature of the sexual encounter, the response from authorities was to punish the homosexual act under laws prohibiting same-sex sexual relations. This mode of discipline effaced the predatory nature of the abuse of children by same-sex abusers.

My research into the joining of sexuality and abuse indicates that, overwhelmingly, children who were sexually abused in the IRS enacted these same patterns of abuse on other children. My argument is that this cyclicity indicates a movement in which Indigenous sexuality emerges explicitly as a site of negativity, a site of non-futurity, a site of the death drive. Sexuality thus becomes a facet of everyday life that is made to repeat without positive value. It is non-generative, indicating a form of social and cultural non-viability and dysfunction, a form of aggressiveness turned inwards. As they intervened into Indigenous lives, Indian residential schools operated as machines for producing monotonous day-to-day sameness, producing intractable patterns of lack: lack of food, sanitation, care, kindness, resources, education, hope. Over and over, the project of residential schooling evacuated Indigenous childhood of agentive sexual exploration, self-identification, expression, futurity, optimism. My central claim here is that the statistically significant number of abused students who in turn abused other students, and abused themselves, is a central *techne* of the colonial project, teaching Indigenous children to grow into subjects who understand themselves to be other, to count themselves out of holding stakes in the future.

This chapter represents my first attempt to reckon with sexuality in the context of this project. I am more accustomed to writing about the level of signification in which sexuality and sexual difference make meaning. This chapter, therefore, proved difficult to begin. As it turns out, the central focus of the dissertation slowly tipped toward sexuality until it became quite clear that sexuality is the link that connects what initially seemed to me to be discreet sites: death, childhood/the child, and the death drive. In future uptakes of this project, I will need to begin with a robust engagement with literatures surrounding childhood and sexuality, and the drives. I am particularly interested in exploring the work of Melanie Klein, whose notion of aggressiveness and whose psychoanalytic work on children fell beyond the scope of my analysis. It is intriguing, in this context to consider that strange psychoanalytic concept, the ‘inner child.’ Serge Leclaire’s approach to this phantasmatic creature, as I discuss in chapter 4, is relentless violence and repeated killing. I would be very interested to explore in further detail what it means to take his claim seriously, that “we all have a child we must kill” (4).

The third chapter, “Bodies out of Time: ‘the Indian,’ ‘the Child,’ and the Racialized Logics of Futurity” examines the conjunction of time and death as they converge upon the Indigenous child in the IRS. The chapter begins with an account of four Indigenous boys who, in January 1937, ran away from the Lejac Indian Residential School, freezing to death on Fraser Lake within a quarter mile of their village. Through an interpretive engagement with an archival fragment—a newspaper article—that tells of their death, I read the figure of the runaway as one whose act of flight/bodily refusal makes visible the colonial politicization of the Indigenous body as anachronistic, as body/ies *out of time*.

The chapter argues that the “the Indian” was so easy to separate from “the Child” because in Western thought the two are already and always considered to operate on different temporal registers. This trope—that the Indian is already outside of history—is amplified by anthropological formalization through ethnographic method, the here/now of the European, and the then/there time-zone of the non-European native other. The story I read in the traces of the four boys points to the antipathies towards Indigenous life encysted in the supposedly neutral categories of ‘the norm’ and the ‘body politic.’ Examining charges that Indigenous people must either learn how to “stand alone” or else be assimilated, I

read two instances in which the federal government goes to great lengths to ensure that “essential traits” of the “Indian race” are recapitulated, laminated more indelibly into Indianness, making it impossible for the “Indian race” to stand independently outside the body politic. The first of these instances is the withholding of food from a group of already malnourished members of the Cree First Nation in hopes of gathering data about the effects of starvation. The second are the durational/longitudinal nutritional experiments at six residential schools on the efficacy of vitamin-enhanced flour on First Nations children, experiments undertaken without the consent or knowledge of the test subjects. In both instances, the very traits that had led to government intervention—“improvidence and inertia,” for example—were ultimately shown to be a direct result of previous interventions designed to make the existing problems worse. The pattern across these and related instances lead me to theorize that for the colonial project of nation-building, Indigenous lives *did* and *do* matter, if only as a site for the renewal of social relations of disposability and subordination in the service of protecting and serving the norm.

In writing this chapter on the four boys who froze to death in minus thirty-degree weather, I felt pulled towards my own phenomenological experience of cold, which I could not help but project into the space of disappearance the frozen surface of Fraser Lake. As an adult iceclimber with all the advantages of modern equipment and a well nourished, highly trained body, my policy is to cancel outdoor activity in the winter if the temperature falls below minus seventeen degrees. Below this ‘hypothermic’ threshold, the ice shatters like glass, proving next to impossible to climb, and I am unable to prevent my fingers and toes from freezing. My breath freezes in the air, hovering above me in a cloud of ice crystals; I am utterly unable to stay warm. From this phenomenological perspective, my body aches at the prospect of crossing a frozen lake at night, in the dark, with woefully insufficient clothing in minus thirty-degree temperatures. As I worked on this chapter, it just so happened that I travelled home to Western Canada in early January, and so I made my own version of what Spivak has called *an act of private piety*, enacting my own crossing of a northern ice-bound lake. In this journey, two things happened almost immediately. First, having planned to follow my snowshoe tracks back home again, I failed to mark the space in the trees from which I had entered the lake. By the time I had made it halfway across the lake, the wind had

scoured any trace I had left behind. Unable to find the tracks in the snow leading me back home, I found myself completely lost. It took hours and hours to find my way back, aching with exhaustion from walking only five miles or so in the snow. The boys had made it nearly eight. For John Jack, this was one more mile than years he had lived. Second, as I neared treeline on the opposite side of the lake, I was followed by either a wolf or coyote. When I backtracked, she backtracked, matching my trajectory exactly. She did not come close enough for me to discern what she was (coyote or wolf) but she ghosted my path for some time, and her tracks interlaced with mine, driving me away from the trees and back into the center of the lake. Her waiting presence activated some deep and waiting fear and I felt impossibly small and defenseless. I *was* small and defenseless. The density of what I needed to move through in this chapter left no space for this personal reflection, and it seemed out of step with the polemic the work overall enacts. I did not want to overshadow the tenuous disappearance of the four boys the chapter considers with my own narrative presence, over-marking their bodies with yet more colonial writing. In other words, I wanted to consider their remains without ontologizing them, without colonizing them. Yet, something of this experience continues to pull at me; certainly it shaped the writing of the chapter, in ways I am still working through.

As I consider what has been left out of the account the third chapter offers, I am brought back to what I continue to find so deeply moving, even wounding, which is the detail of the foot minus its boot, and the boy who removed his jacket—in minus thirty-degree weather—to lay his head on it, to curl up and fall asleep. As I state in the chapter, this story of escape that ended in frozen death prompted the writing of this dissertation. It was the first scene I wrote about it, and yet something of it continues to escape my ability to render it. The details of the absent shoe and the misused jacket seem to hover over the account, details that cannot be assimilated, that signal as odd or unexplainable, touching, tragic. Contemporary medical discourse names the strange removal of clothing in the late stages of hypothermia—which is the preferred term in our current moment for ‘freezing to death’—“paradoxical undressing.” Scientists theorize that those last moments of consciousness are marked with a sudden rush of blood to the extremities when muscles contracting peripheral blood vessels become exhausted and give

up, relaxing. This causes the body to feel overheated, accounting, perhaps, for the phenomenon of the removal of warm clothing in sub-freezing temperatures. This behavior is linked to another occurrence called “terminal burrowing” in which a hypothermic person suddenly begins to dig with his or her hands, straight down into the earth. Also called “hide and die syndrome,” an afflicted person enters an enclosed area or digs into the earth for protection. Very soon after this, the major organs in the body fail. Death occurs.

Considering this wildly unhelpful impulse to throw much-needed insulating clothing away, to dig into the ground for comfort and escape, I am brought up short by the awareness: *these are children*. Further, they are children whose own bodily messaging betrays them in the end by making them feel hot when, in actuality, they are dying from cold. Suddenly the distance or space between the bodies on the ice, their close proximity seems so important. I wonder if the older boy(s) made a decision to stay with the younger boy(s). If the biggest or oldest had gone ahead alone, if they had left the boy who was only seven-years-old behind, might they have made it the last quarter of a mile? There is something in this question, the answer of which is ungraspable, which seems to reverberate through the name of the phenomenon, “hide and die syndrome,” that makes me think of ‘hide and seek,’ the child’s game that is not unlike *fort-da*. The closeness between this mode of death and this mode of playing with absence makes me (think of) despair. I cannot help but connect this account of death by freezing to the other mechanisms of bodily torture by which the IRS reckoned with the unruly and undisciplined bodily child.

In my early writings on the IRS, I was acutely interested in the position of the Indigenous child in a moment in Canadian history that was both colonial and biopolitical. I theorized that in the body of the “Indian” child we can detect an uneasiness towards the recalcitrance of the undisciplined, the unruly raw material of biopower that has yet to be disciplined into the configurations, rhythms, tempos, and stylized repetitions that must be made to seem natural in order to serve as a location for good liberal subjecthood. While the good subject gives her body over to biopower, the child body resists. It runs away, sickens, embarks on impossible journeys. The child body, with its savage intensities, unruliness, inability to perform with perfect verisimilitude, marks an excess of bodiliness that, in its unruliness, signaled to

colonial figures aiming to tame the wild, civilize the savage, and close the open, as *dangerous*, as *Indian* (as dangerously Indian). The excessive utilization of torture and corporeal punishment in the IRS—the outrageous, gratuitous use of the electric chair at the St. Anne School for instance—indicate to me attempts to restrict the excessiveness, or dangerousness, of Indigenous child bodiliness to the corporeal limits of the children’s bodies themselves. In her seminal book, *The Body in Pain*, Elaine Scarry (1985) writes: “Power is, in it fraudulent as well as its legitimate forms, always based on distance from the body” (46). This is a distance that must be vigilantly maintained, (super)imposed onto certain bodies—bodies who signal as a threat to that Power—whose very corporeality is used to contain them, in so many instances by hurting them. Placing children in an electric chair and flipping the switch is an experience that closes out everything (for the child who sits in it) but the sound of laughter, the uncontrollable flailing of her/his own limbs, and the experience of bodily pain. This kind of enforced closeness with the bodily self makes it impossible for subjects of torture to escape the limits of their own bodies (in pain) long enough to claim the rights considered “natural” to the rational individual, whose status as rational and self-possessed is the condition of possibility for her/his entrance into the social contract/the body politic, and the sheltering rights it offers.

The immediacy of pain (I am still thinking, here, about the children placed into the electric chair) traps the subject in a relationship with her/his own body that allows for no critical distance, that enables no access to power. Scarry writes, searingly: “The person in great pain experiences his own body as the agent of his agony” (47). Not the priest flipping the switch, or the chair itself, or the wind or cold or snow, but her/her *own body*. Like the explosive jolt of heat into the hands and feet—which, in my own experience feels as though one’s fingers are about to explode out of their casing of skin, a pain that has caused me to rip my gloves off and stare at my hands in disbelief—this part of pain is invisible to anyone but the sufferer. However, Scarry writes, “it sometimes becomes visible when a young child or an animal in the first moments of acute distress takes maddening flight, *fleeing from its own body as though it were a part of the environment that could be left behind*” (emph. added 47). When the source of pain is made to be one’s *own body*, there is no possible arc of escape. I think this is what makes reading the scientific

account of paradoxical undressing and terminal burrowing so utterly harrowing in the context in which I offer it here. Not even by burrowing into the earth or lying down to die could the children escape the source of their torment: their own bodies.

The fourth chapter, “Somewhere a Child is Burning: Signification and Death in the Indian Residential School System,” centers on a moment of archival aporia, an account in which school officials dispose of a newborn Aboriginal infant by incinerating her. The account I offer traces the provenance of the testimony into a circularity of citationality; its status, vis-à-vis archival practices of verification and authentication, leads to uncertainty. Accordingly, the chapter asks: what do we do with a kind of archival fragment so incendiary it seems to be torn, not from an archive/from archives, but from history itself? What do we do with a record of burning which, itself, seems to go on burning, that seems, still, to writhe, unclaimed/unclaimable? How does this fragment mean, and perhaps as important, what does it mean in the context of the IRS and its archive(s)?

In this chapter, which mobilizes literary as well as psychoanalytic interpretive strategies, figurations of death emerge not as objects that can be made fully re-present but as densely imbricated effects sedimented through enactments of violence—archival, epistemic, material/corporeal, psychic, discursive—that localize over the figure of Aboriginal childhood and the body of the Aboriginal child. The generative possibilities of these readings lie in productively holding in tension the material weight of colonial archival presence, with what I call archival aporia: all that we feel or know or sense to be missing from authorized accounts of the real. In writing into spaces of disappearance, the writing turns towards the performative, activating the metonymic register, considering some of the aesthetic dimensions of loss and the mythic force of an event so incendiary it seems to burn through notions of ‘the archive itself,’ claiming as it consumes.

A significant intervention I advance in this chapter is the concept I call ‘inconvenient life.’ This is a fantasy of erasure that begins by mythologizing the New World and its occupants as *terra nullius*. In this vision of world-making which, I argue, subtends the colonial-imperial project, any material component of the conquered land that does not immediately offer itself up as ‘useful’ to colonial purposes

is considered to be inconvenient. It does not matter, within the context of Empire and the advancement of Imperial interests, whether or not the material component in question is enflashed (e.g., a human population with claims on ancestral lands), geographical (e.g., a mountain that stands in the way of resource extraction, settlement or navigation), or even a pattern in the weather (e.g., monsoons that wash away crops, drought, extreme heat, extreme cold, polar ice caps that render exploration deadly). All that signifies to the colonial commonsense is that some component of a place (e.g., the ‘New World’), which has been pre-constituted in the European imaginary as already available, as there-to-be-had, is standing in the way of the furthering of Empire and Imperial interests. We must remember that at the time of contact on the North American Continent, European Empires were vying for world conquest and domination, first and foremost, *over one another*. In Canada, this struggle played out most vociferously between the British Empire and the French, with the British emerging victorious, claiming the land and the people on it as *de facto* subject to British sovereignty. In the wake of such a victory, the establishment of a unified colony seemed to be both advantageous and easy—just as soon as the inconvenient features of the conquered land were disposed of, overcome, mastered.

My argument is that this fantasy, that the inconvenient materiality of the New World (its people, their interests, the geography, the weather) could and should be mastered, became the dominant objective of the colonial project. Challenges posed by geography and the weather were met with technological innovation (i.e. the Canadian Pacific Railway, a project that bridged the east to west and enabled the settlement of the Prairie Provinces all the way to the Pacific Northwest). But the inconvenience of the people who peopled what was pre-conceived to be empty land, persisted. When I began to think this problematic state of affairs through the analytic of the death drive, what I perceived is a working out of a mythic desire for absence without remainder, a fantasy of purity, which underwrite the colonial project of worlding. How do I intend to argue that the ‘finding inconvenient’ of the life of the other could intensify to a moment of incendiary violence such as the scene Favel relays? The answer is in the relentless aggressivity of the drive, whose movement *only* intensifies, and it is in the irreducible otherness, the otherness of the other that can never, fully, satisfactorily be eradicated or erased.

The logistical imperatives of eradication rely on the fantasy of killing without remainder, and refer to a mythic temporality in which it is possible to arrive at a future that circles back through a time *before*—before, for instance, the birth of the unwanted, problematic child. This fantasy is in direct confrontation with the laws of linear time, and with the laws of thermodynamics, which state that energy can neither be created nor destroyed, it can only be transferred. Nothing once made can be erased, and while material bodies can be incinerated and spirited into the air *as if* they have disappeared, something always persists. As Derrida writes, *cinders fall*, carving pathways through the air. My argument here is that killing the Indian in the child was always, at least partially, about killing the Indian, a fantasy of repetition without a displacement, repetition with no remainder, repetition that overcomes or masters matters of ‘being’ and ‘absence.’

Inconvenient life is a pattern that I see repeated elsewhere, outside the immediate context of the colonial problem of what to *do* with *so many Indians* who cannot “stand alone” outside the body politic. In fact, the concept first occurred to me in the context of the controversial ruling in the Canadian city of Montréal in 2017 to outlaw certain breeds of dog believed to be inherently aggressive and therefore a risk to the body politic. Specifically, Montréal passed a bill prohibiting the Pit Bull, a broad classification that pulls together American Pit Bull Terrier, American Staffordshire Terrier, American Bully, and Staffordshire Bull Terrier. I found it not only genocidal, but ludicrously impossible to invigilate: any dog believed to have inherited any amount of Pit Bull DNA would have to be evacuated out of the Province, or surrendered for execution. The ruling was so obviously ridiculous it made me wonder what logics buttressed it, what made it seem both logical and persuasive? What occurred to me is that within the paradigm of biopolitics, any threat to the ‘public,’ to the rule of the norm, is considered inherently bad. This is the axiom that underwrites the seemingly paradoxical logic of killing in the name of protecting life that Foucault elaborates as a first principle of biopower. By existing as latent threat to bodies considered worth protecting—i.e. normal, or ‘good citizens’ and *especially* their children—‘Pit Bulls,’ a made-up term that convokes a population by linking together morphological similarities to what are thought to be essential qualities (i.e. ‘aggressive’ ‘unpredictable’ ‘volatile’) threatened social life. For this to make

sense, it is important to remember that in the biopolitical paradigm, life is disaggregated from individual bodies and projected onto populations or groups whose features and proclivities must be managed. In this way, biopolitical governance seems to be less about killing and more about managing flows through mitigating risk before it manifests.⁶³

The ruling to kill passed by the Montréal City Council—for we *must* remember the murderousness that traffics invisibly within terms like ‘euthanize’—seemed to me to be subtended by a profoundly racialized and racializing logic, a logic of genocide that collided with the work I was doing on the *quo animo* of the IRS, that helped me to bridge the distance between the ‘bad,’ ‘dangerous’ animal bodies that must be eradicated to save ‘good’ ‘human’ lives, and ‘bad’ ‘Indian’ bodies that had to be eradicated to save ‘good’ ‘child’ lives.

It seemed to me, observing the debates around the breed ban in Montréal that what would happen is that every once in a while a dog would attack a person—usually a child. Such attacks are very rare, however they receive a tremendous amount of media attention. No matter what dog was involved in the attack, the conversation typically moved on to express concerns with a mythical kind of Pit Bull-like dog who could strike at any moment. It is relevant to the point I am trying to make here to indicate that Pit Bulls have become associated with poor urban black populations (collapsed mythologically into black criminality, who, like the dog associated with them are considered aggressive, driven by libidinal impulses, anti-social, *dangerous*). These bodies are, not uncoincidentally, the ‘inconvenient lives’ of the contemporary US. They are bodies that seem, always, to escape attempts to contain and govern them. They occupy urban districts which, if not for ‘them’ could be gentrified and made safe. In constituting a category like ‘Pit Bull’ morphological similarities believed to be ‘facts’ rooted in biology are linked with corresponding traits believed to be inherent to this ‘race.’ As I watched the scene unfold, it became ‘inconvenient’ for politicians when a dog, especially a Pit Bull, attacked a child, as such events always produced charges of poor governance, lax oversight, and failure to protect good citizens from bad

⁶³ It also speaks to sites (e.g., the border, the TSA check-point) in which all brown bodies are policed *as if* the morphological epidermal fact of brownness indicates membership in a population of “terrorists.”

animals—and, by extension, the people who own them. These charges always involved calls to outlaw the breed. *Wouldn't life in general be better, safer if the bad breed could simply disappear, vanish as though it never was?* In the face of this public pressure politicians are faced with an impossible task: how do you make bodies that already exist illegal? How do you *make them disappear as though they never existed?* The *only* answer is that you need to kill them. You need to kill them *all*. In Montréal this means that any vaguely Pit Bull 'looking' dog is seized and killed. The objective to eradicate, to obliterate the bad race, the inconvenient part of life, through 'disappearing' them is a fantasy that can *only* find satisfaction in gratuitous violence and acts of killing. In the broad imperative to "ban" the "breed" every dog body associated with "Pit Bull" must actually be killed, burned, buried. These material bodies, in their materiality above and beyond the smooth semantic container of "breed ban" must be violently dealt with, killing each of them.

So much more remains to be said on the concept of inconvenient life. And I hope that the detour through animal politics has not taken us too far from the central point I am trying to make. Inconvenient life is dense and difficult; I have only begun to pull the concept apart and have not yet elaborated all of its features. Certainly, it strikes me that the concept implicates the biopolitical, within which its logic to kill in the name of improving life connects with what Foucault describes as a state of perpetual ethnic cleansing. The concept also recruits much of my thinking on the death drive, whose invisible motor-force can only intensify the closer it seems to draw to its unreachable objective of total eradication—eradequation.⁶⁴ An idea that occupies a great deal of my time and energy, I anticipate writing and publishing much more extensively on the concept as it takes shape. In particular, I want to connect the concept with my interpretation of *Fort-da*, in which I see a paradigm that elaborates the drive to mastery

⁶⁴ This is a rather dense and complex neologism that gathers 'eradication' and 'adequation' to align the kind of desire that subtends signification itself—the desire for subject and object to come together in complete adequation. Adequation is a central component of Lacanian rhetoric scholar Christian O. Lundberg's account of the context for meaning-making. For Lundberg, adequation is that which covers over the constitutive lack around which subjectivity and communication orbits. For a much fuller account of adequation and its role in communication, see: Lundberg, Christian O. *Lacan in Public: Psychoanalysis and the Science of Rhetoric*. Tualoosa: U of Alabama P, 2012.

as a drive to master absence through increasingly (compulsively) escalating forms of violence. I know that this interpretation of *fort-da* is distinctly different from a very large corpus of work that interprets the game as a child's attempt to gain emotional control over his mother's absence. Because of the significant scholarship that interprets the game in this way, I have not ventured my own, different, interpretation here. I am very interested, however, in cultivating this work, elaborating the game as an essential model of the death drive, or at least as a site in which Freud indicates that the death drive appears. This model of the death drive, I want to argue, has much to tell us about the aggressivity of the social bond, and the constitutive existential lack around which language, culture, violence, and sexuality orbit. I believe this to be a rich site for analysis into the problematic and difficult dynamics of colonial governance as it played out in everyday life, as well as broader conversations on colonial worldings.

Language Matters: Representing Sexuality, Violence, and the Child

What I want to do, by way of bridging to the end, is proceed with a consideration of the chapter's first epigraph, in which Toni Morrison writes:

I focused, therefore, on how something as grotesque as the demonization of an entire race could take root inside the most delicate member: a child ... One problem was centering the weight of the ... inquiry on so delicate and vulnerable a character could smash her and lead readers into the comfort of pitying her rather than into an interrogation of themselves and the smashing ... The other problem, of course, was language. Holding the despising glance while sabotaging it was difficult (188).

In this passage, Toni Morrison (1993) reflects on the critical framing of her novel, *The Bluest Eye*. The book, which she began in 1965 (it was first published in 1970) and speaks to what she names, "the disabling consequences of accepting rejection as legitimate, as self-evident" (x). I encountered Morrison's novel deep into the writing of the dissertation's fourth chapter. In reading it, I was struck, over and over, by a telescopic sense of closeness to the content: the violent unworlding of a child through sexual violence she cannot understand and cannot begin to speak, the recapitulation of this violence/violation through social complicity, and the structural power dynamics that work themselves out on and through

her body, at the expense of her bodily and psychic survival. I felt a kinship with Morrison's authorly impulse to shatter her representation of this unworlding into fragments to forestall a reader's facile identification with the novel's narrative voice. I resonated with what I interpret as her desire to hold the site of trauma in a different location from the language used to describe it, with the struggle to hold the silent center (the center silent), to shape that silence while breaking it. I identified with what I read as an ethical effort on Morrison's part to maintain both the humanness and the monstrosity of the people who trashed the child. I took courage from her ability to remain interested and horrified, and by her refusal to shelter her protagonist, Pecola, from enshatterment within the prose, to recuperate her, to save her from psychic death, as much as she might have wanted to.

In drawing these affiliations between my work here and Morrison's in *The Bluest Eye*, my aim in no way to suggest that our work is the same. My aim, rather, is to mark the ways in which her writing has shaped my own. In marking this influence, I must also mark that my doing so is not a reading that takes every site of non-white pain as identical. It is not my intention in my reference of Morrison to elide Pecola with the indigenous children my dissertation considers. I am mindful not to enact a collapse of the history of chattel slavery in the US and the consequent racialization of contemporary American life, with the complex, intersectional, diverse, and distinct histories of Canada's First Peoples. Doing so would be to do injury to the specificities of both. Furthermore, Americanists Jodi Byrd and Lisa Lowe, among others (e.g., Aileen Moreton-Robinson), caution against conflating Indigenous histories with the history of American slaves as in their view, the important relationships between slavery and indigenous dispossession have largely been pushed out of political and critical discourse. For Byrd (2011) in particular, prevailing understandings of race and racialization within postcolonial, area, and queer studies depend on, what she terms, "an historical aphasia of the conquest of indigenous peoples" (xxvi). She cautions that contemporary conversations on race that forget the disenfranchisement of First Peoples can risk deeming colonialism in North America resolved. To this point, Moreton-Robinson (2008) argues, "the question of how anyone came to be white or black in the United States is inextricably tied to the dispossession of the original owners and the assumption of white possession" (84). Mindful not to enact

such collapse, what I am aiming to do with and through Morrison is to hold distinct the sites at which her writing and mine take place, marking them as different, though in some ways mutually inflected by theme and history.⁶⁵ My hope is that by placing these texts side-by-side, some of the mythical attributes of sexuality, death, childhood, and the transmutation of racial self-loathing into/onto actual children can be usefully considered.

Morrison's novel dramatizes the very fragility—psychic, physical, sexual—the very descent into 'non-being,' and the reverberating forms of enshatterment that emanate from the heart of the IRS and its mandate. In the first pages of the novel, Morrison conjoins sex with death, innocence and faith with lust and despair. This concise joining resonates with Irene Favel's account of a baby born to a young girl who was raped by a priest, in which the baby is born and immediately trashed, disposed of through incineration as if no more (or less) than an insignificant scrap of debris. These stories, Morrison's and my own, hold a silence at their heart, in which children shatter, in which something vital to them/in them is killed. Morrison calls this "psychological murder" (x).

Morrison writes, in her novel's preface, that her interest is in the tragic and disabling consequences of accepting rejection as legitimate, as self-evident, and how these damaging forces enter the life of the one least likely to withstand them (x). Her most resonant observation, in the context of the present work, is that: "some victims of powerful self-loathing turn out to be dangerous, violent, reproducing the enemy who has humiliated them over and over. Others surrender their identity; melt into a structure that delivers the strong persona they lack. Most others, however, grow beyond it" (x). "But," she writes: "there are some who collapse, silently, anonymously, with no voice to express or acknowledge it. They are invisible" (ibid). All of these permutations of the effects of abuse play out in the account of the IRS I have offered: In the cycle of abjection and victimization wherein sexually abused children abuse other children; in the slow death and the epidemics of runaways; in the setting of fires, the deaths from disease and malnutrition; in the resilience of survivors, some of whom brought the class-action lawsuit

⁶⁵ *The Bluest Eye* takes place in 1941, which is within five years in either direction of the major scenes of violence considered in the third and fourth chapter of the dissertation as well as the scene considered in chapter two that features the St Anne School electric chair.

against the federal government which prompted the TRC investigation into the history of Indian residential schooling. All of these outcomes share elements of the horrific; yet I am haunted by the invisibility of the children who, perhaps like Morrison's Pecola, broke, burned, froze, *disappeared*. I am haunted by a single phrase from Morrison's forward to the novel where she writes of Pecola: "her passivity made her narrative void" (xi). Morrison's sense of how Pecola's narrative is made "void" connects with the lineage of feminist psychoanalytic scholarship that demands that materiality, the materiality of the feminine, of the female body, be taken into account in formulations of negation and lack. These concerns are demonstrated by Spivak's searing account of the political and linguistic history of widow sacrifice in British India, and enacted by Mendieta burning Eliade's book that claimed as it effaced, "singing" the question: What does it mean to live as a narrative void?

Passing Returns: Contemporary Stagings of Historical Violences

What does it mean to live as a narrative void? This question carries me into a consideration of the generative destructiveness of colonial worldings in the context of gendered, racial, sexual violence in the present. A recursive event, this violence is a worlding that marks over with sexual violence the missing (but not absent) bodies of Aboriginal women and girls, as, under its erotic and obscuring auspices, they seem to vanish into nothingness. In the contemporary moment in Canada, the Indigenous woman is a poignant site of de-futuring, erasure, sexual violence, loss, enshatterment. Her persistent living lives against the force of (a) violent caesura. And, although the figure of Indigenous femininity extends beyond the purview of the work at hand, in the current moment in Canada, this—*she*—is a site of intense, intensifying violence, towards which the present work opens into in ways that beckon, that insist upon recognition. In the contemporary moment the Aboriginal woman in Canada is a lightning-rod for displaced/deferred (post)colonial aggressiveness.

The psychic, social, personal, and political density and death-driven psychic dimensions of this aggressiveness conjoin with corporeal violence to produce a vicious circle effected by the impossibility of eradicating the problematic difference of the other/of 'inconvenient otherness.' In my analysis of the burning infant, I indicated that what remains, particularly in the eyes of the clergy who took part in the

event, as well as the young Aboriginal woman (Favel) who witnessed it, are the social relations of subordination indexed by the presence of the infant (sexual domination by the male, imperial, priest—*Father*—of the young Aboriginal schoolgirl) and the burning of the infant (the absolute privilege to kill and to place under erasure any trace of that killing). This privilege to kill, to designate certain bodies as unworthy of protection and certain lives expendable, extends from the site of the IRS, one institutional form among many others aimed at decimating Aboriginal lives and livelihoods and eradicating any claims to Indigenous sovereignty by obliterating Aboriginal leadership and families. I do not have the space here to rigorously consider the nexus of violence and death that has become laminated onto the body of the Aboriginal woman in Canada, the dense ways in which these bodies are over-exposed to sexual violence, death, disappearance. I can only mark that the same colonial ideology that viewed Indigenous bodies as fragments of inconvenient life became sutured to the lethal masculinist itinerary of conquest. In conjunction they disprized and made illegal Aboriginal motherhood and impoverished Aboriginal kinship and family practices and rituals. These forces now hover above, haunt, the site of Indigenous femininity. In the contemporary moment, these are lives that matter often only in the sense that they underwrite the conjunction of performative violence with non-futurity, securing a social relation of disposability that guarantees that the violent acts of conquest can continue to play out on the bodies of women for whom people in positions of authority simply failed to look, after they (were) ‘disappeared.’

This dissertation has been an attempt to pull apart some of the dense psychic, social, and political complexities encysted with the warrant to sacrifice to save, to kill the Indian in the child. What are the political stakes in doing this work now? What are the uses of history for the present? Is the relation between sacrifice and saving undone by this labor, or is its logic made more persuasive by my unpacking of its subtending mythos and truth claims? And what of the archive? The project follows Elizabeth Povinelli’s (2002) focus on “who and what” is being recuperated from “the breach and shadow” (73) in the writing of IRS history and the colonial history of Canada. In such explorations, the limits and possibilities of my scholarly interpretation go hand in hand with an obligation to what Povinelli calls, a “project of radical interpretation” (ibid). With such an obligation in mind, the exigencies of postcolonial

archival retrieval return us to what Arondekar calls “the detritus of a colonial landscape” (20). This rendering of colonial landscapes returns me to the optic effect of watching IRS records of admission blur together on the microfiche reel until I felt as though I was watching the black and white landscape of a northern prairie from the window of a passing train. It returns me to the bitter cold of the Winnipeg winter when I visited the as yet empty archives at the Truth and Reconciliation Research Center at the University of Manitoba in December, 2015; it returns me to the space of frozen water upon which the boys of my third chapter laid down to die. It returns me to the art and the stolen totem poles I saw in the Natural History Museum in Ottawa, and have not yet found a way to write about; and, it returns me to the raw and ragged outline of my own family of origin, scattered through the Canadian prairies. It does no good to pretend that archival work is not embodied, that it does not implicate some theory subjectivity and bodies, of what bodies are, what they do, where they go when they seem to vanish: these are the precarious terms that haunt all historiography.

The dissertation has aimed to contribute to the ongoing work of truth and reconciliation through a piece of work that considers what archives are and do, and what the IRS and its mandate inaugurated, formed, and formalized through its state-authorized regimes of killing and civilizing. My intention has been to chip away at the paradigms that viewed the enshatterment of children as not only necessary, but also desirable. In doing so, I have hoped to intervene into contemporary apathies towards the violences that are rendering Aboriginal women’s lives disposable and their deaths ungrievable. Although the contemporary moment, marked by multicultural liberal rhetorics, has shifted the semantic operations away from terms like “Indian” and “Indianness” (e.g., the Federal Department of Indian Affairs is now the Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs) the antipathy and contempt that trafficked within the term remains. Unanchored from its semantic referent it goes on producing violence. It is the work of the contemporary moment to follow this violence where it seems most to disappear, to perform analysis in the most precarious sites and everyday scenes. The dissertation has tried to adhere to Hartman’s focuses on forms of domination and the violent complexity that unfolds in such everyday scenes. My own analysis of Indigenous child suffering attempts to locate the lethality of colonial worldings where only the barest

outline of presence remains. By striving to follow the violence colonial archives have endeavored to palliate, my aim is to contribute to the legacy of Hartman's call to write the mundane scenes of suffering of bodies, to treat the sites of bodily enshatterment without ontologizing remains, or over-exposing already abject bodies to the same world-defining violence that attempted to shatter them.

In a moment within the critical humanities, marked, perhaps even partly determined, by the ascendancy of materiality and affect, certain critics have suggested that postcolonial studies is running out of steam. In 2015, Oliver Belcher observed: "For a long time postcolonial studies was an innovative force with a lot of energy and excitement around it, but towards the end of the 2000's, it seemed to have either lost steam or dispersed into a variety of 'perspectives' (e.g., postcolonial sciences and technology studies, postcolonial feminism, film, literature, etc.), perhaps undermining any currency" ("Border"). For Belcher, the politicized interrogation of colonial categories and knowledges seem to have run their course, ceding to studies in materialities and affects. My dissertation makes the claim that critical engagements with colonial and postcolonial analytics are pressingly necessary in the contemporary moment. I see this dissertation work as contributing to scholarship by thinkers like Povinelli and Stoler, whose work insists that colonial histories shape the present. They are, as Stoler comments, "pressingly in demand" as, she continues, "one could argue that colonialisms have a durability and presence as charged sites of contestation and contemporary political debates in a more explicit way than ever before" (ibid). Following Stoler, the dissertation has aimed to extend a rendering of colonial history that destabilizes assumptions that we know what the articulation of colonial pasts and presents look like. By emphasizing the subterranean quality of the violence and aggressivity that underwrites colonial imperatives and secures postcolonial configurations of subjectivity, sovereignty, and social relations, my aim is to approach these taken-for-granted articulations anew. In so doing, I have tried to suggest that the turn to archives in the 1990's following Derrida's *Archive Fever*, is a move that still promises, that still beckons, a gesture which yields more than we have, in our fatigue and in our fever, managed to exhaust.

One of the important objectives of the dissertation has been to trouble the series of taken-for-granted-principles that order our existence through claims on what is and, correspondingly, what should

be. Reading death as a text, I have hoped to locate some of the claims on being and self that underwrite what most would simply call the ontological. In so doing I adhere to Spivak's work on subalternity, aiming to show that claims on being are always ideological, and therefore always political—and therefore always to the benefit of some at the expense of others. So while I have not ventured a definition of “the child” in a work that is explicitly about childhood and the figure of the child, I have tried to leave some space for us to hold close the memories of our own childhood and the children we love (or perhaps hate, or perhaps feel towards complexly, the inner child we are persecuted by, that we must relentlessly kill or seek to destroy) while remaining conscious of how easy it is to overwrite the child's kinetic life-force with our own narratives and regrets and nostalgic longing.

The preceding analysis has focused on the conjunction of death, childhood/the child, and sexuality. Analyzing this conjunction was not easy; without psychoanalysis and some of the very provocative ways in which queer theory has warped and extended psychoanalytic thought, I would certainly not have gotten very far. This is not to say that I think the figure of the Indigenous child is a queer figure, or to suggest that the figure of queerness is an easily applicable analytic to my research. In fact, I find that there are more difficulties than possibilities within the project of claiming sexualities on behalf of bodies who are gone, certainly when one is a theorist whose domain is a colonial archive that has almost nothing to say about the conjunction of subalternity and sexuality. Anjali Arondekar writes, on the topic of reaching into colonial archives towards (queer) sexuality: “Can an empty archive also be full?” (1). This is a question and a project I am only beginning to think through. The dissertation has found certain queer theories of sexuality (e.g., Lee Edelman's conjoining of queer theory and the death drive) as a tremendously powerful fulcrum with which to brace open a space within archival narratives of recursive patterns/cycles of sexual abuse. In doing so I have marked some of the ways in which sexuality was made non-generative; made to indicate social and cultural non-viability, dysfunction, aggressiveness, and bodily self-betrayal. What I have tried to show in so doing is that, as they intervened into Indigenous lives, Indian residential schools operated as machines for producing monotonous day-to-day sameness, producing intractable patterns of lack: lack of food, sanitation, care, kindness, resources, education, hope.

Over and over, the project of residential schooling evacuated Indigenous childhood of agentive sexual exploration, self-identification, expression, futurity, optimism. My claim here is that the statistically significant number of abused students who in turn abused other students, and abused themselves, is a central *techné* of the colonial project, teaching Indigenous children to grow into subjects who understand themselves to be other, to count themselves out of holding stakes in the future. The colonial project counts on this to continue across generations: a great project of unhoming, orphaning, non-futurity. This dissertation hopes to enervate, even if only in a very small way, the momentum of this itinerary.

Residential Schools/Pensionnats	Location/Emplacement	Church/Église
Federal Hostel - Belcher Islands	South Camp, Flaherty Island	N
Federal Hostel - Broughton Island/Qikiqtarjuaq	Qikiqtarjuaq	N
Federal Hostel - Cambridge Bay	Cambridge Bay	N
Federal Hostel - Cape Dorset/Kinngait	Kinngait	N
Federal Hostel - Eskimo Point/Arviat	Arviat	N
Federal Hostel - Frobisher Bay (Ukkivik)	Iqaluit	N
Federal Hostel - Igloodik/Iglulik	Igloodik/Iglulik	N
Federal Hostel - Lake Harbour	Kimmirut	N
Federal Hostel - Pangnirtung (Pangnirtang)	Pangnirtung/Panniqtuuq	N
Federal Hostel - Pond Inlet/Mittimatalik	Mittimatalik	N

Ontario

Bishop Horden Hall (Moose Fort, Moose Factory)	Moose Factory Island	A
Cecilia Jeffrey (Kenora, Shoal Lake)	Kenora	P
Chapleau (St. Joseph's, St. John's)	Chapleau	A
Cristal Lake High School	Cristal Lake	M
Fort Frances (St. Margaret's)	Fort Frances	C
Fort William (St. Joseph's)	Fort William	C
McIntosh (Kenora)	McIntosh	C
Mohawk Institute	Brantford	A
Mount Elgin (Muncey, St. Thomas)	Muncey	U
Pelican Lake (Pelican Falls)	Sioux Lookout	A
Poplar Hill	Poplar Hill	M
St. Anne's (Fort Albany)	Fort Albany	C
St. Mary's (Kenora, St. Anthony's)	Kenora	C
Shingwauk	Sault Ste. Marie	A
Spanish Boys' School (Charles Garnier, St. Joseph's, Wikwemikong Industrial)	Spanish	C
Spanish Girls' School (St. Joseph's, St. Peter's, St. Anne's, Wikwemikong Industrial)	Spanish	C
Stirland Lake High School	Stirland Lake	M

Québec

Amos (St. Marc-de-Figuery)	Amos	C
Fort George (St. Phillip's)	Fort George	A
Fort George (St. Joseph's Mission, Residence Couture, Sainte-Thérèse-de-l'Enfant- Jésus)	Fort George	C
Federal Hostel - George River	Kangirsualujuaq	N
Federal Hostel - Great Whale River (Poste-de-la-Baleine, Kuujaraapik)	Kuujuaaraapik/Whapmaguastui	N
Federal Hostel - Payne Bay (Bellin)	Kangirsuk	N
Federal Hostel - Port Harrison (Inoucdjouac, Innoucdouac)	Inukjuak	N
La Tuque	La Tuque	A
Point Bleue	Pointe-Bleue	C
Sept-Îles (Seven Islands, Notre Dame, Malotenam)	Sept-Îles	C

Residential Schools/Pensionnats	Location/Emplacement	Church/Église
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Saskatchewan

Battleford	Battleford	A
Beauval (Lac la Plonge)	Beauval	C
Cote Improved Federal Day School	Kamsack	U
Crowstand	Kamsack	P
File Hills	Balcarres	U
Fort Pelly	Fort Pelly	C
Gordon's Gordon's Reserve	Punnichy	A
Lac La Ronge	Lac La Ronge	A
Lebret (Qu'Appelle, Whitecalf, St. Paul's High School)	Lebret	C
Marieval (Cowessess, Crooked Lake)	Cowessess Reserve	C
Muscowequan (Lestock, Touchwood)	Lestock	C
Onion Lake	Onion Lake	A
Prince Albert (Onion Lake, St. Alban's, All Saints, St. Barnabas, Lac La Ronge)	Prince Albert	A
Regina	Regina	P
Round Lake	Broadview	U
St. Anthony's (Onion Lake, Sacred Heart)	Onion Lake	C
St. Michael's (Duck Lake)	Duck Lake	C
St. Phillip's	Kamsack	C
Sturgeon Landing (Guy Hill, Manitoba)	Sturgeon Landing	C
Thunderchild (Delmas, St. Henri)	Delmas	C

Yukon

Carcross (Chooulta)	Carcross	A
Coudert Hall (Whitehorse Hostel/Student Residence, Yukon Hall)	Whitehorse	C
St. Paul's Hostel (Dawson City)	Dawson	A
Shingle Point (St. John's)	Shingle Point	A
Whitehorse Baptist (Lee Mission)	Whitehorse	B
Yukon Hall (Whitehorse/Protestant Hostel)	Whitehorse	N

Church / Église

A = Anglican / Anglicane
 B = Baptist / Baptiste
 C = Catholic / Catholique
 M = Mennonite / Mennonite
 N = Non-denominational / Non-confessionnelle
 P = Presbyterian / Presbytérienne
 U = United / Unie

Residential Schools/Pensionnats	Location/Emplacement	Church/Église
Federal Hostel - Belcher Islands	South Camp, Flaherty Island	N
Federal Hostel - Broughton Island/Qikiqtarjuaq	Qikiqtarjuaq	N
Federal Hostel - Cambridge Bay	Cambridge Bay	N
Federal Hostel - Cape Dorset/Kinngait	Kinngait	N
Federal Hostel - Eskimo Point/Arviat	Arviat	N
Federal Hostel - Frobisher Bay (Ukkivik)	Iqaluit	N
Federal Hostel - Igloodik/Iglulik	Igloodik/Iglulik	N
Federal Hostel - Lake Harbour	Kimmirut	N
Federal Hostel - Pangnirtung (Pangnirtang)	Pangnirtung/Panniqtuuq	N
Federal Hostel - Pond Inlet/Mittimatalik	Mittimatalik	N

Ontario

Bishop Horden Hall (Moose Fort, Moose Factory)	Moose Factory Island	A
Cecilia Jeffrey (Kenora, Shoal Lake)	Kenora	P
Chapleau (St. Joseph's, St. John's)	Chapleau	A
Cristal Lake High School	Cristal Lake	M
Fort Frances (St. Margaret's)	Fort Frances	C
Fort William (St. Joseph's)	Fort William	C
McIntosh (Kenora)	McIntosh	C
Mohawk Institute	Brantford	A
Mount Elgin (Muncey, St. Thomas)	Muncey	U
Pelican Lake (Pelican Falls)	Sioux Lookout	A
Poplar Hill	Poplar Hill	M
St. Anne's (Fort Albany)	Fort Albany	C
St. Mary's (Kenora, St. Anthony's)	Kenora	C
Shingwauk	Sault Ste. Marie	A
Spanish Boys' School (Charles Garnier, St. Joseph's, Wikwemikong Industrial)	Spanish	C
Spanish Girls' School (St. Joseph's, St. Peter's, St. Anne's, Wikwemikong Industrial)	Spanish	C
Stirland Lake High School	Stirland Lake	M

Québec

Amos (St. Marc-de-Figuery)	Amos	C
Fort George (St. Phillip's)	Fort George	A
Fort George (St. Joseph's Mission, Residence Couture, Sainte-Thérèse-de-l'Enfant- Jésus)	Fort George	C
Federal Hostel - George River	Kangirsualujuaq	N
Federal Hostel - Great Whale River (Poste-de-la-Baleine, Kuujaraapik)	Kuujuaraapik/Whapmaguastui	N
Federal Hostel - Payne Bay (Bellin)	Kangirsuk	N
Federal Hostel - Port Harrison (Inoucdjouac, Innoucdouac)	Inukjuak	N
La Tuque	La Tuque	A
Point Bleue	Pointe-Bleue	C
Sept-Îles (Seven Islands, Notre Dame, Malotenam)	Sept-Îles	C

Residential Schools/Pensionnats	Location/Emplacement	Church/Église
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Saskatchewan

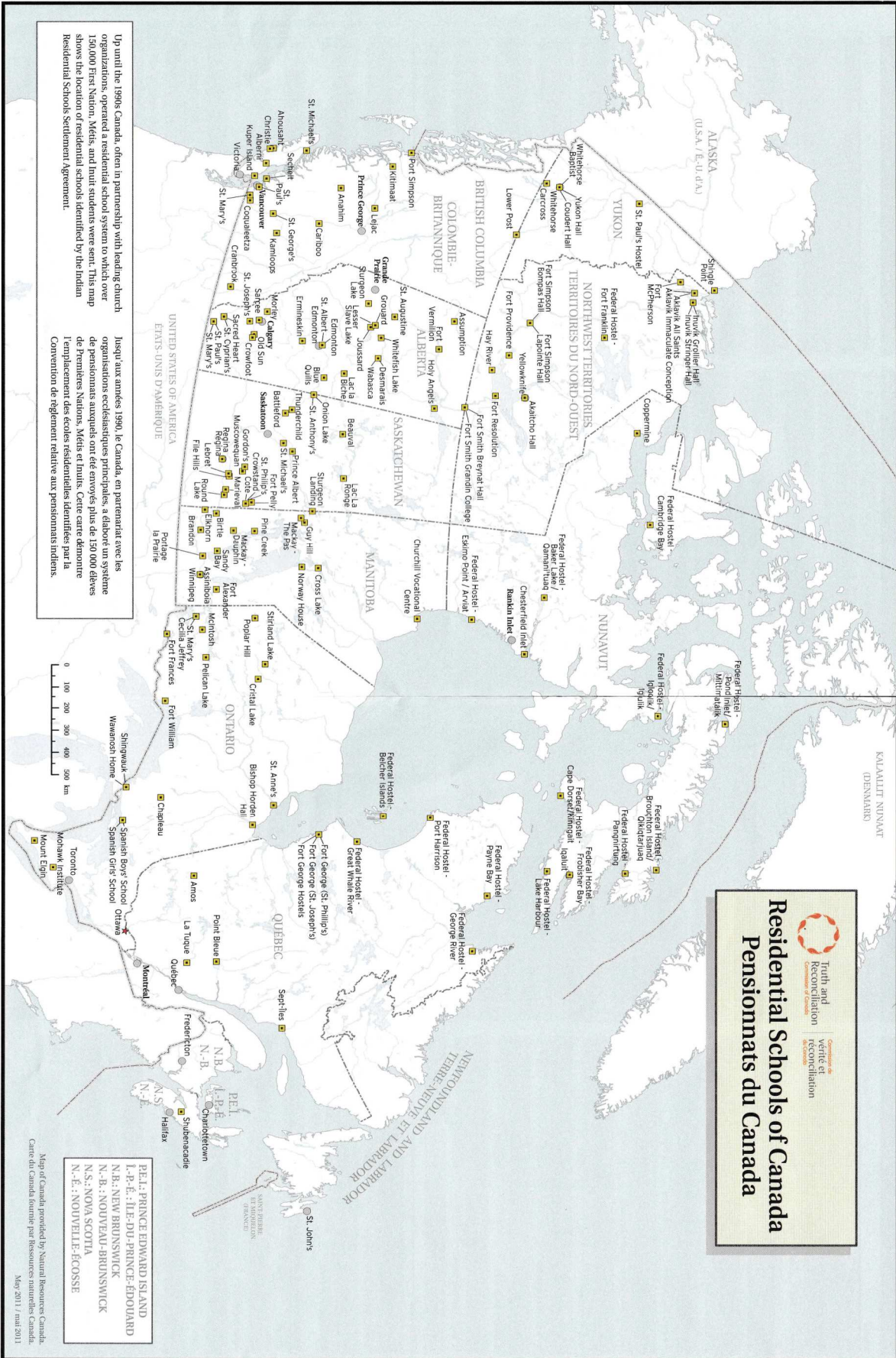
Battleford	Battleford	A
Beauval (Lac la Plonge)	Beauval	C
Cote Improved Federal Day School	Kamsack	U
Crowstand	Kamsack	P
File Hills	Balcarres	U
Fort Pelly	Fort Pelly	C
Gordon's Gordon's Reserve	Punnichy	A
Lac La Ronge	Lac La Ronge	A
Lebret (Qu'Appelle, Whitecalf, St. Paul's High School)	Lebret	C
Marieval (Cowessess, Crooked Lake)	Cowessess Reserve	C
Muscowequan (Lestock, Touchwood)	Lestock	C
Onion Lake	Onion Lake	A
Prince Albert (Onion Lake, St. Alban's, All Saints, St. Barnabas, Lac La Ronge)	Prince Albert	A
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St. Michael's (Duck Lake)	Duck Lake	C
St. Phillip's	Kamsack	C
Sturgeon Landing (Guy Hill, Manitoba)	Sturgeon Landing	C
Thunderchild (Delmas, St. Henri)	Delmas	C

Yukon

Carcross (Chooulta)	Carcross	A
Coudert Hall (Whitehorse Hostel/Student Residence, Yukon Hall)	Whitehorse	C
St. Paul's Hostel (Dawson City)	Dawson	A
Shingle Point (St. John's)	Shingle Point	A
Whitehorse Baptist (Lee Mission)	Whitehorse	B
Yukon Hall (Whitehorse/Protestant Hostel)	Whitehorse	N

Church / Église

A = Anglican / Anglicane
 B = Baptist / Baptiste
 C = Catholic / Catholique
 M = Mennonite / Mennonite
 N = Non-denominational / Non-confessionnelle
 P = Presbyterian / Presbytérienne
 U = United / Unie




Up until the 1980s Canada, often in partnership with leading church organizations, operated a residential school system to which over 150,000 First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students were sent. This map shows the location of residential schools identified by the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.

Jusqu'aux années 1980, le Canada, en partenariat avec les organisations ecclésiastiques principales, a élaboré un système de pensionnats auxquels ont été envoyés plus de 150 000 élèves de Premières Nations, Métis et Inuits. Cette carte démontre l'emplacement des écoles résidentielles identifiées par la Convention de règlement relative aux pensionnats indiens.



Map of Canada provided by Natural Resources Canada.
Carte du Canada fournie par Ressources naturelles Canada.
Map 2011 / mai 2011



Residential Schools of Canada
Pensionnats du Canada

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
 Commission de vérité et de réconciliation du Canada

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