

It was Very Wrong: A Comparative Examination of Moralization of Residential School Histories
at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights and in Canadian Comic Books

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Abstract

This paper compares how Canada's residential school histories are discursively framed in Canadian comic books about residential schools and at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR). Specifically, I look at the extent to which this history is framed in terms of "moralization," defined as a judgement made about "right" or "wrong" conduct. Both Canadian comic books and the CMHR's treatments of residential school histories are heavily moralized, and in both sources residential schools tend to be moralized as examples of wrong conduct. However, this paper explores key differences between how, and to what degree, the two sources moralize this history, ultimately arguing that the particular "technology" and layout of the museum, as well as the placement of residential school related content allows for a layering of information that diversifies and creates hierarchies among various framings. I then postulate about what these moral judgments and hierarchies of information mean for education about residential schools in Canada and for levels of congruence between Aboriginal and settler narratives of residential schooling. In this paper, I observed moralization through determining the relative likelihood of museum and comic book content provoking sympathy and by analyzing the use of moralized words such as "abuse," "wrong," and "genocide."

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Introduction

This paper is a comparative study of representations of residential schools in Canadian comic books and at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR). I examine how these sources moralize residential school history, where moralization is defined as a judgement between right and wrong. In doing so, I seek to answer questions about how different groups of Canadians are encountering the history of residential schools, and whether Aboriginal perspectives on residential schooling are represented and legitimized in official narratives of Canadian history. I am also concerned with the differences between authoritative and unauthoritative voices and hierarchies of information, particularly with regard to the CMHR, where some information and/or perspectives about residential schools is more accessible than other information or perspectives, and where some views are advanced by the authoritative institutional voice of the museum while others, if expressed, are only expressed by interviewees or in video-clips taken from outside sources.

The first chapter of this thesis will be devoted to a literature review where I will discuss (1) residential school history, (2) the history of representations of history, violence and Aboriginals in comic books, and (3) the history of the representation of Aboriginal peoples, objects, and stories in Canadian museums, particularly with regard to colonialist mentalities and ways of ordering Aboriginal objects and experiences. In the second chapter, I will discuss (1) how techniques that provoke the “moral emotion” of sympathy help to create moralized narratives in the two media I examine;¹ (2) how these media moralize the residential school system by using particular moralized words such as “abuse” or “wrong”; and (3) how the word ‘genocide’ is used in the two media and whether residential schooling is framed as a component or main event of a genocide perpetrated against Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Definitions and Word Choice

One of the central ideas of this paper is the idea of a “moral emotion,” from which I base my simplistic definition on the much longer one of Jonathan Haidt. For the purposes of this paper,

¹ I take the term “moral emotion” from the works of Jonathan Haidt, though the idea that how we perceive things as moral or immoral is linked to emotions goes back at least as far as David Hume and Adam Smith, and probably earlier. For Haidt’s more detailed definition of the term, and complete explanations of which emotions qualify as “moral emotions” see: “The Moral Emotions.” In *Handbook of Affective Sciences*, 852-70. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, 852-870.

a “moral emotion” is an emotion that is “easily linked to the interests of society or of other people.”² Of course, it is possible to feel oneself or one’s group a victim of immoral action; however, according to Haidt, the more an emotion is linked to the perceived welfare of others or of society in general, the more likely it is to be a “moral emotion.”³ In this paper this definition is useful, as the media I examine, to many people who view them, address the stories and histories of people who are not the viewer. This being said, some viewers may feel certain affinities (for example, Aboriginal people may identify more with Aboriginal characters). As for “sympathy” which is the main moral emotion I will use in my analysis, I base my definition on Haidt’s⁴ with minor changes, and define it as, “a moral emotion elicited by the perception of suffering in another person which promotes a desire to somehow alleviate that suffering or work to prevent future similar suffering.”⁵

Throughout this thesis, I will be using the term ‘comic book’ to denote any narrative found predominantly in comic strip form and originally published in a bound volume. I use the acronym “CMHR” to denote the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg, Manitoba. I use the acronym TRC to signify the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

In order to prevent confusion related to terminology used to designate Aboriginal groups in Canada, I provide a guide here. The term ‘First Nations’ refers to all Canadian Aboriginals who are not Inuit or Métis. ‘Métis’ is a term that designates a group of mixed European and Aboriginal descent, while Inuit are the predominant Aboriginal people group in Canada’s North. Throughout this thesis, I will use the terms ‘Aboriginal’ and ‘Indigenous’ to designate all three of these groups together, except in cases where my case studies or literature I am citing uses other terminology or specifically addresses a particular sub-grouping of Canadian Aboriginals. Also, although I will not use this term, ‘First Peoples’ is synonymous with “Aboriginal” or “Indigenous.” Furthermore, while I recognize the problematic nature of referring to ‘Canadian’ Aboriginals or ‘American’ Aboriginals, as many Aboriginal peoples have historically lived on both sides of the modern Canadian-American border, I see no option other than to use this terminology as I have committed to focusing this paper

² The Moral Emotions." In *Handbook of Affective Sciences*, 852-70. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, 852-870, 853.

³ Ibid.

⁴ To see Haidt’s definition of “compassion,” see “The Moral Emotions.” In *Handbook of Affective Sciences*, 852-70. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, 861-862.

⁵ Haidt prefers the term “compassion” as he considers “sympathy” too close to the notion of “empathy,” which promotes thinking and feeling alike. However, I have stuck with the term “sympathy” as it is widely used by other scholars I have cited. Ibid, 862.

only on Canadian representations of residential schools. Finally, ‘Indian’ is a largely historical term used to describe Aboriginal populations in Canada; in cases where this is used in my sources or in legal or historical documentation (such as in the case of “Indian residential schools” or “Indian Act”) I will use it; however, in all other cases I employ the terms ‘Indigenous’ or ‘Aboriginal.’

Finally, throughout this thesis I will be referring to Aboriginal people who attended residential school as ‘former residential school attendees’ and not the more common term used in both my sources, ‘residential school survivor,’ or the less common ‘residential school student.’ The terms ‘survivor’ and ‘student’ are both potentially problematic. ‘Former residential school student’ makes the implicit assumption that Aboriginal children were educated at residential schools; the fact is, many were given minimal or substandard education,⁶ rendering the term ‘student’ potentially inappropriate in many cases. The term ‘residential school survivor,’ however, is more problematic in the context of this thesis. First, it presupposes that all residential schools were bad or something to be survived. As a large part of my analysis is devoted to how the history of residential schools is moralized in my two media, I must avoid potentially moralized terms such as ‘survivor’ in my analysis. Second, ‘survival’ is not something that I, as somebody who never witnessed or experienced residential school, can attribute to somebody, especially considering that questions remain about the exact nature of survival, including the question of whether survival is a purely physical phenomenon. Finally, as many of the characters and persons in my sources did not survive residential school even in a physical sense, I concluded that it was preferable to use the blanket term “(former) residential school attendees.” I applaud those who consider the term ‘survivor’ to be empowering, those who use the term to refer to themselves, or those within the Aboriginal community who have a better understanding than I of what it means to have ‘survived’ in a personal, community, or Aboriginal cultural context. However, I leave individual people and Aboriginal groups to determine whether ‘survivor’ is an appropriate word to use in their particular context.

Why Comic Books? Why the CMHR?

I chose to examine these two media because they are outside of the traditional academic strictures of books and articles published by academic presses or in academic journals. I wanted the focus of this paper to be on discourses that are both accessible to and likely to be seen or consumed

⁶ Milloy, John S. *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879-1986*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2006, 68-72.

by broad publics comprised of mostly non-academics (or by academics with different fields of specialty.)

The second reason I chose these media touches on fundamental divisions between how different kinds of Canadians perceive museums. In 2009, the Canadian Museums Association (CMA) conducted telephone interviews with 3,319 Canadians about their interest and engagement with the past. One of the main findings of this survey was that Canadians have a high degree of trust in museums.⁷ About two thirds of survey respondents answered that they found museums to be “very trustworthy,” making museums the most trusted source of historical information discussed in the survey.⁸ This data varied little across all the demographic indicators used in the survey (including age, gender, education, and whether or not respondents were born in Canada), with one notable exception: while 64% of the national sample saw museums as being “very trustworthy,” this figure dove to 46% among Aboriginal respondents who, overall, rated family stories as being the most trustworthy sources of historical information.⁹¹⁰

Although family stories are typically preserved only within families, there are times when these narratives reach larger audiences, including in works of local history, public storytelling events, books designed to collect stories in one volume,¹¹ and comic books. Since 2008, several publishing houses, authors, and illustrators have released comic books that engage the residential school experience to varying degrees. These comic books include *Sugar Falls: A Residential School Story*,¹² *The Life of Helen Betty Osborne: A Graphic Novel*,¹³ *UNeducation, Vol 1: A Residential School*

⁷ Northrup, David. “Visiting and Trusting Museums: Findings from the Trust Canadians and Their Pasts Survey.” Canadian Museums Association National Conference, 2009. Accessed June 4, 2014. http://www.isr.yorku.ca/projects/pasts/CMA_09_presentation_northrup.pdf, 7-8.

⁸ Other options were books about the past, family stories, and teachers, which 39%, 32%, and 29% rated as very trustworthy sources of information about the past, respectively. Ibid, 7.

⁹ Similar surveys were conducted in Australia and the United States during the 1990s. Overall findings were similar and, like in Canada, Aboriginal respondents reported lower levels of trust in museums. Unfortunately, properly unpacking these findings is beyond the scope of this particular project, however if you are interested in reading further, I have provided the citations for these studies.

Australia: Hamilton, Paula and Paul Ashton, “Australians and the Past,” *Australian Cultural History*, 23, 2003.

United States: Rosenzweig, Roy and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

¹⁰ Northrup, “Visiting and Trusting Museums,” 11.

¹¹ For example, see Rogers, Shelagh, Mike DeGagné, and Jonathan Dewar, eds. *Speaking My Truth: Reflections on Reconciliation and Residential School*. Winnipeg: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2012.

¹² Robertson, David Alexander, and Scott B. Henderson. *Sugar Falls: A Residential School Story*. Winnipeg: Highwater Press, 2011.

¹³ Robertson, David Alexander, and Madison Blackstone. *The Life of Helen Betty Osborne: A Graphic Novel*. Winnipeg: In a Bind Publications, 2008.

Graphic Novel,¹⁴ *7 Generations: A Plains Cree Saga*,¹⁵ *lost innocence*,¹⁶ and *The Outside Circle: A Graphic Novel*.¹⁷ Without exception, these comic books have been written by Aboriginal people, and many of them are based on a testimonial or a composite of testimonials from former residential school attendees. I contend that these comic books can be considered similar to the ‘family stories’ that the Aboriginals surveyed tended to rate as being “very trustworthy” sources of historical information. These stories are taken more-or-less directly from an Aboriginal source and mediated by Aboriginal people; if these people do not belong to the category of immediate family, their common Aboriginal identifications are likely to inspire more trust among Aboriginal people than would be bestowed upon museums where it is not always a given that curators and others involved in the creation of exhibits treating Aboriginal issues are Aboriginal. Without conducting another survey, I am unable to prove this conclusively, but based on the findings of the CMA survey, I am confident that this is a reasonable link to draw.

This link between comic books and family stories is not the only reason I have chosen these two media. I also selected them because of the marked age differences between the average museum visitor and the average comic book reader. According to the CMA report cited earlier, people under the age of 30 are much less likely to frequent museums than their older counterparts;¹⁸ another report conducted in 2004 concluded that over 78% of museum visitors were over the age of 35.¹⁹ However, the average age of comic book readers has been placed between 24 and 30 (and most of the comic

¹⁴ Eaglespeaker, Jason. *UNeducation Vol 1: A Residential School Graphic Novel (Uncut)*. Createspace, 2014.

¹⁵ Robertson, David Alexander, and Scott B. Henderson. *7 Generations: A Plains Cree Saga*. Winnipeg: Highwater Press, 2012.

¹⁶ Mitchell, Brandon, and Tara Audibert. *lost innocence*. Courtenay: Healthy Aboriginal Network, 2013.

¹⁷ LaBoucane-Benson, Patti. & Kelly Mellings. *The Outside Circle: A Graphic Novel*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2015.

¹⁸ Northrup, “Visiting and Trusting Museums,” 6.

¹⁹ Canadian Heritage Information Network. "5. Survey Results 2004 Survey of Visitors to Museums' Web Space and Physical Space: Survey Documentation and Findings." Canadian Heritage Information Network. 2004. Accessed June 9, 2015. http://www.rcip-chin.gc.ca/contenu_numerique-digital_content/2004survey-2004survey/surveyResults-surveyResults-eng.jsp.

books I have included as source material are, at least officially, geared towards teenagers.)²⁰ This generational difference between the average consumers of these media raises questions about how different Canadian generations are encountering narratives about residential schools and their legacy, as well as about how Aboriginal generations who did not experience residential schools first-hand are able to engage their history.²²

A third reason I have juxtaposed comic books and museums is that each medium possesses different connotations of authority to represent the past. As I stated earlier, the CMA survey concluded that most Canadians perceive museums to be “very trustworthy.”²³ Comic books, on the other hand, have long been a subversive story-telling medium, with subversiveness defined as “in some way authoritative to somebody outside the dominant regime”; since the 1970s, comic books have frequently been used to represent events in ways that deviate from establishment narratives. I will further discuss this global subversiveness in my upcoming literature review; however, a specifically Aboriginal subversiveness with regard to comic books has already been addressed by scholars. Doris Wolf writes that, “Like other disenfranchised minorities, Aboriginal artists have

²⁰ Fagan, Bryan D., and Jody Condit Fagan. *Comic Book Collections for Libraries*. Westport: Libraries Unlimited, 2011, 4.

²¹ On his website, David Alexander Robertson’s website indicates that *Sugar Falls*, *7 Generations*, and *The Life of Helen Betty Osborne* are meant for grades 9-12 (approximately ages 14-18.) The Healthy Aboriginal Network website states that “Our mandate is the non-profit promotion of health, literacy & wellness through the production of visual resources for youth.” *The Outside Circle* and *UNEducation* likely have slightly older target audiences due to their marketing, and representation of sex abuse respectively, although on the publisher’s website *The Outside Circle* is recommended for readers 13 and up.

Robertson, David Alexander. “Sugar Falls.” David Alexander Robertson. 2015. Accessed June 11, 2015.

<http://www.darobertson.ca/publications/sugar-falls/>.

Robertson, David Alexander. “7 Generations” David Alexander Robertson, 2015. Accessed June 11, 2015.

<http://www.darobertson.ca/publications/7-generations/>

Robertson, David Alexander. “The Life of Helen Betty Osborne.” David Alexander Robertson

<http://www.darobertson.ca/publications/the-life-of-helen-betty-osborne/>

“The Outside Circle.” House of Anansi Press. 2016. Accessed February 28, 2016.

<http://houseofanansi.com/products/the-outside-circle>.

“About Us.” Healthy Aboriginal Network. 2014. Accessed June 11, 2015. <http://thehealthyaboriginal.net/about-us/>

²² It must be noted that it is possible that historically-based comic books are generally enjoyed by a different demographic than might typically enjoy comic books. Demographic research about comic book consumption is already few and far-between, and I was unable to find any information about the demographics of history-based comic book readers specifically. However, the targeted demographic of Robertson and the Healthy Aboriginal Network’s works is definitely young people, and while it is likely that history-based comic books are read by a slightly older demographic than more pulpy titles, it is unlikely that the average age of a history-based comic book consumer approaches that of an average museum visitor.

²³ Northrup, “Visiting and Trusting Museums”, 7.

turned to the comic book as a medium of great potential in affirming non-hegemonic identities and ideologies.”²⁴ This sentiment is echoed by C. Richard King, who states that, “Over the past decade, Native American artists have seized on the comic book not simply as a means to interrupt imperial idioms but also as a space in which to reimagine themselves and reclaim their cultures.”²⁵ It is thus probable that, although museums may still be generally very authoritative when their audiences are non-Aboriginal, Aboriginal people may actually attribute more authority to comic book representations of histories involving Aboriginals. My comparison of the two media is thus not simply about which is seen as more authoritative, but about who attributes authority to each medium. It is known that in Canada, non-Aboriginal peoples attribute a great amount of authority to museums, and based on Wolf and King’s statements, it is highly likely that Aboriginal people attribute more authority to comic books while non-Aboriginals continue to find them subversive.

List of Primary Sources

The primary sources I have selected for this paper are the following. The comic books are Patti LaBoucane-Benson’s *The Outside Circle*; David Alexander Robertson’s *The Life of Helen Betty Osborne, Sugar Falls: A Residential School Story*, and *7 Generations: A Plains Cree Saga*; Brandon Mitchell and Tara Audibert’s *lost innocence*, and Jason Eaglespeaker’s *UNeducation: A Residential School Graphic Novel: Volume 1*. I arrived at these titles after internet research and consultation with various comic book professionals in Toronto and Montreal. Additionally, I combed the Mazinbiige Indigenous Graphic Novel Collection at the University of Manitoba for relevant titles. Although the field of Aboriginal comic books extends far beyond these titles, I determined that these titles were the most relevant to the topic of residential schooling, which they all address in some form.²⁶

²⁴Wolf, Doris. "The Seductions of Good and Evil: Competing Cultural Memories in Steven Keewatin Sanderson's Superhero Comics for Aboriginal Youth." Edited by Lorna Hutchinson. In *Children and Cultural Memory in Texts of Childhood*, edited by Heather Snell, 179-96. New York: Routledge, 2013, 181.

²⁵ King, C. Richard. "Alter/native Heroes: Native Americans, Comic Books, and the Struggle for Self-Definition." *Cultural Studies ⇄ Critical Methodologies*, 2009 ser., 9:214-23, 220.

²⁶ Some other excellent Canadian comic books by or about Aboriginal issues are Brown, Chester. *Louis Riel: A Comic-strip Biography*. Montreal: Drawn & Quarterly, 2006.; and Yahgulanaas, Michael Nicoll. *Red: A Haida Manga*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2014. American Aboriginals have produced many titles as well. For comic books that talk about Aboriginals but are not intended to provide historically accurate portrayals, Michael Sheyahshe's book about portrayals of Aboriginals in comic books is a good starting-point. See: Sheyahshe, Michael A. *Native Americans in Comic Books: A Critical Study*. Jefferson: McFarland, 2008,

I selected the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) in Winnipeg, Manitoba as my subject after visiting a few Canadian museums including The Canadian Museum of History in Ottawa, Ontario; le Musée de la Civilisation in Québec City; and the Woodland Cultural Centre in Brantford, Ontario. The latter three museums contained relatively little information or interpretation of residential schools. The CMHR, on the other hand, provided a wealth of productively analyzable content. I visited the museum in May, 2015, and have been informed that some changes have since been made to the exhibitry.²⁷ For this reason, when discussing the comic books in the paper, I use the present tense, but when discussing the exhibitry at the museum I use the past tense.

I am grateful to have been awarded funding by Concordia International to travel to Winnipeg and spend time collecting information at the CMHR. This paper could not have been effectively written without this opportunity.

²⁷ Jodi Giesbrecht, Personal Communication, August 9, 2016.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

Introduction

Before analyzing how the comic books and CMHR moralize residential school history, I will contextualize the history of residential school and the types of sources I have chosen in a literature review. Many different fields and sub-fields of study are relevant in the topic of this paper; however, in the interests of space I have focused on the three with the most immediate relevance. These are (1) the study of Indian residential schools in Canada, the system that created and maintained them, and current public reactions to them including reconciliation efforts; (2) the history of North American comic books, particularly comic books that address history or historical violence, and the history of Aboriginal representation in North American comic books; and (3) Canadian museum representations of Canadian Indigenous peoples.

1.1 Literature on Residential Schools: An Overview

Indian residential schools are the topic of a wealth of scholarly literature. Rather than provide a comprehensive overview, I will address here literatures on the policies and effects of the residential school system. I will also broadly address the events following the final residential school closures.

The residential school system ran from the mid-1800s²⁸ into the late 20th century, with the last federally run residential school closing in 1996.²⁹ The majority of residential schools were funded by the federal government, but most were administered by the Catholic, Anglican, United, and Presbyterian Churches of Canada.³⁰ In total, about 150,000 children were sent to approximately 140 residential schools across Canada.³¹ The goal of these schools, according to John Milloy, was to

²⁸ Exact dates for the beginning of the residential school system are difficult to determine. Although it is easy to know when the first federally operated residential schools opened, some religious-based day and boarding-schools were operating before the institution of church and federal government cooperation, as early as the 17th century. For more information on pre-Confederation European-based educational institutions for Aboriginals see Carney, Robert. "Aboriginal Residential Schools Before Confederation: The early Experience" *Historical Studies* 61 (1995): 13-40. Accessed December 3, 2015. <http://www.cchahistory.ca/journal/CCHA1995/Carney.pdf>.

²⁹ Elias, Brenda, Javier Mignone, Madelyn Hall, Say P. Hong, Lyna Hart, and Jitender Sareen. "Trauma and Suicide Behaviour Histories among a Canadian Indigenous Population: An Empirical Exploration of the Potential Role of Canada's Residential School System." *Social Science and Medicine* 74, no. 10 (May 2012): 1561.

³⁰ Milloy, John S. *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879-1986*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2006, 307.

³¹ Niezen, Ronald. *Truth & Indignation: Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013, 1-2.

assimilate Canadian Aboriginal people into settler Canadian society.³² Other sources state that the goal went beyond simple assimilation into “cultural genocide.”³³ In 1920, then Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs Duncan Campbell Scott declared, “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.”³⁴ Sir John A. MacDonald, too, made statements to this effect. According to John Milloy,

“A national goal, [Sir John A. MacDonald] informed Parliament, was “to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the inhabitants of the Dominion, as speedily as they are fit to change.” With the assistance of church and state, wandering hunters would take up a settled life, agriculture, useful trades and, of course, the Christian religion.”³⁵

Despite goals that may have seemed lofty to some settler-Canadians, Christians, church workers, and government officials at the time, the residential school system was underfunded and poorly supervised. Furthermore, in many of these schools children were abused by school staff.^{36,37} Over 48 different types of abuse are listed in Roland Chrisjohn, Sherri Young and Michael Maraun’s *The Circle Game: Shadows and Substance in the Indian Residential School Experience in Canada*. Some of the more heinous abuses mentioned in the book include sexual assault and forced sexual intercourse between men or women in authority and girls and/or boys in their charge,³⁸ arranging or inducing abortions in female children impregnated by men in authority, beating children into

³² Milloy, *A National Crime*, 6.

³³ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. 2015. Accessed February 28, 2016.

http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Honouring_the_Truth_Reconciling_for_the_Future_July_23_2015.pdf, 1.

³⁴ Milloy, *A National Crime*, 46.

³⁵ Ibid, 6.

³⁶ I have only listed types of abuse that are not meant to be assimilative in nature (as opposed to, for example, forbidding Aboriginal children to speak their native languages.) This is because I will address questions of ‘assimilation’ ‘colonialism’ and ‘genocide’ in greater depth later in this review.

³⁷ During many of the years that the schools operated, funding was awarded on a per-attendeé basis. This meant that it was in the interest of the schools to recruit as many attendees as possible, even if they were sick and could infect other children. For more information, see Milloy, John. “The Charge of Manslaughter”: Disease and Death, 1879-1946.” In *A National Crime The Canadian Government and the Residential School System 1879 to 1986*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2006.

³⁸ See: Angeconeb, Garnet. “Speaking My Truth: The Journey to Reconciliation.” In *Speaking my Truth: Reflections on Reconciliation & Residential School*. Winnipeg: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2012, 11-35 for a first-hand account of this type of abuse.

unconsciousness, forcing sick children to eat their own vomit,³⁹ inadequate nutrition, inadequate medical services sometimes leading to children's deaths,⁴⁰ failure to remove known sex offenders from positions of supervision and control of children, and failure to adequately inspect or otherwise maintain effective supervision of institutions into which legal wards had been placed.

Leading up to and following the final residential school closures in the 1980s and 1990s, many Aboriginal people began to come forward with allegations of abuse that occurred during time spent in a residential school. In 1991, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was established to investigate Canada's policy towards Aboriginals and to advise the government on their findings. In one section of their 1996 report, they wrote that,

The basic premise of resocialization, of the great transformation from "savage" to "civilized," was violent. "To kill the Indian in the child," the department aimed at severing the artery of culture that ran between generations and was the profound connection between parent and child sustaining family and community."⁴¹

This report gave way to a government "Statement of Reconciliation" in 1998, in which the then minister of Indian Affairs stated

Particularly to those individuals who experienced the tragedy of sexual and physical abuse at residential schools [. . .] we wish to emphasize that what you experienced was not your fault and should never have happened. To those of you who suffered this tragedy at residential schools, we are deeply sorry.⁴²

Ten years later, in 2008, the Canadian government apologized once again in a Statement of Apology, this time delivered by former Prime Minister Stephen Harper. A year before, the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) was reached after the Assembly of First Nations launched a class action lawsuit against the federal government for the sum of over 36 billion dollars.⁴³ The settlement amounted to about 4 billion dollars; a great deal less than what the original lawsuit called

³⁹ Niezen, Ronald. *Truth & Indignation: Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013, 16.

⁴⁰ Milloy, John. "The Charge of Manslaughter": Disease and Death, 1879-1946." In *A National Crime The Canadian Government and the Residential School System 1879 to 1986*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2006.

⁴¹ *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. Publication. Vol. 1. Ottawa: Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996. Accessed February 29, 2016. https://qspace.library.queensu.ca/bitstream/1974/6874/5/RRCAP1_combined.pdf, 349.

⁴² Niezen, *Truth and Indignation*, 34-35.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 43.

for.⁴⁴ As part of the settlement, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was created. The TRC's mandate stated

There is an emerging and compelling desire to put the events of the past behind us so that we can work towards a stronger and healthier future. The truth telling and reconciliation process as part of an overall holistic and comprehensive response to the Indian Residential School legacy is a sincere indication and acknowledgement of the injustices and harms experienced by Aboriginal people and the need for continued healing. This is a profound commitment to establishing new relationships embedded in mutual recognition and respect that will forge a brighter future. The truth of our common experiences will help set our spirits free and pave the way to reconciliation.⁴⁵

Allegations of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse sparked outrage among both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations in Canada. However, these patterns of abuse were only one negative consequence of a system that a strong cohort of scholars, activists, and others – of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal origin – have termed a ‘genocide,’ ‘cultural genocide,’ or ‘settler colonial genocide.’⁴⁶ The idea behind the use of these terms is that, through government policy, settler-Canadians attempted to destroy Aboriginal peoples’ cultures in order to assimilate them into Euro-Canadian society, and that this amounts to attempted destruction of a people group. Scholars that have endorsed this idea include University of Manitoba’s Andrew Woolford⁴⁷ and Christopher Powell,⁴⁸ Roland Chrisjohn, Sherri Young, and Michael Maraun, Agnes Grant in her monograph *No End of Grief: Indian Residential Schools in Canada*, and Tricia Logan in her article, “National Memory and Museums: Remembering Settler Colonial Genocide of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.” Grant writes that “Indian Residential schools were established in order to help Canada fulfill its assimilationist policies. Schools were established to “civilize” Indian children, and the first

⁴⁴ Ibid, 44-45.

⁴⁵ "Our Mandate." Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Accessed February 28, 2016. <http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=7>.

⁴⁶ For an overview of common Canadian conceptions (or lack thereof) of a genocide against Aboriginal peoples, see Logan, Tricia. “National Memory and Museums: Remembering Settler Colonial Genocide of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.” In *Remembering Genocide*. New York: Routledge, 2014. Logan does contend that non-Indigenous Canadian historians rarely consider the historical relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians to be an instance of genocide, (see p. 112) but it bears repeating that this idea is not exclusively held by Indigenous historians and that, although they may be rarer, many non-Indigenous scholars also hold this view.

⁴⁷ See Woolford, Andrew. *This Benevolent Experiment: Indigenous Boarding Schools, Genocide, and Redress in Canada and the United States*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2015.

⁴⁸ See Powell, Christopher. "The Moralization of Genocide in Canada." Proceedings of Prairie Perspectives on Indian Residential Schools, Truth, and Reconciliation, The Forks, Winnipeg. Accessed February 28, 2016. <http://tesla.cc.umanitoba.ca/chrr/images/The%20Moralization%20of%20Genocide%20in%20Canada.pdf>

prerequisite was to remove them from the influence of parents.”⁴⁹ She continues, writing that “the policy was that of relentless cultural genocide, and the miracle is that the institutions did not succeed. [. . .] Assimilationist policies were poorly rationalized since assimilation implies equality, but there has never been equality for Native people in Canada.”⁵⁰ Chrisjohn et al are similarly blunt with their allegations of genocide, writing that “the federal government of Canada bears primary responsibility for adopting and implementing an explicitly genocidal policy.”⁵¹ They explain that according to the United Nations Genocide Convention, which they include as an appendix in the book, genocide does not require killing, but may only be the act of (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group and (c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.⁵² Finally, Powell goes so far as to suggest that not only did Canada commit genocide against Indigenous people, but that the perpetrators of genocide justified it through positive moralization.⁵³ As I examine the comic books and exhibits that make up my sample, I will be observing whether or not the word ‘genocide’ is used to describe the structures that gave rise to residential schools and how and if it differs between the two media. Later in this review, in the section on scholarship related to Aboriginal representation in museums, I will discuss former CMHR curator Tricia Logan’s article describing how the use of the term ‘genocide’ was actively suppressed during the initial curation process at the CMHR.

Finally, it bears mentioning that, although this occurred after the publication of all of my sources, the final conclusions of the TRC stated that Canada’s treatment of its Aboriginal populations constituted a ‘cultural genocide.’⁵⁴ It remains to be seen how this statement will affect current discourses around Aboriginal experiences in Canada; however, as the analysis of whether residential schools are characterized as a component of genocide in my sources will form a large part of this paper, it is important to acknowledge that a large institution that was financially supported by the

⁴⁹ Grant, Agnes. *No End of Grief: Indian Residential Schools in Canada*. Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications Inc, 1996, 23.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 24.

⁵¹ Chrisjohn, 43.

⁵² For a full copy of the United Nations Convention, see: UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, 9 December 1948, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 78, p. 277. Accessed February 29, 2016. <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3ac0.html>

⁵³ Powell, Christopher. “The Moralization of Genocide in Canada,” 2-5.

⁵⁴ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. 2015. Accessed February 28, 2016. http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Honouring_the_Truth_Reconciling_for_the_Future_July_23_2015.pdf, 1.

federal government has used this terminology and that this will likely affect official and non-official discourses about residential schools and Aboriginal peoples in Canada.⁵⁵

1.2 History, Violence, and Aboriginal Representation in Comic Books: An Overview

I turn now to relevant literature on comic books. I will begin (1) by sketching the history of the historically-based comic book in the North American context, including the particularly subversive period of the 1970s.⁵⁶ I will then (2) move to a discussion of violence in comic books in general, before finally (3) providing an overview of literatures on the representation of Aboriginal people in comic books.

1.2.1 *The History of the Historically Based Comic Book*

To my knowledge, the only person who has written extensively on the history of history in comic books is Joseph Witek, whose book *Comics as History* details the evolution of this genre in North America.⁵⁷ Witek writes about historically-based comic book narratives, beginning from what he terms ‘preachies’: comic book representations of Bible stories, demonstrations of how things worked, and comic inspirational biographies.⁵⁸ He then turns to a discussion of ‘real-life adventure’ comic books based on historical events.⁵⁹ Witek’s examples date back to the 1950s; these initial didactic and adventure-based comic books would be the first step in what has become a significant cadre of work belonging to this genre.

⁵⁵ I have also been informed by the museum that the exhibitry about residential schools has been updated following the conclusions of the TRC and that it is now stated in the exhibitry that the TRC determined that residential schools were a component of cultural genocide. However, the museum was not willing to provide me with a copy of the new exhibit text on the grounds that “Each exhibit is comprised of a number of elements, including text, photographs, documents, artefacts, audiovisual materials, and other assets, and these are intended to be experienced as a whole. The broader context of the particular gallery is also key to the specific approach and messaging of the exhibits.” I will provide further information about what information they were able to give me in a footnote in my later section about the use of the term ‘genocide’ when referring to Aboriginal peoples. (Jodi Giesbrecht, Personal Communication, August 9)

⁵⁶ There exists a wealth of literature on the Franco-Belgian *bande-dessinée*, which is itself a venerable cultural institution (as well as about comic book traditions in other countries.) However, since all of my sources are written in English and published by North American presses, I have chosen to focus only on the American context as I believe it to be more relevant.

⁵⁷ Witek, Joseph. *Comic Books as History: The Narrative Art of Jack Jackson, Art Spiegelman, and Harvey Pekar*. Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 1989.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 13-15.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 14-15.

While 1950s didactic and adventure history-based comic books were an early precursor to their modern-day inheritors, today's historical comic books, especially those that deal with violence, are indebted to the work of the Comics Code. This code, created by the comic industry's self-regulating Comics Code Authority, stipulated that comics were prohibited from displaying

corrupt authority, successful crimes, happy criminals, the triumph of evil over good, violence, concealed weapons, the death of a policeman, sensual females, divorce, illicit sexual relations, narcotics or drug addiction, physical afflictions, poor grammar, and the use of the words 'crime,' 'horror,' and 'terror' in the title of a magazine or a story.⁶⁰

This served to squelch comic books looking for a more sophisticated audience, as the moral insipidity required by the code was incompatible with both the shades of grey or the salacious details present in real life and in many works of literature. Furthermore, it made the act of recounting a violent historical narrative extremely difficult.

In Canada, the success of the anti-crime comic book movement arrived earlier than it did in the U.S., and was also more successful at being enshrined into law. During the 1940s, several Canadian comic book publishers were operating in Canada. Some of these produced reprints of American titles, while others focused on uniquely Canadian content. Canadian comic books were frequently distributed in the U.S. as well, although their content may not have been explicitly Canadian. By 1948, a fairly organized network of anti-comic book activists were attempting to thwart the publication of "crime comics," which they considered detrimental to the moral character of Canadian children. Their position was bolstered that same year when two boys in Kamloops, British Columbia, aged 11 and 13, stole a rifle and hid along a highway at Dawson Creek. Playing highwaymen, they shot at a passing car, killing the driver. It came to light soon after that both boys were avid readers of crime comics, and as a result new legislation was passed in 1949 that attempted to limit depictions of morally suspect material in comic books.⁶¹ The law, which is still on the books today (c. 2016) states that making, printing, publishing, distributing, selling, or possessing a crime comic for "the purpose of publication, distribution or circulation,"⁶² is a crime.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 48.

⁶¹ Bell, John. "ARCHIVED – Crackdown on Comics, 1947-1966." ARCHIVED – Crackdown on Comics, 1947-1966 – Comic Books in English Canada – Beyond the Funnies. January 24, 2002. Accessed April 21, 2016. <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/comics/027002-8400-e.html>.

⁶² "Criminal Code (R.S.C., 1985, C. C-46)." Criminal Code. March 28, 2016. Accessed April 21, 2016. <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-46/page-36.html>.

In the act, “crime comic” is defined as “a magazine, periodical or book that exclusively or substantially comprises matter depicting pictorially the commission of crimes, real or fictitious; or events connected with the commission of crimes, real or fictitious, whether occurring before or after the commission of the crime.”⁶³ There are provisions in the act whereby comic books and other media that portray these things in ways that further the “public good” are exempt from the stipulations in the act.⁶⁴

Other factors, (namely, trade regulations) effectively squelched the Canadian comic book industry in the following years. By 1956, comic books sold in Canada were almost exclusively American and were being sanitized by the Comics Code Authority before being imported into Canada, ensuring that Canadian censorship laws had relatively little work to do.⁶⁵

South of the border, the censorship activities of the American Comics Code Authority spurred the development of the underground comics movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Works belonging to this period, known as ‘comix,’ were notorious for their vulgarity and flew in the face of the strict Comics Code guidelines. According to Witek, works from this period “systematically flung down and danced upon every American standard of good taste, artistic competence, political coherence, and sexual restraint.”⁶⁶ Furthermore, “these titles spoke to the counter-culture in its own terms, which meant dealing with subjects like drugs, anti-Vietnam protest, rock music and, above all, sex.”⁶⁷ The x at the end of the name served to set them apart and also to emphasize their X-rated nature.⁶⁸ Comix were vulgar, did not shy away from graphic representations of sex and violence, and were mainly distributed through drug paraphernalia shops. Because they flouted the Comics Code’s authority, they were able to engage subject matter that did not lend itself to consistent demonstrations of the power of good over evil. Although the comix movement did not last beyond the 1970s, it paved the way for a new wave of historically-based comics that were created for a less juvenile audience, and that engaged violence in thought-provoking or realistic ways.⁶⁹ Comic book artists Art

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ It is interesting to note that most of my sources depict crimes, and that depending on the general consensus of Canadians during particular periods, could have been assumed to further the public good, or not.

⁶⁵ Furthermore, similar regulations were enacted in the U.K. around the same time, so the English-language shock comic book industry was effectively squelched from three sides. See Sabin, Robert. *Comics, Comix, and Graphic Novels: A History of Comic Art*. London: Phaidon Press Limited, 2002, p. 68.

⁶⁶ Witek, 51.

⁶⁷ Sabin, 92.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Witek, 52-53.

Spiegelman (who wrote *Maus I & II*, the Pulitzer-prize winning comic books about the Holocaust), and Jaxon (who wrote historical comic books about the relationships between European colonists and American Indigenous populations) both got their start during this movement.⁷⁰ It could be argued that, without the artistic freedom the underground comix movement afforded comic and comic book artists, and without the simplistic morality demanded by the code, North American comics might never have gained such great connotations of subversiveness. While sanitized human cruelty could be represented as part of a Manichean comic book universe under the code, real-life violence does not conform to the black-and-white sterile structure that it demanded. Furthermore, the outlet of comix allowed artists to engage this subject matter without resorting to Manichean representations, and to construct narratives where villains were successful or where no clear moral distinctions existed between characters.

1.2.2 Comic Books and Violence: An Overview

In the approximately forty years since the underground comix movement, the historically-based comic book genre and the number of comics that engage issues of violence has expanded a great deal, and has raised questions about how best to engage and represent historical violence in this medium.

In her article “Human Rights and Comics: Autobiographical Avatars, Crisis Witnessing, and Transnational Rescue Networks” Sidonie Smith reflects on the representation of violence in comic books. She creates a term, “crisis comics,” defined as comics that are a mode “of witness to radical injury and harm.”⁷¹ She writes that “arraying boxes of witnessing, [crisis comics] narrativize and dramatize complex information at the same time that they intensify the affect of empathetic identification.”⁷² Smith also points out that affect inherent in crisis comics can serve not only to put a human face to suffering, but also that the actors involved in the creation of such comic books can reframe violence “in boxes of victimization.”⁷³ She cites the NGO Campaign against Trafficking of Women, which used personal stories to show some women as victims of human rights abuses in order to illustrate how these ‘boxes of victimization’ can be constructed. Smith writes that “there is

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Smith, Sidonie. “Human Rights and Comics: Autobiographical Avatars, Crisis Witnessing, and Transnational Rescue Networks.” In *Graphic Subjects: Critical Essays on Autobiography and Graphic Novels*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011.

⁷² Ibid, 62.

⁷³ Ibid, 64.

an NGO that is functioning as a coxer seeking the story, and a story of a particular kind,”⁷⁴ and that the people involved in publishing the story “coproduce the form the life story will take and the experiential history that will be included and excluded.”⁷⁵ She then concludes, “These aspects of the incorporation of personal stories in comic books [. . .] raise important questions about the relationship of boxes of witnessing to the commodification of contemporary life writing.”⁷⁶

Persepolis, about a young Iranian girl’s growing-up years during the Iranian revolution, is another well-known comic book dealing with violence. In “Witnessing Persepolis: Comics, Trauma, and Childhood Testimony,” Leigh Gilmore writes that Persepolis “aims to teach readers how to think about the Middle East,” and also “how to feel.”⁷⁷ Furthermore, Persepolis offers a mode through which to link personal suffering with greater historical forces and violence.⁷⁸ The style of Persepolis allows the reader to see a personal narrative of the effects of violence within a greater context.⁷⁹

Smith provides some interesting fodder for this paper, as my upcoming analysis of how sympathy is provoked in my sources recalls her ‘boxes of victimization.’ These ‘boxes of victimization’ add dimension to the question I raised earlier about who has the authority to represent the past, as Smith stresses that the comic books coax out a story and “a story of a particular kind.”⁸⁰ Gilmore’s reflections are ultimately relevant to my later analysis as well. While Satrapi does not explicitly claim to aim to “teach people how to feel,” as Gilmore puts it, or link an individual’s experience to greater historical forces, the comic books in my survey are frequently quite explicit about linking personal narratives to a greater context (such as assimilative policy in government, cycles of abuse in Aboriginal communities, cycles of poverty and addiction, and so on).

1.2.3 Aboriginals as Subjects: Comics Books that Feature Aboriginal Populations

I move now to a discussion of the history of Aboriginal representation in comics. Little has been written on this topic, and Michael Sheyahshe’s work *Native Americans in Comic Books* is this

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Gilmore, Leigh. “Witnessing Persepolis: Comics, Trauma, and Childhood Testimony.” In *Graphic Subjects: Critical Essays on Autobiography and Graphic Novels*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011, p. 157.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 159.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

subject's only book-length treatment. Sheyahshe, who is himself Aboriginal, writes that as a childhood fan of comic books, he always identified with Aboriginal characters.⁸¹ However, as an adult he realized that, while comics can be both inspiring and pedagogical, they can also provide audiences with a clear view of ingrained societal attitudes.⁸² He concludes his introduction by writing that, "put simply, as Indigenous people, we must tell our own stories and begin to represent ourselves more truthfully, especially in popular media such as comic books."⁸³ The rest of Sheyahshe's book is largely devoted to uncovering tropic representations of Aboriginal characters, including what he terms 'the barbarian,' 'the noble savage,' 'the racial threat,' 'the childlike dupe,' and 'the sidekick.'⁸⁴ Sheyahshe also briefly writes about comics from independent Aboriginal publishers. He states that the Aboriginal-directed Milles Lacs Ojibwe Educational Comic Book Series visually presents Aboriginal traditions of oral storytelling, with few, if any stereotypes.⁸⁵ However, in his analysis of *Darkness Calls*, a comic book published by the Healthy Aboriginal Network, (the publishing house that produced *lost innocence*, one of my case studies), Sheyahshe notes that, although it is written and illustrated by Indigenous people and published by an Aboriginal publishing house, and although it stays away from certain comic book tropes of Aboriginal people (such as "Tonto-talk" and language demeaning to Aboriginal people) it still makes use of some of his stereotypical comic book archetypes of Aboriginal people, including what he terms "obligatory feathers,"⁸⁶ which he asserts are part of a "stereotypic imagery" of Aboriginal characters in many other comic books that portray them. Although Sheyahshe's criticisms are convincing and undoubtedly an important facet of the study of comic books about Aboriginal peoples, I am ill-equipped to analyze the stereotypical aspects of my case-studies, as I am not sufficiently familiar with Canadian Aboriginal cultures and traditions to be able to effectively interpret the relative authenticity or inauthenticity of representations of Aboriginal cultural or material traditions.⁸⁷ This is unfortunate, and my hope is that further research by more qualified people will be able to properly address these questions. To return to the point at hand, however, what is intriguing about Sheyahshe's analysis is that, while he champions the idea of

⁸¹ Sheyahshe, Michael A. *Native Americans in Comic Books: A Critical Study*. Jefferson: McFarland, 2008, p. 1.

⁸² Ibid, 3.

⁸³ Ibid, 6.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 9-10.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 131-132.

⁸⁶ Sheyahshe, Michael A. *Native Americans in Comic Books: A Critical Study*. Jefferson: McFarland, 2008. Kindle, 70%.

⁸⁷ This is without mentioning that 'authenticity' and 'inauthenticity' are themselves disputed categories even among those who are more familiar with Aboriginal histories and cultures.

Aboriginal-directed representation, he does not seem to believe that Aboriginal people are exempt from being influenced by stereotypes of Indigenous culture, and that questions of authenticity and inauthenticity are not simply answerable by a claim that something was created by an Aboriginal person or group.⁸⁸

1.3 Modern and Historical Aboriginal Representation in Canadian Museums

The history of the representation of Indigenous peoples in Canadian museums is fraught with colonialist mentalities. In an anecdote in the introduction of *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums and Material Culture*, the editors of the volume illustrate two attitudes to Indigenous artifacts.

The Kwakwaka'wakw curator and anthropologist Gloria Canmer Webster tells a story about an encounter she had with the Canadian anthropologist Wilson Duff in the early 1970s. Duff came upon her one day while she was working in the store room of the old University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology. "He picked up a raven rattle, brought it over to me and asked, 'Isn't it beautiful?' 'Yes,' I replied, and went back to my typewriter. He then asked, 'But how do you read it?' Impatiently, I said, 'Shit, Wilson, I don't read those things, I shake them.'"

This anecdote, write the editors, introduces "the pervasive colonial legacies which have privileged the Western sensorium and the role that museums have played in the continuing inscription of this particular way of being-in-the-world."⁸⁹ Although my paper is not devoted to material culture, as the CMHR contains few objects other than photographs related to residential schools, this anecdote is a good illustration of how museum ownership of Indigenous objects or media could order them in a way they were not designed to be ordered. This idea is echoed in Constance Classen and David Howes' article in the same volume. They write that

collecting is a form of conquest and collected artifacts are material signs of victory over their former owners and places of origin. [. . .] What the modern museum particularly developed in conjunction with this paradigm of conquest, was a model of colonization, of foreign dominion.⁹⁰

They continue, writing that

⁸⁸ Sheyahshe, Hardcopy, 151-152.

⁸⁹ Edwards, Elizabeth, Chris Gosden, and Ruth B. Phillips. "Introduction." In *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums, and Material Culture*. New York: Berg, 2006.

⁹⁰ Classen, Constance, and David Howes. "The Museum as Sensescape: Western Sensibilities and Indigenous Artifacts." In *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums, and Material Culture*. New York: Berg, 2006, 209.

artifacts were better off in the clean, bright, protected environment of the museum under the aegis of knowledgeable Western scholars. Ironically, the implied conclusion was that indigenous artifacts were misused by their original owners and that it was only when they entered the Western museum that they were used properly. The ethnographic museum was a model of an ideal colonial empire in which perfect law and order was imposed upon the natives.⁹¹

This colonial attitude towards Indigenous peoples and artifacts on the part of Canadian museums was widespread. In 1990, a task-force on the representation of Indigenous peoples in Canadian museums was created as a result of a controversy at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary. The 1988 Glenbow exhibit "The Spirit Sings," was financially supported by Shell Oil who, at the time, was drilling for oil on land claimed by the Lubicon Cree First Nation in Northern Alberta.⁹² The exhibit attracted protests, which eventually culminated in the creation of the 1990 task-force. The task-force's report, published in 1992, emphasized the need for increased involvement of Aboriginals in cultural institutions. In her 2009 article *Museums Taken to Task*, Stephanie Bolton attempted to determine whether the recommendations of the taskforce had been implemented. In doing so, she interviewed Dolores Contré Migwans, a former Aboriginal staff member at the McCord Museum of Canadian History in Montreal. Migwans took it upon herself to revise the museum's educational programming in order to integrate personal discourse from Aboriginals and to limit Aboriginal objectification in the museum.⁹³ When Bolton asked her how she felt about the slow pace of change at the museum, Migwans responded "Petit à petit, sans faire peur à personne."⁹⁴ This suggests that, although it had been over ten years since the task-force was officially formed,⁹⁵ Indigenous populations continued to be objectified and still had difficulty integrating personalized discourse into Canadian museums. Essentially, at least ten years ago, representations of Indigenous peoples and objects portrayed them more as ordered curiosities consistent with the colonial landscape described by the articles in *Sensible Objects* than as vivacious living communities with personalized, emotional,

⁹¹ Ibid, 209-210.

⁹² Butler, Shelley. *Contested Representations: Revisiting Into the Heart of Africa*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007, 8.

⁹³ Bolton, Stephanie. "Museums Taken to Task: Representing First Peoples at the McCord Museum of Canadian History." In *First Nations First Thoughts: The Impact of Indigenous Thought in Canada*, edited by Annis May Timpson, 145-69. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009, 159.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 160.

⁹⁵ In English, this translates to 'Little by little, so as not to frighten anybody.'

⁹⁶ Bolton's article is based on her master's thesis, originally published in 2004. Bolton, Stephanie. *An Analysis of the Task Force on Museums and First Peoples: The Changing Representation of Aboriginal Histories in Museums*. A Thesis In The Department of Art History. Montreal: Concordia University, 2004.

spiritual, and intellectual relationships with the world around them and as people whose objects served and were serving practical purposes in daily and spiritual life.

Although the CMHR exhibits are not as object-based as the cases I have cited, I have included these examples to demonstrate the history of representation of Indigenous populations in Canadian museums in order to provide a historical context to modern Canadian museology, even if this modern museology (and specifically the CMHR) has moved away from such an object-centred focus. Stripping Aboriginal values can as easily be done to narratives or people as it can to objects, and no matter what is contained in a museum it is always possible to superimpose dominant values coming from outside of Indigenous communities. I will not say that all non-Indigenous interpretations of Indigenous stories or objects are wrong, as this creates a dichotomy where non-Indigenous perspectives are considered de facto worthless by virtue of their origin in a non-Aboriginal landscape, and this mentality could contribute to a uniformity of perspective that may be counter-productive to intellectual examination of the role of Aboriginal peoples and artifacts in the Canadian museum landscape. This being said, however, it is necessary to be aware of who is telling a story or interpreting an object, in what sense they have authority to do so, and in whose interest they are performing these interpretations. The fundamental questions in Canadian museums (and comic books, for that matter) are these: Who has the authority to interpret the past? Are all interpretations equally valid, or are some interpreters to be afforded more authority than others? How do power dynamics privilege some interpretations and not others? Which interpretations are ultimately privileged, and is this privilege appropriate?

In the following paragraphs, I cite two articles written by Aboriginal curators describing their experiences curating more recent Aboriginal content in Canadian exhibits. Both of these exhibits are largely information-based, rather than object-based as the exhibits I have mentioned before, and both engage residential schools. The first article is written by Heather Igloliorte, an Inuk curator responsible for a recent exhibit on the Inuit experience in residential schools. The second was written by Tricia Logan, a Métis woman and former curator at the CMHR, following her departure from the museum. Both of these articles address the topic of exhibit representations of residential schools, and what implications these representations have for larger questions of Indigenous representation in Canada.

In Heather Igloliorte's 2011 article "We Were So Far Away": Exhibiting Inuit Oral Histories of Residential Schools,' she describes her experiences curating "We Were So Far Away," a 2008 exhibit about the Inuit experience of the Canadian residential school system. The exhibit was housed at Library and Archives Canada before touring throughout Northern Canada. It consisted of interviews of eight Inuit former residential school attendees who recounted the impact of residential schools on their lives before, during, and after the time they spent there. Igloliorte writes that the primary intended audience of this exhibit was other Inuit former residential school attendees, and that the goal of the exhibit was to "educate the public and support the healing efforts of Inuit within their communities."⁹⁷ One of her main challenges was to represent the interviewees' recollections without precipitating trauma or distress among visitors. "It has been our policy to approach openings as potential sites for the reinscription of trauma," Igloliorte writes.⁹⁸ To counteract this risk, warnings were placed outside the exhibit entrance, and during exhibit openings clinical and community-based healthcare teams were onsite and available if needed. Furthermore, each exhibit space possessed a quiet room, where possible, or a specialized seating area containing health resource materials in case any visitors were overwhelmed by the exhibit's content. "In this sense," Igloliorte concludes, "the guiding principle of the exhibition has been *protecting*."⁹⁹ The creation process and results of this exhibit paint a remarkably different picture than those contained in the other articles I cited above. Although this exhibit was about residential schools, it is unlikely to have been curated within a colonialist framework as it was overwhelmingly designed by Indigenous people for Indigenous people and with the specific intent of not harming Indigenous people in mind. Perhaps, this article seems to suggest, headway is being made towards a Canadian Indigenous museology free of colonialist attitudes.

Tricia Logan's article "National memory and museums: Remembering settler colonial genocide of Indigenous peoples in Canada" paints a different picture. In her article, Logan, a former curator at the CMHR, addresses several topics, including the legacy of colonial attitudes on museological representations of Indigenous populations in Canada,¹⁰⁰ the upsurge in government

⁹⁷ Igloliorte, Heather. "'We Were So Far Away': Exhibiting Inuit Oral Histories of Residential Schools." In *Curating Difficult Knowledge: Violent Pasts in Public Places*, 23-40. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, 30.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 35.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 36.

¹⁰⁰ Logan, Tricia. "National Memory and Museums: Remembering Settler Colonial Genocide of Indigenous Peoples in Canada." In *Remembering Genocide*. London: Routledge, 2014, 116.

involvement in Canadian museum curation¹⁰¹ and the government desire to effectuate nation-building that minimizes a narrative of Indigenous oppression (or attempts to mitigate it with discourses of reconciliation).¹⁰² “In Canada,” she writes, “there is a risk that the ‘celebratory discourse’ of museum-driven ‘reconciliation’ glosses over or sugar coats existing violations against Indigenous peoples.”¹⁰³ She supports her argument by describing her experience as a curator at the CMHR where, she writes, she was forced both to replace any mentions of ‘genocide’ or ‘settler colonial genocide’ with the word ‘colonialism.’¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, for every instance of violence or human rights abuses perpetrated against Canadian Indigenous populations that she included in museum exhibitry, she was forced to balance her writing with the inclusion of some kind of effort towards reconciliation.¹⁰⁵ She concludes

Movements such as Idle No More have motivated all generations of the First Peoples of North America. These voices are clear with the message that settler colonial genocide continues and human rights violations are historic, traumatic, and undoubtedly ongoing. Canada is still working to catch up with the inclusion of settler colonial genocide in public history institutions like museums.¹⁰⁶

Logan’s article paints a different picture than Igloliorte’s, and suggests that, while low-profile exhibits designed for Aboriginal audiences may be more likely to promote Aboriginal perspectives, government interpretations may not leave room for the perspective that Canada’s historical and present-day treatment of Aboriginal peoples could legitimately be considered a ‘genocide’ of some form or that government-sanctioned or tolerated human rights violations vis-à-vis Aboriginal people are ongoing.

Conclusion

In this literature review, I have attempted to outline the history of residential schools, the backgrounds of the media that I have chosen to examine, and some answers that other authors have given to the questions that gave rise to this thesis. Logan answers the question of whether museums continue to order Aboriginal experiences in colonial ways in the affirmative. Other writers (namely Christjohn et al., Grant, Woolford, Powell, and of course Logan) state that the idea that Canada has

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 117-118.

¹⁰² Ibid, 120.

¹⁰³ Logan, 120.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. Previously Logan had been ordered to “limit coverage of stories of Aboriginal children in the child welfare system, missing and murdered women in Canada and climate change. When asked to remove the word genocide, Logan resigned from her position.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Logan, 127.

committed a ‘genocide’ or ‘cultural genocide’ against Aboriginal peoples is more-or-less obvious, even within the narrow definitions in the United Nations Convention on Genocide.

In the following chapter, I will analyze how my sources approach the question of whether residential schools constituted a genocide, while also interpreting how stories and histories of residential school are moralized more broadly using other techniques that are likely to provoke moral responses among viewers and readers. In the final chapter, I will use my findings to make conclusions about whether there exists a disconnect between Aboriginal conceptions of the relative morality of residential schooling and officialised perspectives, whether a similar disconnect exists between perspectives championed in media directed towards younger people versus media directed towards older people, and what implications these conclusions may have for general discourses around residential schools’ histories and legacies in Canada.

Chapter 2: How Comic Books and the CMHR are Moralized

Introduction

In this chapter, I will examine three major ways in which my sources moralize (or fail to moralize) residential school history. These are: (1) how residential school narratives are constructed in ways likely to evoke the moral emotion of sympathy, for example by using techniques such as individualizing historical actors and characters, representing residential schools as having harmed a high proportion of their charges, and representing historical actors and/or characters as belonging to categories of high vulnerability. Secondly, I will (2) examine whether my sources explicitly moralize residential school histories by using moralized terms such as ‘abuse’ and ‘wrong.’ Thirdly (3) I will examine whether or not my sources portray residential schools as being a component of ‘genocide’ or ‘cultural genocide’ and whether this idea is legitimized by the authors of the content (in the case of the CMHR, by text or audio written by the museum, and in the case of comic books by statements made in the comic book through the voice of the author of the comic book.) Below, I describe and define some terms and frameworks of analysis that I will be using throughout this chapter.

Analytical Tools

The Authoritative Institutional Voice

In this paper, I will analyze how the authoritative institutional voice of the museum, defined as museum wall-text, museum-written narration, or captions that introduce or structure video clips, differs in the moral judgments that it makes about residential schools from other voices present in comic books or allowed to speak via other media in the museum. In the introduction to this paper, I mentioned how I selected comic books and museums to analyze because they possess different connotations of authority, and that different audiences may perceive comic books and museums as being more or less authoritative based on various factors, most importantly whether or not viewers are Aboriginal.

The institutional voice of the museum possesses a different connotation of authority than may be afforded to other voices allowed space to speak in exhibitry. Even if these other voices are allowed to tell their story, the authoritative institutional voice is likely to be given more weight or legitimacy by museum visitors, particularly those for whom the exhibition is designed. Pauline

Turner Strong writes that, “museum labels subtly index the public for which an exhibition is designed at the same time that they more overtly interpret displayed objects.”¹⁰⁷ She continues, writing that “labels index an intended public through the use of words that imply a particular perspective, (“discovery,” “encounter,” or “invasion”); shifters such as “we” and “they,” “here” and “there”; place names such as “new world” and “our land”; and racial, ethnic, national, or local markers.”¹⁰⁸ It is therefore possible that audiences not fitting the profile of the indexed audience would not find the content of the museum as authoritative as those for whom the labels were intended. (For example, Aboriginal people may not find the characterization of residential school history as authoritative as non-Aboriginal people if these characterizations do not represent Indigenous perspectives.) However, it is not so simple to state that if a visitor does not belong to the intended audience, that means they will not perceive the institutional voice as authoritative, as Strong continues and states that “when authors are unidentified, labels in a major institution bear its authoritative voice.”¹⁰⁹

Strong is echoed by James B. Gardner, who adds to her thoughts by explaining that the public plays its own role in this dynamic. It is not simply the labeling that creates authority, he contends, but the fact that audiences invest museums with this authority. Gardner writes,

I don’t take comfort in their finding that the public trusts museums “as much as they did their grandmothers.” That trust is apparently based on a perception that museums stand for authenticity and accuracy in a way that professors, teachers, and books do not. At first glance that may seem flattering, but Rosenzweig and Thelen explain that the public feel they can go to museums and interpret artifacts as they want, unmediated, without concern that ideas are being interposed between them and the objects. And that means the public really don’t get what museums do, that we [i.e. museums] too have perspectives, make choices, present arguments, just like our colleagues elsewhere in the profession.¹¹⁰

“The public needs to understand,” he continues, “how museums have shifted from preoccupation with the authenticity of artifacts to issues of significance and meaning; that the selection of artifacts for exhibition is itself a subjective act, a way of shaping perspective, establishing point of view; and that artifacts never simply stand as objective evidence.”¹¹¹ Gardner posits that the public does not understand this, and that the institutional authoritative voice of the museum allows the public to

¹⁰⁷ Turner Strong, Pauline. “Exclusive Labels: Indexing the National “We” in Commemorative and Oppositional Exhibitions.” *Museum Anthropology* 21, no. 1 (1997): 42-56. doi:10.1525/mua.1997.21.1.42, 44.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 44-45.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 45.

¹¹⁰ Gardner, James B. “Contested Terrain: History, Museums, and the Public.” *The Public Historian* 26, no. 4 (2004): 11-21. doi:10.1525/tph.2004.26.4.11, 13.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 15.

labour under the illusion that their understanding of objects and other museum content is not rooted in the perspective of the museum institution, and that institutional perspectives are not as vulnerable to being challenged by other readings as any other perspective taken and argued for in the practice of history.

Finally, in her article “State Authority and the Public Sphere,” Susan Ashley writes about how museums have traditionally been a repository of power, authority, and nationalism.¹¹² She notes that, while museums have traditionally been “seen as a hegemonic agent of the state [. . .] the institution is also considered an important space in the public sphere for the discussion, construction, and contestation of ideas.”¹¹³ This ideology of the museum-as-democratic-public-space, she continues, is not as democratic as it sounds, even in Canada. She writes

The use of the medium of museums as a voice of the state is highly manipulative, and is a source of disaffection among non-dominant groups when they think about museums. [. . .] African Canadians voice a discomfort in entering museums because of the overwhelming official presence. Henry has written extensively on the case of the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto where a controversial exhibit, *Into the Heart of Africa*, caused outrage among some African Canadians who interpreted the exhibit as a perpetuation of dominant culture racism. In these cases their fears relate to loss of control of and participation in the dialogue within the museum walls—the museum space is not theirs, it belongs to someone else. The museum is clearly not a public space equally accessible to all.¹¹⁴

She continues, writing that,

The limited nature of the public sphere has been pointed out by many scholars who agree that Habermas’ original [universally accessible] notion [of the public sphere] excluded access on the basis of gender, race and other characteristics, and implied participation in a unity based on the characteristics of European white males. Thus the public sphere shares with the notion of state authority the issue of power — domination and exclusion are implied here too. So we can add another layer to the problem of authority in museums: not only does authority and domination exist in the use of the museum as a voice of the state, but this power of exclusion can creep into its alternative use as a public site of contestation and dialogue.¹¹⁵

These three scholars highlight the enduring and problematic nature of the museum-as-authority. Although steps may be being made, in some cases, towards democratization of museum

¹¹² Ashley, Susan. “State Authority and the Public Sphere: Ideas on the Changing Role of the Museum as a Canadian Social Institution.” *Museum and Society* 3, no. 1 (March 2005): 5-17, 6-7.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

perspectives, museum exhibits continue to exercise authority by targeting particular audiences and creating particular belongings. They may, similarly, be a victim of visitors' visions of them as authoritative institutions immune to criticism. Finally, even institutions that appear democratic may struggle to implement truly democratic practices in their exhibit design and decision-making about which content to privilege, particularly where nationalism and state authority and unity may be at stake. The institutional voice of the CMHR is not exempt from these scholars' characterizations of authority in museums, and particularly museums of a national and state-serving mandate, as it is itself a national museum and must likely bow to any pressure the state (or other major influencers, such as donors) put on it. The above scholars have proven that the CMHR's institutional voice is likely to be seen as authoritative by many of its visitors, and later in the paper I will discuss whether this authoritative institutional voice is used to allow Indigenous voices to speak in ways that cast them as equally authoritative as the institution itself.

CMHR Layout, Videos, Hierarchy of Information, and a Note on Persuasion

At the time that I visited the museum, the layout of the CMHR ordered content about residential schools into several disparate sections of the museum.¹¹⁶ "Canadian Journeys", the largest museum gallery that addressed residential schools, was located on the second floor. It consisted of a large, mostly open, space surrounded by a number of story niches that recounted different stories of efforts to gain human rights in Canada. One of these story niches was devoted to residential schools; it was the only exhibit in the museum that exclusively addressed residential schools. In this story niche several photographs were displayed of groups of children at residential school, a few staff members, a photograph of Duncan Campbell Scott (Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs during the period of greatest growth of the residential school system), a photograph of an Aboriginal man with his children (his children are dressed in European-style clothing), and a photograph of Anglican Priest T.B.R. Westgate holding a very young Aboriginal child. It also contained a video, titled *Childhood Denied: Indian Residential Schools and their Legacy*, which ran for about 10 minutes. This video clip was narrated by a museum narrator and interspersed with stories from Aboriginal people about their residential school experiences. The video was placed in

¹¹⁶ From my understanding, this is still more or less true – exhibitory has been added, but the fundamental ordering of the information hasn't and many of the exhibits are still the same. Still, I speak in the past tense as I have not had the opportunity to visit the museum a second time.

a child-sized desk at an awkward height for watching; visitors who wished to watch the entire thing were forced to stand and look down at what I found to be an awkward angle. There was no seating.¹¹⁷

Other content related to residential schools was relegated to other floors and galleries. The majority of the fourth floor of the museum was devoted to a large exhibit entitled “Examining the Holocaust.” On the same floor, another smaller exhibit entitled “Breaking the Silence” held displays about the five genocides officially recognized by the Canadian government. This exhibit was home to small niches that visitors could enter. Inside the niches were small video terminals that presented video clips about a variety of human rights abuses around the world. Some of these clips addressed residential schools. These videos were not narrated by the museum, although they were captioned and sometimes edited by them. The niches also presented a wealth of other video clips, which visitors could choose or choose not to watch depending on their particular area of interest. In front of these video terminals, there was seating.

Level 4 of the museum housed an exhibit called “Actions Count.” In this exhibit there was a small display about Project of Heart, an initiative designed to memorialize children who died at residential school. Several photographs of participants painting tiles in remembrance of these children and a video about the project were available for viewing.

According to Mayr, Zahn, and Hesse in their article “Supporting Information Processing in Museums with Adaptive Technology,”

There is only a limited time available to hold visitors’ attention. The average visitor spent 19 minutes in an exhibition and 51% of visitors looked at less than half the exhibits available. If visitors are provided with advanced organizers more mental effort is available to process the information presented: When homogenous exhibit clusters were labeled accordingly by Falk (1997) visitors’ concept development was enhanced.”¹¹⁸

In other words, there existed a clear hierarchy of information between residential school content and other content (most notably Holocaust content.) The fact that the exhibit that addressed the

¹¹⁷ While filming this video for later research, I remember wondering “how bad would it look if I squatted?” While I have NOT performed a quantitative survey on the impact of concrete flooring and lower back pain on the length of time museum visitors spend watching a video, I suspect that this alone would cause museum visitors to move on quickly.

¹¹⁸ Mayr, Eva, Carmen Zahn, and Friedrich W. Hesse. “Supporting Information Processing in Museums with Adaptive Technology.” Proceedings of 29th Annual Cognitive Science Society, Austin, Texas. Accessed August 3, 2016. <http://csjarchive.cogsci.rpi.edu/proceedings/2007/docs/p1289.pdf>, 1289.

Holocaust possessed a unified theme made it more likely for visitors to retain information about it. Contrast this with content about residential schools and other human rights abuses perpetrated against Aboriginal peoples, which were presented in a disparate fashion all over the museum. This creates a hierarchy of information as, based on this research, it seems more likely that visitors would retain information about the Holocaust (an event that has comparatively little to do with Canada in particular) than retain information about Canada's treatment of Indigenous populations.

The disparate locations and relatively diminutive scale of displays and content about residential schools ensured that residential school history operated at a disadvantage within the museum's hierarchy of information, and not only because other exhibitions took up more space or possessed enhanced concept development. In order to see all media about residential school, visitors would likely have had to spend three days in the museum (as I did) if they did not know where to find this media. While the story niche about residential schools in the "Canadian Journeys" exhibit was fairly obvious, the videos in other seemingly unrelated parts of the museum were not, and as residential school content was not presented in the same place, visitors hoping to see it would likely have been forced to hunt all over the museum for the content as I did.

To add to this location and size-based hierarchy of information, some information presented in video clips is subject to a different sort of information hierarchy. In Beverly Serrell's 2002 article "Are they Watching? Visitors and Videos in Exhibitions," she analyzes data about video attraction power, holding time, and holding power from a museum exhibit about women's health.¹¹⁹ She then contrasts the data she collects with data collected by other museum professionals for videos in other museum exhibits. In total, this data comprises about 45 videos.¹²⁰ The data indicated that, on average, 32 percent of museum visitors were attracted to videos, and the average time spent watching was a mere 137 seconds.¹²¹ The highest attraction powers reached only 60% of visitors and the data showed that a 70% watch time was exceptional.¹²² There was a strong correlation between lower attraction and lower watch-times and competition from other videos.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Serrell, Beverly. "Are They Watching? Videos and Visitors in Exhibitions." *Curator: The Museum Journal* 45, no. 1 (January 2002): 51.

¹²⁰ Admittedly, a fairly small sample size.

¹²¹ Serrell, "Are They Watching?", 61-62.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

Since most of the videos at the CMHR did not possess factors correlated with high attraction rates and watch times, such as having a place to sit down, paying extra money to see them, being stand-alone videos, or being presented in special chambers that make exit in the middle of the video disruptive, it would be fair to assume that the attraction power to videos here was only around 32 percent, suggesting a pronounced hierarchy in which media was consumed by visitors to the CMHR at the time of my field work. Most museum wall-text can be read much more quickly than a video can be seen.¹²⁴ Even if there were no hierarchy of information distinguishing wall-text and videos in the sense of likelihood of consumption, a hierarchy of information could still exist even within the videos. If moralizing content or content that features Aboriginal people's own voices (albeit curated by the museum) occurred closer to the end of videos at the CMHR, visitors would have been less likely to hear or engage the opinions expressed during the latter half of the video. For this reason, throughout this paper, I will be analyzing at what points moralizing information about residential schools was offered with respect to the most likely points at which visitors might stop watching video clips based on statistics taken from the research done in Serrell's article. By doing this, I can crudely estimate whether visitors are likely to be exposed to particular perspectives or moral judgments about residential schools.

Finally, the psychological processes by which people are persuaded to believe things is important to mention here in tandem with other types of hierarchy present in the museum. The Elaboration Likelihood Mode, described by Richard Petty and John Cacioppo, holds that highly elaborated judgements (i.e. judgements that are thought deeply about and reasoned) are more likely to be made when a person feels particularly interested in the subject matter,¹²⁵ and when that subject matter impacts the self.¹²⁶ Highly elaborated judgements are more likely to endure than low-elaborated judgements.¹²⁷ However, low-elaborated judgments are more likely to be made on other bases, such as the attractiveness of the person presenting the information,¹²⁸ the status of the person

¹²⁴ It is more difficult to judge if museum visitors read wall-text as tools that aid in counting views for videos do not exist for text. See: McManus, Paulette M. "Oh, Yes, They Do: How Museum Visitors Read Labels and Interact with Exhibit Text." *Curator: The Museum Journal* 32, no. 3 (September 1989): 174-89.

¹²⁵ Petty, Richard E. "The Elaboration Likelihood Model." Edited by Paul A. M., Van. In *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology*, by Pablo Brinol, edited by Tory E. Higgins and Arie W. Kruglanski, 224-45. Vol. 1. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2012, 233.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 229.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 227.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 233.

presenting the information as an expert,¹²⁹ lack of motivation to think about the topic or, when arguments about the topic are weak, distraction.¹³⁰ Judgements made through low elaboration are easier to change, however.¹³¹ This is relevant at the CMHR, as those who are disinterested in learning about residential schools are more likely to make swift judgements that the perspectives that the museum portrays are accurate portrayals of what happened. While those with a particular interest in residential schooling may not make swift judgements in this way, it is important to note that many people coming into the museum may not be particularly interested in the history of residential schooling or of human rights abuses against Aboriginal peoples in Canada and will likely not be given much more than mere exposure at the museum. Furthermore, they may simply accept the museum as an authority. These facts, added to the distractions inherent in much of the exhibitry about residential schools, serve to create a further hierarchy of information as, at the time of my visit to the museum, visitors were not provided with things that encouraged them to elaborate their thoughts about residential school, such as exhibitry without distraction, a personal reason to be interested in residential school history, or a reason to question the museum's authority.

Parts of this paper may seem like a fairly simplistic list of portrayals of human rights abuses against Aboriginal children in residential school, but it is important to keep in mind that these portrayals possess different likelihoods of being convincing. The biggest difference is that nearly all people who read the comic books will do so out of their own interest (this is correlated with a high motivation to think about things), whereas people who go to the CMHR may have a high motivation to go to the museum, but are also likely to be guided by other interests. These interests may be social (my family is going, I will look smart if I go), may be related to a sense of belonging (I am Jewish and I would like to see the Holocaust gallery), and may be purely intellectual but unrelated to residential school history. However, what is important is that, for many people who visited the CMHR around the same time I did, their experience of the residential school narrative was unlikely to go beyond mere exposure due to the hierarchies of information that I have already mentioned. It is with this in mind that I would encourage readers of this paper to view my lists of moralized and unmoralized content, not as the be-all and end-all of the paper, but one facet of analysis that also assumes that hierarchies of information are useful in the analysis of specific moralizations and that, although both

¹²⁹ Ibid, 232.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 229.

¹³¹ Ibid, 227.

media may possess significant negative moralizations, the understandings they are likely to provoke differ because of likelihood of elaborative thinking on the part of visitors. This certainly marks a likely difference between the ways consumers of the two media understand residential school history.

A Moral Framework

This paper is not an empirical or quantitative study. I have not taken a sample of people to the CMHR or asked them to read comic books and then presented them with a survey about their impressions of residential school history afterwards. In lieu of this, one of the strategies I employ is to transpose the conclusions of more empirical researchers in the social sciences who research the foundations on which people base their moral responses. In the first section of my analysis of moralization, I will employ the research of Jonathan Haidt; Anton Dijkster; Deborah Small, George Loewenstein and Paul Slovic; and Tehila Kogut and Ilana Ritov. Haidt's research attempts to answer the question of how people form moral judgements.¹³² While recognizing that the moralization of particular events or actions is culturally determined, Haidt holds that that the action of moralizing is governed by a suite of "moral emotions."¹³³ He defines these as "those emotions that are linked to the interests or welfare either of society as a whole or at least of persons other than the judge or agent."¹³⁴ The moral emotions typically also inspire some kind of action that will either work to benefit others or to benefit the social order, though this action may not actually be taken.¹³⁵ According to Haidt, sympathy is one such moral emotion, and it is this one I will examine in my analysis.¹³⁶

The reason I have chosen to examine the moral emotion of sympathy and not the many other possible moral emotions that could be analyzed is because it appears to be the moral emotion the most in vogue in North America, particularly among people with high levels of education. Jonathan Haidt and Craig Joseph write that research on morality has "been dominated by politically liberal researchers" and that this "has led to an inappropriate narrowing of the moral domain to issues of harm/care and fairness/reciprocity/justice. Morality in most cultures (and for

¹³² Haidt, Jonathan. "The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgement." *Psychological Review* 108, no. 4 (2001): 814-34. Accessed December 3, 2015. Doi: 10.1037//0033-295X.108.4.814.

¹³³ Haidt, Jonathan. "The Moral Emotions." In *Handbook of Affective Sciences*, 852-70. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, 852.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 853.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 859.

social conservatives in Western cultures), is in fact much broader, and includes issues of ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity.”¹³⁷ I have chosen sympathy as a moral metric for two reasons: the first is that much academic research has been performed on how it is provoked due to the biases that Haidt and Joseph have noted; the second is that Haidt and Joseph seem to indicate that in Western cultures morality tends to be seen through the lenses of whether or not someone or something is being harmed or neglected and whether things are fair and/or just. This is, as they admit, not universal and socially conservative factions in Western culture do view morality more broadly. This is an area that demands further research and is a fundamental weakness of this paper, which by focussing only on sympathy, surely tells only a part of the story. This being said, however, the fact that it appears that the Western moral landscape is generally dominated more by emotions such as sympathy than it is by questions of impurity or authority means that, at the very least, beginning to study this from the viewpoint of sympathy gets a significant portion of the analysis of the moralization of residential school histories out of the way.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Haidt, Jonathan, Craig Joseph, S. Laurence, and S. Stich. "The Moral Mind: How Five Sets of Innate Intuitions Guide the Development of Many Culture-specific Virtues, and Perhaps Even Modules." In *The Innate Mind: Foundations and the Future*, edited by P. Carruthers, 367-83. Vol. 3. Oxford University Press, 2008, 367-8.

¹³⁸ I am not able to fully analyze this in this paper, but it is my belief that Canadian society has undergone a shift in the primacy of the different pillars of morality since the residential school era. It is now more or less universally believed that residential schools were “a bad thing” (even when people express caveats such as, “they were doing their best” or “they really wanted to help and just got it wrong,”) and few Canadians would publicly defend residential schooling even if they did believe that it was morally conscionable, as the societal response to such statements would almost certainly be negative. However, during the time that residential schools were operating they were believed to be morally conscionable by many. These opinions which can perhaps be attributed to the other pillars of morality. Aboriginal practices and culture may have evoked an idea of impurity among Euro-Canadians, they may have felt that Aboriginal peoples undermined the authorities in these societies (authorities that may have included church, government, or simply social mores), or they may have assumed that condoning Aboriginal practices constituted a betrayal of their own group’s practices. This hypothesis is little more than speculation and demands further research; however, it could explain why Canadian society has performed such an about-face vis-à-vis certain aspects of the history of interactions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.

Furthermore, other moral questions, such as notions of ‘impurity,’ group loyalty, and others can also be considered moral concerns and provide further explanation for how some questions formerly considered differently moralized (such as homosexuality in Canada) have either lost their moral currency (fewer people think of homosexuality as an example of ‘impurity’) or have gained a different moral currency (gay marriage is linked to the moral question of universal equality.) Smoking is another example. Smoking and smoking in front of others is generally considered “harmful,” and in Canadian society has gone from being a merely personal choice to a moral one within the last thirty years or so. Even when people only harm themselves (for example, by smoking outside away from others), people who smell smoke on their clothes can make disparaging comments or even engage in social rejection. This may be an example of “impurity” based morality, and demonstrates that while there has likely been a shift away from viewing morality through this lens in Canada, there has by no means been a complete abandonment of this type of moral framework.

Researchers have identified several factors that increase the likelihood of sympathetic response. In one study, Dijkers concludes that likelihood of sympathetic response is correlated with high perceived vulnerability.¹³⁹ People, such as children and the elderly, who are perceived as vulnerable tend to garner greater sympathetic responses when harmed than people who are not perceived to be vulnerable.¹⁴⁰ Another factor that tends to provoke sympathy is a large perceived proportion of harm; where a high proportion of people belonging to a group are perceived to have been harmed, sympathetic response is higher.¹⁴¹ Finally, individuals tend to provoke a greater sympathetic response than groups who are portrayed as undergoing a similar type or quantity of harm.¹⁴² In the first analytical section of this chapter, I will analyze whether Aboriginal characters belong to a category of high vulnerability, what proportion of Aboriginal people are represented as being harmed, and whether or not they are identified as individuals. By doing this, I will be able to sketch the relative likelihood of a sympathetic response from viewers of my two examined media, and will thus be able to come to a conclusion about whether the CMHR or comic books are more or less likely to provoke the moral emotion of sympathy.

2.1 Likelihood of Sympathetic Response to Aboriginal Characters

Introduction

In this first section of the chapter, I will use the framework I outlined above to form conclusions about how likely my sources are to provoke moralizing responses that stem from the moral emotion of sympathy. I will begin (1) by examining the level of likely perceived vulnerability resulting from age, relative proportion of harm, and level of character individualization represented in comic books

¹³⁹ Dijkers, Anton. "A Theory of Vulnerability Based Morality." *Emotion Review* 6, no. 2 (2014): 175-83. doi:10.1177/1754073913514120, 176.

¹⁴⁰ Dijkers, Anton. "Perceived Vulnerability as a Common Basis of Moral Emotions." *British Journal of Social Psychology* 49 (2010): 416.

¹⁴¹ Small, Deborah A., George Loewenstein, and Paul Slovic. "Sympathy and Callousness: The Impact of Deliberative Thought on Donations to Identifiable and Statistical Victims." *Organisational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 102, no. 2 (March 2007): 143-53. See also Kogut, Tehila, and Ilana Ritov. 2005. "The "Identifiable Victim" effect: an identified group, or just a single individual?" *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, 157-167.

¹⁴² Kogut, Tehila, and Ilana Ritov. 2005. "The "Identifiable Victim" effect: an identified group, or just a single individual?" *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, 157-167.

before (2) discussing the same factors at the CMHR. In the museum I focus less on vulnerability due to features of the museum medium that make presenting high perceived vulnerability more difficult.

2.1.1 How Sympathy is Provoked in Comic Book Sources

In the comic books I surveyed, it is always clear that the Aboriginal people involved in or feeling the effects of the residential school system are being harmed. In five out of seven of the comic books included in this survey, the victims are children. This puts them in a category of high perceived vulnerability. They are typically individualized, tend to be identified by name, and are sometimes identified by age as well. As such, they are likely to provoke viewers' sympathy. Furthermore, none of the comic books analyzed include any narrative where a child did well or thrived in residential school, or even enjoyed moments of their residential school experience. Because of this, I have concluded that the relative proportion of harm represented is very high. I present examples to support these claims below.

In *lost innocence*, the two protagonists of the story are children who are identified by name early on. The boy is called Umquisawa, and the girl Maltaless.¹⁴³ However, when they arrive at residential school, they are rechristened David and Mary. This is not only a demonstration of how Aboriginal children were stripped of culture; less obviously, they are also being stripped of the very thing that tends to make people feel sympathy for others: their names.¹⁴⁴ *Lost innocence* is one of the less explicit of the comic books in this survey;¹⁴⁵ in the ensuing pages Umquisawa/David gets yelled at for wetting the bed,¹⁴⁶ Maltaless/Mary gets whacked on the hand with a ruler,¹⁴⁷ and they are forced to eat terrible food.¹⁴⁸ In each case, it is clear that these are examples of harm, and based on the studies cited earlier, it can be assumed that the children's hardship is likely to provoke sympathy among readers, the level of which is likely to be higher due to their age and identification. This serves to create a narrative where it is very likely that their treatment would be judged as morally wrong. Finally, in this comic book, there are only three identified Aboriginal children characters. Two of these characters undergo physical and emotional abuse, and one's death of an unidentified illness

¹⁴³ Mitchell and Audibert, *lost innocence*, 7.

¹⁴⁴ See Kogut and Ritov, "The Identifiable Victim."

¹⁴⁵ It does not engage the issue of sexual abuse, and the physical abuse it engages is much less harsh than that portrayed in other comic books in this survey.

¹⁴⁶ Mitchell and Audibert, 15.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 19.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 30-32.

(likely tuberculosis) that no staff member attempts to treat is implied at the end of the comic book.¹⁴⁹ The represented proportion of harm in this book is very high at 100% of all Aboriginal characters, suggesting that a high level of sympathy and consequent high level of negative moral judgement would be provoked among readers.

In *Sugar Falls*, children are the subject of the story once again, and once again they are individualized and identified by name. Betty is the woman telling the story, and her best friend at residential school is called Flora. They are the only identified residential school attendees in the comic book, and are both abused. Betty (known as Betsy during her time at residential school) is physically abused. She endures rough scrubbing of her body at the hands of a nun,¹⁵⁰ being strapped with a ruler for bad penmanship even though she was not told how to perform the task correctly,¹⁵¹ and even loses her hearing on one side after a nun kicks her in the ear for speaking Cree.¹⁵² Additionally, both Betsy and Flora are sexually abused by a school priest.¹⁵³ Eventually, Flora tries to escape from the residential school, but drowns as Betsy watches from the window.¹⁵⁴ All throughout the comic book, it is clear that the characters are suffering harm, and the fact that they are clearly children and identified by name increases the likelihood that this comic book would provoke the moral emotion of sympathy in its readers. Additionally, as both of the identified residential school attendees in the comic book are abused, and as there is no statement about the number of residential school attendees who were attending school at that time, a high perceived proportion of harm and a consequent high rate of sympathetic response can be assumed.¹⁵⁵

7 Generations: A Plains Cree Saga, is similarly likely to provoke a high degree of sympathetic response. In this narrative, two brothers, James and Thomas, go to residential school. They are the

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 51.

¹⁵⁰ Robertson, David Alexander. *Sugar Falls: A Residential School Story*, 19.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 23-24.

¹⁵² Ibid, 28-29.

¹⁵³ Ibid, 27.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 32-33.

¹⁵⁵ It is important to note that the fact that I have not analyzed how race or background can impact sympathetic feeling to people of a different race or background. The reason I have not done this is not because I believe race to be irrelevant to questions of sympathetic response (research shows that it is very relevant: see Kogut and Rihov). However, because all of my sources only portray Indigenous suffering, and none portray settler Canadians as sympathetic characters, I am only comparing narratives of Indigenous suffering with other narratives of Indigenous suffering. For this reason, I concluded that discussions of whether settler-Canadians felt more or less sympathy towards Indigenous suffering than they do to non-Indigenous suffering is irrelevant. The point here is whether sympathy-provoking techniques are used in equal measure across the different media and whether Aboriginal children and adults affected by residential schools are drawn as sympathetic characters in general.

only identified residential school attendees in the section of the comic book that engages residential school experiences. James is older, and appears to be an adolescent;¹⁵⁶ his brother Thomas, whose age is not given, appears to be a pre-adolescent between ten and twelve years of age.¹⁵⁷ Thomas, is sexually and physically abused by a priest,¹⁵⁸ and then humiliated by being forced to sit in a hallway all day with a pair of underwear on his head because he has wet his bed.¹⁵⁹ James is physically assaulted by a priest¹⁶⁰ and is forced to work on the grounds instead of learning in a classroom.¹⁶¹ Both boys are shown as being harmed, James because he is denied education and physically abused, and Thomas because of the physical and sexual abuse and public humiliation. Both are also individualized. Only Thomas belongs to a category of high perceived vulnerability as he is a young child. Finally, as these are the only individualized residential school attendees in the book, and as the number of other attendees is not given, the relative proportion of the number of children who experienced harm in residential school in this narrative is high. Although James is not portrayed as belonging to a category of high perceived vulnerability, the comic book displays all the other aspects known to increase sympathetic response, including the individualization and identification by name of victims of harm and a high perceived proportion of harm.

In *UNeducation: A Residential School Graphic Novel*, no residential school attendees are identified by name, though some are presented as individual children. However, portrayals of abuse abound and no portrayal of any residential school attendee who is explicitly not abused is included in any of the narratives. In one story, a young girl's head is slammed on a desk after she addresses a nun in Blackfoot.¹⁶² In another, a young child is tied down and sexually abused in a barn.¹⁶³ Both of the victims in these stories are young, which indicates that they would be the subjects of a high degree of sympathy from readers. Their lack of identification by name, however, suggests a lower degree of provocation of sympathy than in the other comic books in my survey. In this book, the relative proportion of harm is roughly as high as it is in the comic books I have already analyzed; there is not a single interaction that an Aboriginal child or adult has with a non-Aboriginal person or institution

¹⁵⁶ Robertson, David Alexander. *7 Generations: A Plains Cree Saga*, 76-77.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 84-86.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 87-88.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 75.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 79.

¹⁶² Eaglespeaker, *UNeducation: A Residential School Graphic Novel Volume 1*, 59.

¹⁶³ Ibid, 60.

that is not negative or harmful to the Aboriginal person in all the comic book sections of the book. Furthermore, one story at the end likely hits many of the marks resulting in a high degree of sympathetic response. This story is about an elderly man (the elderly are also in a category of high perceived vulnerability) who recounts how, after being sexually abused in residential school, he went on to sexually abuse others. Eventually he went to jail before being released and spending time in a halfway house. At the end of his story he concludes “my life is unredeemed.”¹⁶⁴ Although this man is not identified by name, he is somewhat individualized, and he does demonstrate that he has been harmed and has carried this harm throughout his life. In conclusion, this book employs all the techniques that provoke sympathy except for identifying characters by name. The representation of the proportion of harm stands at 100%, and victims of harm are individualized and belong to categories of high vulnerability. This results in a significant likelihood of a high degree of sympathetic response from readers.

Finally, in *The Outside Circle*, characters are divided between high-vulnerability and low-vulnerability groups. While the main character, Pete, is an adult in the In Search of Your Warrior program, his uncle Ray Carver comes to visit him.¹⁶⁵ Ray starts to tell Pete about Pete’s grandparents (Ray’s parents), who met in residential school and married at sixteen.¹⁶⁶ The panels then turn to Ray’s own childhood, where his father and mother struggled to make ends meet and where his father occasionally beat him.¹⁶⁷ A panel shows Ray as a young child crying, with a caption that says, “[my father] caught me once and slapped my face over and over again. Told me I was useless. Told me he was going to give me the “school treatment.””¹⁶⁸ Ray’s position as a child points to a high position of vulnerability and the use of the term “school treatment” contextualizes the abuse as being a result of residential schooling. Because he is portrayed as a child, Ray is thus likely to arouse a high degree of sympathy for the fact that he is a victim of intergenerational abuse related to residential schooling. Additionally, both the proportion of harm represented in this book and the level of individualization of characters are high, although proportion of harm does not reach 100 percent as it does in some of the other comic books I have analyzed. In one Aboriginal counsellor’s family, she draws a family tree that includes 22 family members. Of these, ten struggled with addiction, ten were physically or

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 81.

¹⁶⁵ LaBoucane-Benson, Patti. *The Outside Circle: A Graphic Novel*, 85.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 86-87.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 88.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 88.

sexually abused, three died in residential school, and two became sexual abusers themselves. In total only six out of 22 did not experience any of these hardships or abuses.¹⁶⁹ These family members are individualized by name but not represented as characters, which suggests at least some likelihood that they will inspire sympathy. Of course, the main characters in the comic book are all individualized and named as well, and their hardships are contextualized as being a result of residential schools and other abuses against Aboriginal people, suggesting a high proportion of residential school-created harm even for Aboriginal people who did not go to residential school.¹⁷⁰ This is likely to negatively moralize residential schools and their legacy by provoking a high degree of sympathetic response among readers, even though most characters are not represented as belonging to categories of high perceived vulnerability.

2.1.2 Provocation of Sympathy at the CMHR

While it was also likely to provoke sympathetic responses to persons harmed by residential schools, the CMHR used fewer techniques that are likely to provoke sympathy, rendering its representations of residential schools less negatively moralized when using likelihood of sympathetic response as a framework of analysis. Victims of abuse were often not represented in categories of high perceived vulnerability, and stories of residential school did not always represent harm as a main theme, thereby reducing the relative proportion of perceived harm. There were a few instances where happy moments or beneficial aspects of residential schools were discussed, and there was less individualization of people who experienced or experience harm in or as a result of residential school. Furthermore, hierarchies of information that did not put content about residential schools together likely resulted in an overall lower level of engagement. To add to this, the fact that many museum visitors are likely less interested than the readers of my comic book sources in residential school history is likely to further skew the amount of moralization. Because visitors were less likely in the museum to engage in reasoned highly-elaborated thought-processes due to distraction, lack of interest, or an assumption about the museum constituting an authority that need not be questioned, they may have been less likely to see residential school history as extremely negatively moralized because, overall, the museum did not present residential school content with the same level of negative moralization present in my comic book sources.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 60-61.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 60-61, 23.

Before I begin giving examples, it is important to first acknowledge that some of these differences between levels of moralization at the CMHR and in comic books are likely due to the museum medium. In comic books, it is easy to represent children being abused as drawings, because they are not real children. The idea of creating something similar that would be more appropriate in a museum context (such as a short filmed dramatization of life at a residential school) carries with it distinct challenges. If real children were used as actors, it would likely raise ethical questions to have them act the part of an abused child. Furthermore, although it is not absolutely necessary for museums to make generalizations instead of individualizing people on museum panels, it is standard practice in museums to tend more towards providing general background information in lieu of representing one or a few personalized narratives in wall text.¹⁷¹ However, it would certainly have been possible for the museum to display some of these comic books in the exhibit as examples of Indigenous-directed narratives of residential schooling. In reality, all Aboriginal-produced media was mediated by the museum, and what was displayed tended to be relegated to upstairs galleries where the main focus of the exhibit was not residential schooling.

All this being said, this lesser amount of individualization is significant, as is the relatively smaller focus on stories of harm and a consequent smaller perceived proportion of harm. Globally, I contend that the museum represented residential schools in ways that were less likely to provoke sympathetic responses than the comic books I have discussed and that, because of this, people would likely have made weaker moral judgements about residential school and their legacy from looking at the exhibitry at the CMHR than they would from reading the comic book sources included in this paper.

2.1.1.2 Wall Text

I begin my analysis with the authoritative institutional voice of the CMHR wall-text in the small story niche about residential schools located in the larger “Canadian Journeys” exhibition. In the wall text of this niche, the introductory panel stated,

thousands of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children were torn from their homes and sent to Indian Residential Schools. Canada’s government used these schools, run by Catholic and Protestant churches, to assimilate Aboriginal children into the dominant culture. Many students suffered neglect and abuse.”

¹⁷¹ Igloliorte’s exhibit appears to be an exhibit where this is not done.

Here it is clear that it was a highly vulnerable population of children that were harmed, although proportion of harm does not seem as high as the proportion of harm displayed in my comic book sources. “Many students” suffered neglect and abuse according to the panel, but not “most,” as seems to have been consistently implied throughout the comic books.

Sympathetic response is less likely for other reasons as well. Of the 12 photographs that the museum selected to display on the wall in this exhibit, only one showed an individual Aboriginal child (she is being held by a priest), and none identified the children by name or by age. Six of the pictures, most of which displayed groups of children at residential school, were captioned in large letters with the name of the school and the date, but no mention of abuse. The other photographs, which were captioned in much smaller print and whose captions were not juxtaposed with the photographs they are meant to caption, did sometimes mention abuse. However, none individualized the people who underwent this abuse. Instead, phrases like “many former students recall abuse, neglect, and loneliness at the school,” “Aboriginal clothing, languages, and traditions were forbidden at the schools,” and “students were often isolated from their families for months” were displayed. In none of these statements are any Aboriginal children individualized. Significant too is the fact that they were not even explicitly identified as children, but as “students.” The use of this word should raise serious questions, considering that many Aboriginal children were minimally educated at the schools, but instead were forced to work; however, this fact was not at all engaged on the wall.¹⁷² All of these things suggest a lower perceived proportion of harm than is represented in the comic books. Lower levels of perceived vulnerability are also likely, as the content did not make it as explicit as comic book sources that *children*, as a category of high perceived vulnerability, were often isolated from their families for months and many of the photograph captions did not mention abuse, although the photographs depicted children.

2.1.2.2 Video Clips

As I have mentioned before, it is difficult in museum videos to present characters belonging to highly vulnerable populations; however, it was pointed out to me that the museum could have created a video that contained photographs of specific children with voice-over from their adult selves

¹⁷² Please see the introduction to this paper for my explanation of why I use the term “former residential school attendees” in my analysis

recounting their experiences at residential school.¹⁷³ Therefore, in this section, I will focus primarily on represented proportion of harm and individualization; however I maintain that, had the museum wanted to, more could have been done to present victims of abuse at residential school as belonging to vulnerable populations, and that this would likely have increased the sympathetic impact of the exhibits.

Located in the “Canadian Journeys” story niche about residential schools, *Childhood Denied: Indian Residential Schools and Their Legacy*, at 10m 20s in length, was the longest video available about residential schools in the museum.¹⁷⁴ Throughout this video, stories of abuse and sadness abound. For the first three and a half minutes, the tone of the video is dark, a mixture of former attendees recalling the pain of leaving their families, and their stories of abuse intermingled with the authoritative voice of the narrator. Former attendee Simon Hogaluk recalls being forced into a plane. Jules Daigneault recalls how his name was replaced with a number. Paul Andrew talks about how “you’re told that your culture is the culture of the devil” and Sa’na Peters recounts a story of a nun burning her with an iron when she would not iron as she was supposed to. Then, the narrator says, “Yet even in the midst of this darkness, there are moments of light.” Former attendee Jules Daigneault goes on to tell of an unnamed staff member bringing him a pair of skates, and how he learned how to skate. “Bobby Orr,” was born,” he says, smiling. Then he returns to a narrative of sadness. “Sometimes it was kind of fun but, uh, 90 percent of the time it was sad.” Still, this moment of discussion of a pleasurable moment experienced at residential school is significant as nothing of the sort is discussed in the comic books. It is already clear that the relative proportion of harm is represented as being lower than that represented in the majority of comic books in my survey.

This is not the only instance in the museum where residential schools were engaged as something other than a series of moments of harm. In a video in the upper level “Breaking the Silence” video niche, an elderly Persis Gruben describes her time at residential school between 1930 and 1933 at Shingle Point, without once mentioning any kind of abuse. “There was no running water,” she states. “We had to get ice and melt it for drinking water. There was no electricity. We had to get firewood all year round. Kids today are very lucky. They have gyms and areas inside to

¹⁷³ Dr. Erica Lehrer, Personal Communication

¹⁷⁴ This video is located in the story niche of the “Canadian Journeys” exhibit, the same small exhibit from which I took the wall text in the previous section.

play in. In those days we had nothing except the outdoors.” She laughs. She does not appear to bear any resentment about this fact.¹⁷⁵ In another story in the same video, a woman recounts how a Mrs. Holman brought her a plate of food. “The only thing my little Inuk mind could think was ‘it’s cooked,’” she recounts. She thought the mashed potatoes was a pile of snow, and she found it odd that Mrs. Holman would not know that green berries (in this case, a pile of peas) would make her sick. Although this experience may have seemed strange for a child, it can hardly be qualified as abuse and does not appear to be cast this way. In this video, two out of six of the anecdotes have nothing to do with overt abuse and may even be interpreted as humorous reminiscences. It also bears mentioning that, because the videos in the “Breaking the Silence” gallery were not presented in an exhibit about residential school and were in competition with many other videos, they were quite unlikely to be seen by visitors, and so visitors who saw the video *Childhood Denied* in the story niche on the first level were more likely to get any impressions about residential schooling in the museum from there. However, considering the fact that, like *Childhood Denied*, these videos in the “Breaking the Silence” gallery presented neutral or positive memories of residential school and, like the wall-text that appeared in “Canadian Journeys” they created a narrative with an overall smaller proportion of perceived harm than is present in comic books, it is fair to conclude that the CMHR represented residential schools as having perpetrated a smaller proportion of harm than comic books portray. In fact, it is not only a smaller proportion of perceived harm that is at play here, but a number of positive and quasi-positive perspectives towards residential schools. As Tricia Logan wrote in her article about her experience curating the CMHR exhibits, she was forced to temper negative narratives with positive narratives and narratives of reconciliation,¹⁷⁶ creating a narrative where residential schools and government efforts would also enjoy a high proportion of perceived provided benefits, or at least things like kindness and goodness. These positive memories leave the option open for people to believe that residential schools were a morally conscionable entity gone wrong in a few cases rather than a morally unconscionable entity where some people managed to benefit or enjoy themselves regardless.

¹⁷⁵ Indeed, it does not seem scandalous or like a result of the persistent lack of funding that residential schools enjoyed that Shingle Point, a community in the Yukon, should not have had electricity at this time. According to the Yukon Energy website, electricity was intermittent at this time even in Whitehorse. I was unfortunately not able to find a more academic source from which to cite this factoid, but I provide the decidedly unacademic citation here: "The History of Power in Yukon." Yukon Energy. February 26, 2009. Accessed February 29, 2016. http://www.yukonenergy.ca/blog/the_history_of_power_in_yukon.

¹⁷⁶ Logan, 120.

What about the relative level of individualization in these video clips? How does it compare with the level of individualization in comic books? In *Childhood Denied: Indian Residential Schools and Their Legacy*, the first individual testimony occurs at the beginning, as one Inuit man describes the pain of being taken away from his parents in a plane. His story lasts for nearly 1.5 minutes. Then the narration begins, during which time there is no individualization, and no indications about proportion of harm such as “many,” or “most.” This narration lasts for about 30 seconds, during which photographs of groups of residential school attendees are displayed. Then another individual begins his story about how his name was replaced with a number. A few seconds later, the narrator returns. “The schools are run with little accountability,” he declares. “It’s estimated that thousands of children died.” Two photographs are displayed of single children. One is captioned “Mollie, died of cholera, 1907,” while another is captioned “George, died of tuberculosis. Date unknown.” Another photograph displays two children. “Eve and Tony. Cause of death unknown. Date unknown.” The video turns again to individualized representations of Aboriginal people telling stories of their experiences at residential school. This is at only 2.5 minutes into the 8 minute video. This large amount of individualization indicates that this video is highly likely to provoke a sympathetic response from visitors. Additionally, people who begin watching this video need only watch a third of it to see these individualized stories of harm caused by residential schools; as Serrell’s study indicated that people who watch videos in museums tend to watch about one third of them, this suggests that, despite a lower proportion of represented harm in this video, visitors were still likely to feel sympathy for former residential school attendees and thus make the judgment that residential schools were wrong.

Individualization was similarly high in the video clips about residential schools in the “Breaking the Silence” gallery, despite being less likely to be seen by visitors. Individuals recounting stories of harm in residential schools tended to appear early in videos. In one video, Eva Cardinal recounted her experience at residential school. Her face is seen and her name is heard at around the 45 second mark, but her voice is heard from the beginning. She recounts how she went to counselling, how she still cries when she thinks about residential schooling, and how she hopes to make education “a productive place to be in.” The reporter historicizes the residential school system before the video returns to Cardinal, who describes the abuses she underwent at residential school including being forced to hold other attendees down while they were beaten.

In another video about the Métis experience at the schools, the video opens by identifying the speaker, “Tony is a Métis residential school survivor who started school in 1950 at the age of eleven.” Tony then recounts how he was given a name for a number on his first day of residential school. In the second half of a video, a woman called Grace recounts how the nuns would beat her and pull her hair. She is also identified prior to telling her story.

In another video of TRC testimony collected in the North West Territories, all the people who speak are also identified by name. Grace Wolki of Tuktoyuktuk talks about a supervisor sexually abusing her. Lawrence Thrasher Sr. talks about how the clippers used to give the children haircuts burned their flesh. Winnie Akhaitak talks about how the nuns told her she was stupid and how she would get strapped with a ruler for not knowing how to speak English, despite trying hard.

Not all videos in this section were about the experiences at the schools.¹⁷⁷ However, where reminisces about residential school were made, they were made by identified individuals and tended to occur early on in the video. This high degree of individualized identifications does suggest a high likelihood of sympathetic response from viewers of these videos, and this contributes to negative moralizations of the school. However, these negative moralizations are somewhat mitigated by the upstairs placement in kiosks of these videos in the museum, the fact that they were not placed close to other content related to residential schools, and their placement next to other competing videos. Only visitors with high levels of interest in Aboriginal issues and residential school history would have been likely to seek them out.

Conclusion

Overall, it is fair to say that some of content at the CMHR was fairly highly moralized in terms of the factors I analyzed in this section: techniques likely to provoke the moral emotion of sympathy, including a high perceived proportion of harm, a high degree of perceived vulnerability, and a high degree of individualization of victims of harm. In the video clips at the CMHR, a high proportion of harm was represented, as most testimonials from former students recounted abuse. There was widespread individualization of victims of harm, and while they were rarely represented as high-vulnerability children, this was likely more due to the constraints of the museum medium

¹⁷⁷ One is about reconciliation efforts, the other about Mary Courchene who, as a young girl attending residential school, told her parents “we’re not going to speak Indian here any more!”

than a lack of desire to moralize residential school history. However, it bears mentioning that, compared to the wall-text, these videos were less likely to be seen. Six of them were located outside of the “Canadian Journeys” exhibit on residential schools, and the “Canadian Journeys” residential school exhibit had no seating, making standing and watching the video a more difficult task than simply taking a moment to read the wall-text or look at the pictures. Furthermore, in wall-text, like in the videos, there was definitely a lower proportion of harm represented than in my comic book sources. Larger captions tended not to individualize victims, and smaller captions that mentioned abuse were not placed so as to be easily read while looking at the picture. Furthermore, only one of the 12 pictures on the wall displayed an individual Aboriginal child, and she was not identified by name. Adjectives such as “many” implied a high proportion of harm, but did not imply a proportion of harm as high as that implied in my comic book sources, which nears 100%. In short, I conclude that, though both my comic book sources and media at the CMHR are highly likely to provoke sympathy for former residential school attendees and consequently highly likely to cause visitors to negatively moralize residential schools, comic book sources are significantly more likely to do so.

2.2 Moralized Narratives and Statements

Introduction

In this section, I will examine how residential schools are moralized through written and spoken statements in each medium. In comic books, these statements may come out of the mouths of characters, or may be contained in text meant by the author to provide a historical overview of the residential school system. At the CMHR, these moralized statements and terms may be found in wall-text or in video clips, and may be attributable to the authoritative voice of the museum or to one of the many people who discuss their residential school experience in the CMHR’s video clips. The terms I take to be indicators of moral judgment are as follows: “Abuse,” “wrong,” “right,” “good,” “bad,” “negligent,” “neglect,” “atrocious,” and “accountable” are the first set of terms. I have also attributed moral value to terms that possess a moral value in Christianity. As various churches were responsible for running residential schools during this period, Christian ideas of morality were a common framework for assessing morality among both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginals during the period that residential schools existed, and even now. For this reason, I also treat terms like, “innocence” and “innocent,” “heaven,” and, “guilt” and “hell” as discursive moral markers, despite the irony of using the same terminology and moral framework that underwrote the schools to judge

modern narratives of them. It is likely a consequence of the residential school system that even Aboriginal people sometimes frame residential school history through this kind of Christian moral framework.

I will (1) begin this section by examining explicitly moralized statements in the comic books in my survey, before (2) moving to a discussion of museums. It is not until section 2.3 that I will discuss the term “genocide,” another term widely understood to be moralized.¹⁷⁸ Finally, I do not treat “assimilation” as a de facto moralized term. Although it is possible and likely that curators and comic book authors who use it are trying to portray it as a bad thing, it is not always treated as such in regular discourse and thus lacks the same moral sharpness of the terms I noted above.

2.2.1 Comic Books

In *lost innocence*, one of the last pages explains the residential school system this way.

For over a century, more than 150,000 children went through the Indian Residential School system. With 132 schools across the nation, the government of Canada tried to assimilate Aboriginal children into the dominant culture. Children were prohibited from speaking their language and practicing their culture. Raised without affection and a nurturing family environment, those who survived returned home disconnected. They were strangers in their own community. With the family and community bond severed, and the abuse suffered at residential schools, students never knew how to raise their own children. The shame, guilt and abuse they carried was passed down to their children and families.¹⁷⁹

The use of the word “abuse” demonstrates that the author of this comic book considers aspects of residential schools to be morally wrong. Although the character of the “abuse” is not explicitly defined (for example, assimilation is not explicitly defined as abuse), the very use of the word implies a strong moral judgement of the system. Secondly, the title and a theme of the book, *lost innocence* implies a state of purity that the children enjoyed before being sent to residential school. Near the beginning of the book, an Aboriginal man stares bluntly out of a panel. The narration states, “they took away more than a culture and a nation; they took away generations of innocence.”¹⁸⁰ To steal somebody’s innocence and replace it with a knowledge of wrongdoing or (while this is not explicit in the narrative) possibly with wrongdoing itself, evokes an idea of a purity that the children

¹⁷⁸ See Section 2.3 for a more lengthy explanation of why the term ‘genocide’ is considered a moralized term in this paper.

¹⁷⁹ Mitchell and Audibert, *lost innocence*, 59.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 5.

experienced before it was marred by the moral wrongdoing of the residential school system. Finally, the word “guilt” in “the shame, guilt and abuse they carried was passed down” is a moral discursive marker, as guilt is typically experienced when a person feels as though he/she has done something morally wrong, whether or not he or she has actually engaged in morally wrong actions. This can be interpreted in two ways: either that Aboriginal children engaged in morally wrong actions as a result of residential school abuse and feel guilty, or that they were so damaged by residential school abuse that they felt guilty for existing, allowing bad things to happen to them, allowing bad things to happen to others, or any other perceived wrong that they feel was their fault.

Near the beginning of *Sugar Falls*, the narrator and main character, Betty, describes how her mother abandoned her. “What I didn’t know then,” she says, “was the she [her mother] was a survivor of residential school and its unimaginable abuses.”¹⁸¹ Once again, the word “abuse” is mentioned in tandem with residential schools, creating a narrative where residential schools, and events that occurred there, are judged as morally wrong. In another scene, near the end of the book, the school priest comes into the dormitory. Betty recounts that her friend Flora “told me once how she got through the abuse [. . .] she would close her mind to it [. . .] that way it seemed less real. When it was my turn, I did the same.”¹⁸² The word “abuse” implies a moral judgement of the situation, but that is not all. Betty concludes, “our innocence wasn’t the only thing they took away,” implying, like in other comic books, that residential school marred an erstwhile state of moral purity, where the children were not aware of the evils of the world and, perhaps, did not engage in wrong acts themselves before their residential school experience, but were forced to learn of them and/or experience them through their residential school experience.

Christianity is employed as a way to create a moralized narrative in *7 Generations: A Plains Cree Saga*. At the end of the chapter about residential school in *7 Generations*, the main character, James, beats up the priest who is abusing his younger brother Thomas. During their fight, the priest says, “you’re going to hell, savage.” James responds “Ekota kista kayan,” or “you will be there, also.”¹⁸³ This use of the ideas of heaven and hell, part of a Christian moral framework where God can

¹⁸¹ The Life of Helen Betty Osborne, 6.

¹⁸² Ibid, 27.

¹⁸³ Robertson, David Alexander, *7 Generations: A Plains Cree Saga*, 93.

condemn the unrighteous to hell,¹⁸⁴ evokes a moral framework and judges the priest's actions as being wrong.

In *UNEducation: A Residential School Graphic Novel*, residential schools are negatively moralized using various moralized terms. At the beginning of the book, it is written, "There may have been some individual happy endings here and there, but, the residential school era as a whole offers no happy ending. It must be seen for what it is: as an overwhelmingly tragic and evil era with no redeeming features."¹⁸⁵ In his introduction to the book, EagleSpeaker writes "In these schools, many Native children – including my own family – experienced every abuse you can imagine: sexual, verbal, cultural, neglect, physical, psychological, emotional etc. I have witnessed, first-hand, the destruction and intergenerational trauma that resulted from these horrific government policies."¹⁸⁶ In both cases, EagleSpeaker employs various negatively moralized words including "tragic," "evil," "abuse," and "horrific."

Finally, in *The Outside Circle: A Graphic Novel*, as an Aboriginal woman is asked to give up her son into the child welfare system, the guardianship order reads

In 1920, the federal government tried to "solve the Indian problem" by making it mandatory for all Indian children ages 7 to 15 to attend these schools. Residential schools were underfunded, overcrowded, and poorly monitored. The children were malnourished and many suffered from physical, emotional, and sexual abuse perpetrated by school staff."¹⁸⁷

Again, the explicit identification of some staff actions as "physical, emotional, and sexual 'abuse'" clearly judges those staff members' actions as wrong and situates them within a moralized framework where Aboriginal children were harmed by staff and allowed to be harmed by the government due to lack of monitoring.

In conclusion, all but one of the comic books in my survey makes liberal use of highly moralized words that served to negatively moralize residential schools. In the following section, I will examine whether the CMHR did the same and to what degree.

¹⁸⁴ Various Christian theologies allow for the possibility of Divine Grace in the case of unrighteousness and so generally speaking the process by which humans get judged by God in Christianity is not dichotomous. However, the point stands that telling somebody they deserve to go to hell implies a judgement about wrong conduct.

¹⁸⁵ EagleSpeaker, Jason. *UNeducation*, 4.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 8.

¹⁸⁷ *The Outside Circle*, 23

2.2.2 Explicitly Moralized Statements at the CMHR

I have already written about the hierarchy of information at the CMHR, where more negatively moralized content tended to be relegated to videos that visitors were less likely to watch, where residential school material was relegated to disparate corners of the museum, and where less negatively moralized content was visible in wall-text. For this reason, in this section I have once again divided my analysis into wall-text first and video content second, in the hopes that my reader will understand that, although these moralized terms are present in both types of content, significant differences exist between how and to what extent they are presented in different media at the museum.

2.2.2.1 Museum Wall Text

Precious little wall-text was devoted to residential schools at the CMHR, and even less was devoted to explicit moralization. In the story niche in “Canadian Journeys,” the introductory wall-text stated that “many students [in residential school] suffered neglect and abuse.” Another smaller caption to a photograph read, “boys saying their prayers in a dormitory, Chooutla Indian Residential School, Carcross, Yukon, 1964. Many former students recall abuse, neglect, and loneliness at the schools.” While the mention of “abuse” and “neglect” are explicitly moral, the use of the word “recall” may introduce a cast of doubt related to the fallibility and politicization of memory. A stronger statement such as “many former students were abused, neglected, and suffered from loneliness at the schools” or “many former students have spoken out about the abuse, neglect, and loneliness they suffered at the schools” would not have left room open for doubt. The idea of “recollection” casts doubt on the veracity of former attendee’s statements in a way that other formulations would not have done. Furthermore, as I have mentioned before, the use of the term “student” implies that children were educated at the schools; why the museum did not choose a more neutral word (such as attendee, which I use in this paper) raises questions about whether the officialised perspective of the museum would suggest that children in residential school were always being given a valuable education even if they were “recall[ing] abuse, neglect, and loneliness.”

On the fourth floor, sandwiched between wall-text about a variety of human rights abuses around the world, a small amount of text and a video about “Project at Heart” was displayed. The panel stated, “participating students [in the project] decorate small wooden tiles to honour children

who died at residential schools, often from disease or abuse.” This is the only acknowledgement I found in the museum that some Aboriginal children died from abuse (and I did not find any video or text that made it explicit anywhere in the museum that any of the diseases suffered by Aboriginal children in residential schools were preventable and the result of neglect or negligence.)

These are the only instances of wall-text at the CMHR that used any of the terms I outlined in a way that makes it clear that residential schools were places where children were subjected to moral wrong-doing. Although certain aspects of residential schools were certainly judged as wrong by the authoritative institutional voice of the museum in wall-text, the terms that make this explicit are used far less than they are in my comic book sources. This may be attributable to space constraints, but as I will demonstrate in the following section, museum videos also consistently underperformed their comic book counterparts when it came to using explicitly moralized words, particularly when the authoritative institutional voice of the museum was speaking.

2.2.2.2 Videos Clips at the CMHR

In the video that was shown in the residential school story niche of the “Canadian Journeys” exhibit, the institutional narrative voice of the CMHR mentions abuse 2.5 minutes into the video in the line, “there is abuse of all kinds.” However, before this moment, not a single one of the terms I outlined at the beginning of this section was used. Even when the video was playing pictures of children who died at residential school, the narrator simply stated, “The quality of education is poor, and conditions often abysmal. It’s estimated that thousands of children died, many from disease and malnutrition.” Although one could argue that these statements are already moralized, they do not identify the reason of death with any of the discursive moral markers I identified, nor do they make explicit the fact that many of the illnesses in residential schools were at least somewhat preventable. Furthermore, they fail to identify any agents of abuse, or address the question of how children contracted illnesses. Disease and malnutrition can affect anybody; they are only moralized when they are a result of negligence or spread purposely. In simply stating that attendees died from disease and malnutrition, the museum missed an opportunity to overtly negatively moralize residential school history.

While the authoritative institutional voice of the museum made few explicitly moralized statements, the Aboriginal people who spoke in the videos did this more often. Directly following

the line “there is abuse of all kinds,” several individual Aboriginal people speak about their experiences at residential school. Paul Andrew states that if you didn’t act like you were perfect “then you got the physical abuse” and Charlie Paul speaks about how a group of men at his school “sexually abused younger boys.” The narrator makes one last moralized statement when he talks about how “survivors [were] [. . .] determined to hold the government and the churches accountable,” where “accountable” is the key moralized word. However, the museum does not explicitly state that the government and churches are accountable, only that Aboriginal people wished to hold them accountable and that the government apologized for the effects of the residential school system. It also bears mentioning that all of the explicitly moralized words in this video occur after the 137 second mark that Serrell states is the average amount of time a museum visitor watches a video. While some visitors certainly stay to watch the entire video, it is telling that neither the authoritative institutional voice of the museum nor the Aboriginal people whose comments the museum decided to include described residential schools in explicitly moralized terms until after the time that an average visitor will spend watching a video had already passed.

In the “Breaking the Silence” exhibit, far from the residential school story niche in “Canadian Journeys,” the videos tended to present individual testimonies about residential school. Many were taken from other sources and narration is not written by the museum, but the authoritative institutional voice of the museum was present in video captions, and tended to make use of moralized terms. However, as I have noted before, the competition from other videos and lack of association with other residential school content make it unlikely that visitors would see the videos about residential school in this exhibit.

In one clip from the CBC in the 1990s, Eva Cardinal tells her story. Both she and the CBC reporter’s voice moralize residential schools throughout the video. Cardinal states, “I learned that what was done to us as children was very wrong. It was very wrong.” The CBC reporter states that “there were cases of sexual abuse. Children were raped and sodomized by clerics.”

Other videos, of TRC testimony, could be interpreted as being highly moralized but do not use any of the terms I outlined in the introduction to this section. In another video of TRC proceedings, during which no mentions of any of the moralized terms appear, the museum-written caption nevertheless noted that “survivors of northern residential schools recall their abuse and forced separation from their culture.” The caption of a third video stated “Métis survivors of church-

run schools remember the fear, abuse, and loss of identity that they suffered as children.” In this video, a Métis woman called Grace says “how they [nuns] abused us, how they pulled my hair. [. . .] how could you learn something when you were living in fear?”

In another section of the museum, a video about the project “Project of Heart,” the video narrator speaks about the “atrocities of the Indian Residential School system.” “Atrocities” is a moralized term; however once again, the narration was not written by museum staff, as it is sourced from ATPN National News in Edmonton. It was also far away from all other content about residential schools, which suggests that it is unlikely to be seen. Residential school content was spread into three disparate parts of the museum, thereby giving the effect of a residential school narrative that was not particularly coherent, organized, or hard-hitting.

Conclusion

In conclusion, although both comic books and the CMHR use moralized words to describe residential schools, they differ in scale and voice. The authoritative institutional voice of the CMHR in video narration and wall-text in the most obvious exhibit about residential school was less likely to engage in overt moralization than both Aboriginal people portrayed in video clips and other non-Aboriginal perspectives presented in video clips. It was also less likely to use these terms than are characters and writers of comic books. This suggests that, although the government-funded museum was willing to give voice to those who would state unequivocally that residential schools were morally wrong, it shied away from taking a similarly unequivocal stand in its own narration, at least where it is likely to be seen. This is consistent with both the lack of techniques known to provoke the moral emotion of sympathy that I discussed in the previous section, as well as with Tricia Logan’s assertion that the museum did not allow curators to represent the negative parts of residential schools without mitigating them with discourses of reconciliation or fun. Overall, the CMHR seemed less willing than comic books to judge residential schools as being unequivocally wrong. In the next section, I will discuss another aspect in which the museum took a softer line on the moralization of residential schools by comparing how the term ‘genocide’ is employed in comic books and at the CMHR.

2.3 Use of the word Genocide in Comic Books and at the CMHR

Introduction

Genocide is another term I interpret to be negatively moralized, following on the tails of scholars such as Paul Boghossian, who states that “[genocide] is supposed to name a phenomenon that is, *as part of its very meaning, morally wrong*”¹⁸⁸ and Stephen P. Lee, who states both that “genocide is thought to be morally distinctive, a special form of wrong doing, a class of moral evil unto itself,” and that the belief that genocide is due special moral condemnation is wide-spread.”¹⁸⁹ The first United Nations definition of genocide, found in a 1946 resolution, defined genocide through a moral lens as well, stating that, “genocide shocks the conscience of mankind” and “is contrary to moral law and to the spirit and aim of the United Nations.”¹⁹⁰ While the current United Nations legal definition of “genocide” does not contain the term “moral” or “morality,” based on the earlier precedent set by the United Nations and the work of the above scholars, it is reasonable to say that the word ‘genocide,’ when not used in an explicitly legal sense, does bear a negative moral meaning. I wish to make it absolutely explicit that throughout this paper, in instances where the word “genocide” is used in any document not intended for criminal trial for the crime of genocide, I assume that it constitutes a negative moral judgement about the event or events that it is used to describe.

In my literature review, I discussed how many scholars, activists, and members of the public consider Canada’s treatment of Aboriginal peoples to constitute a ‘genocide,’ a ‘cultural genocide’ or an instance of ‘settler colonial genocide.’ I also discussed how, by and large, during the period of my research, federal government-affiliated bodies tended not to use this terminology.¹⁹¹ The term ‘genocide’ appears twice in the comic books I have surveyed and in both cases the conception of

¹⁸⁸ Boghossian, Paul. "The Concept of Genocide." *Journal of Genocide Research* 12, no. 1-2 (2010): 69-80, 73.

¹⁸⁹ Lee, Steven P. "The Moral Distinctiveness of Genocide." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 18, no. 3 (September 2010): 335-56, 335.

¹⁹⁰ United Nations. "Resolution 96 (I) The Crime of Genocide." General Assembly Resolutions, 1st Session. Accessed August 6, 2016. <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/1/ares1.htm>.

¹⁹¹ Since the completion of my primary research, the Truth and Reconciliation released its final report in which they stated that Canada’s treatment of Aboriginal peoples was an instance of “cultural genocide.” Additionally, a new Liberal government was formed which has promised to implement each of the 94 recommendations of the final report. However, neither Liberal party nor the Government of Canada has, as yet, officially recognized the treatment of Aboriginals as a genocide or cultural genocide, and I have not heard of any plans to do so.

treatment of Aboriginal peoples in Canada as ‘genocide’ is legitimized.¹⁹² While instances of this term did appear in the CMHR, it was presented with little legitimacy and, due to the hierarchy of information in the museum, was unlikely to be seen by all but a few visitors. Indeed, in Dr. Erica Lehrer’s recent review “Thinking Through the Canadian Museum for Human Rights” she does not mention seeing or hearing this term.¹⁹³ This omission, she wrote me, was because she did not notice that the term was used during her visit to the museum.¹⁹⁴ In the following section, I will demonstrate the reasons that have led to these conclusions by providing examples of uses and absences of the word ‘genocide’ in my sources, in what contexts the word is employed, and whether the perspective of a genocide against Canadian Aboriginal peoples is legitimized or delegitimized.

2.3.1 How the Term ‘Genocide’ is Used in Comic Books

Of the six comic book sources I surveyed, two used terms containing the word ‘genocide.’ Both used the term in ways that indicated that the author considered genocide a legitimate term to ascribe to residential schools and related events. In *UNeducation: A Residential School Graphic Novel*, Jason Eaglespeaker writes “...that’s right ... not 1906 not 1956 ... 1-9-9-6 is when all residential schools were finally closed for good. Recovery from genocide takes generations of healing, so maybe wait till 2096 before telling Canadian NDNs to “get over it”. Make sure your opinion is informed!!!”¹⁹⁵ Earlier in the book, he writes, “You can’t sugarcoat genocide. Countless memories will pass and the last of the survivors will pass away. They worry that newer generations will begin to sugarcoat the residential school era. Every survivor has their own story, but, lets [sic] never forget the victims.”¹⁹⁶ These two statements are explicit: Eaglespeaker considers residential schools to be an aspect of a genocide against Aboriginals and, in fact, appears to cast them as the main event of this genocide against Canadian Aboriginal people. Furthermore, those who do not share his opinion are not simply of a different opinion, but “uninformed.”

¹⁹² Only two of the comic books champion the idea of a genocide against Aboriginal peoples; however, one of these books is written by David Alexander Robertson, who wrote three out of six of the books I have included in my sample.

¹⁹³ Lehrer, Erica. "Thinking through the Canadian Museum for Human Rights." *American Quarterly* 67, no. 4 (2015).

¹⁹⁴ Dr. Erica Lehrer, Personal Communication.

¹⁹⁵ EagleSpeaker, *UNeducation: A Residential School Graphic Novel*, 35.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 4.

In *The Life of Helen Betty Osborne*, David Alexander Robertson writes that “Aboriginal people were undesirable. The goal of residential schools was education but as the government looked to cure the “Indian problem” it is now widely accepted that they committed cultural genocide.”¹⁹⁷ Once again, this statement presents the view that residential schools constituted a component of genocide as a legitimate or even dominant perspective.

Although only two of my comic book sources use the terms ‘genocide’ or ‘cultural genocide,’ they both present it as a legitimate, or in the case of EagleSpeaker, almost unquestionable perspective. EagleSpeaker’s statement that those who do not believe that Canadian residential schools qualify as genocide are “uninformed” and Robertson’s assertion that the belief that the residential school system was a major actor in ‘cultural genocide’ is “widely accepted” stand in sharp contrast to the characterization of terms containing the word ‘genocide’ at the CMHR.

2.3.2 The Term ‘Genocide’ at the CMHR

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights used the word ‘genocide’ in a variety of contexts, but tended not to present it in legitimizing ways when it referred to Canadian Aboriginal experiences. This contrasts with the way the term ‘genocide’ and terms containing the word ‘genocide’ were used to describe the experiences of other Indigenous populations outside of Canada, where the term is presented in legitimizing ways even though the non-Canadian Indigenous experiences discussed in the museum display remarkable similarities to those of Canadian Indigenous populations. In this section I will (1) discuss how the term ‘genocide’ and terms that contain the word ‘genocide’ were used specifically regarding Canadian Aboriginal issues at the CMHR. I will then (2) discuss how the term ‘genocide’ was used and defined in other sections of the museum, how the word was used to describe the experiences of Indigenous peoples in countries other than Canada, how this compares with how the word was used with regard to Canadian Indigenous peoples, and how these two factors worked together to create a space where the idea of a genocide against Aboriginal peoples in Canada is far less legitimized at the CMHR than it is in comic books.

¹⁹⁷ Robertson, *Life of Helen Betty Osborne*, 12.

2.3.2.1 Hierarchy and the Term “Genocide” with Regard to Indigenous Populations

In my literature review, I briefly discussed former curator at the CMHR Tricia Logan’s scathing words for her former employer and for the federal government of the time about their insistence that she remove mentions of the word ‘genocide’ from exhibitry that addressed Canadian Indigenous issues at the CMHR. According to Logan, the lack of use of these terms in high profile federal institutions was not simply a lack of use, but a case of active omission.¹⁹⁸

Logan left the CMHR in 2013. I conducted my primary research two years later, when in early May of 2015 I spent three full days at this museum.¹⁹⁹ During that time I uncovered two mentions of genocide related to Canadian Aboriginal populations. I have since discovered a newspaper article that states that in the “Breaking the Silence” gallery, another interactive panel mentioned the word at the time.²⁰⁰ I am unable to find this panel in my photographs, so I must have managed to miss it after spending three entire days in the museum. However, for the purposes of this paper, I will give the museum the benefit of the doubt and include this text in my analysis.

The mentions of genocide related to Canadian Aboriginal peoples were all located on the fourth floor of the museum. The largest exhibit on this floor addressed the Holocaust. In this exhibit, information about the work of Raphael Lemkin, the man who coined the term ‘genocide,’ was displayed.²⁰¹ This floor was also home to the much smaller “Breaking the Silence” exhibit, which displayed content about the four genocides officially recognized by the Canadian government: the Holodomor, the Armenian Genocide, Srebrenica, and Rwanda.²⁰² In this section of the museum there was no wall-text devoted to Canadian Indigenous populations. Instead, several small video terminals

¹⁹⁸ Logan, 120.

¹⁹⁹ Since May 2015, some changes have been made to the museum to reflect the conclusions of the TRC report. I have not had the opportunity to see these changes, and when I contacted the museum about them was given little knowledge about them. However, the museum did indicate that the term ‘cultural genocide’ was added to two exhibits following the conclusions of the TRC. They also indicated that the new exhibitry framed the term very similarly to how it is done in the blog post I will cite below. (Personal Communication, Jodi Giesbrecht, August 9, 2016.) Blog post: Peristerakis, Julia. "New Exhibit Explores Reconciliation in Canada." Canadian Museum for Human Rights. August 17, 2015. Accessed August 14, 2016. <https://humanrights.ca/blog/new-exhibit-explores-reconciliation-canada>.

²⁰⁰ Welch, Mary Agnes. “CMHR ‘model of Complacency’” *The Winnipeg Free Press*, May 6, 2015. Accessed January 12, 2016. <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/Former-curator-of-CMHR-says-she-was-ordered-to-limit-aboriginal-content-302847231.html>.

²⁰¹ I will discuss Lemkin’s ideas the following section

were set up in small alcoves located off to the side of the main exhibits. These terminals presented many short video clips about many different human rights abuses around the world, including some about Canadian Aboriginal issues. I did not watch every single video available on these terminals, so I do not know if and to what point events taking place outside of Canada were characterized using the word ‘genocide.’ I did, however, make sure to view all the videos that addressed Canadian Indigenous issues. The authoritative institutional voice of the museum captioned one video, “Eva Cardinal recalls humiliation and violence at residential schools and a reporter notes that many people consider this to be cultural genocide.” At the end of the video the reporter makes good on the caption’s promise by stating that “cultural genocide is how many native people describe their residential school days.” Not only did this quotation not come from the authoritative institutional voice of the museum itself, (in the caption, the museum made sure only to suggest that it is “the reporter” who says this), it seems to suggest that the term ‘cultural genocide’ was widely used among Aboriginal people only, but fails to state or imply that many non-Aboriginal people also subscribe to this definition. It is a far cry from EagleSpeaker and Robertson’s statements about genocide being a widely accepted idea.

According to the newspaper article I mentioned earlier, an interactive caption in the middle of the “Breaking the Silence” exhibit read, “Many Canadians, both indigenous and non-indigenous, share the view that Canada’s historic treatment of indigenous peoples was genocide.” Although this statement suggests more legitimacy to the idea that Canada’s treatment of Aboriginal peoples could be a genocide by stating that it is not only Indigenous people who hold this view, it still does not compare to the characterizations in the comic books of the definition of “cultural genocide” being “widely accepted” (in the case of Robertson) or (in the case of EagleSpeaker) that people who do not believe that Canadian Aboriginal people were subjected to genocide are “uninformed.” It is worth reiterating that these video terminals were not located centrally or with other content related to residential schools and that, if I had not specifically been looking for any and all content in the museum related to Aboriginal human rights issues, and had I not spent three full days in the museum, I probably would have missed all mentions of the word ‘genocide’ related to Canadian Aboriginals. The word ‘genocide’, while present, was not declared ‘loud and proud’ as it is in some of my comic book sources. Instead, it was relegated to the dusty corners of the museum, outside of the eyes of many, if not most, museum visitors, and subject to the same hierarchy of information I have described earlier in this paper, most notably at the beginning of this chapter.

Furthermore, the position of the Holocaust in the exhibit that addressed genocide demonstrates a primacy capable of eclipsing even the scant references to a Canadian genocide against Aboriginal peoples. It is at the top of the hierarchy of information due to its size, but also due to established ideas about its role in defining popular notions of what the word “genocide” means. In his article “Does the Holocaust Reveal or Conceal Other Genocides? The Canadian Museum for Human Rights and Grievable Suffering” Dirk Moses writes about how use of the Holocaust can serve to effectively hide other genocides by forcing a comparison between them and the Holocaust, which is frequently understood as the gold standard (my words, not his) of human rights abuses and genocide. He writes about the CMHR,

Enshrining the Nazi genocide of Jews as the unique lens, template, yardstick, paradigm, or prototype [. . .] with or through which to understand all genocides and human rights violations satisfies Jewish communal leaders who fear that the Holocaust will be hidden when not specially highlighted [. . .] By contrast, leaders of some other migrant groups assert that their powerlessness means the genocides and human rights abuses endured by their compatriots have been hidden from memory and research agendas— and often still are— and are therefore inadequately represented in the museum. Arguing, as many do, that the Holocaust is the “best documented” genocide and therefore best suited for the pedagogical purpose of exemplifying human rights violations misses the point, according to these critics. They think that injustice led to the lack of documentation about other genocides in the past and that the CMHR is compounding it by reproducing historic power imbalances in the exhibition’s Holocaust- centric design.”²⁰³

Indeed, when speaking to people about the content of this paper, I have had people react with sentences like this: “Well, what happened with Native people wasn’t a genocide like the Holocaust – because it wasn’t a planned extermination.” The CMHR’s hierarchy of information vis-à-vis a genocide against Indigenous people is not simply visible in the scant use of the term “genocide” to refer to Canadian Aboriginal people, but also competition with more Holocaust-centred notions of what a genocide is and larger displays about officially recognized genocides.

In conclusion, all this suggests that the museum was not willing to address whether the term ‘genocide’ or terms containing this word are an appropriate way to describe policies that served to destroy Aboriginal cultures and peoples in Canada. Even when the exhibit did mention ‘genocide,’ it allowed these panels to be eclipsed by much larger more visible galleries that addressed already

²⁰³ Moses, Dirk. “Does the Holocaust Reveal or Conceal Other Genocides? The Canadian Museum of Human Rights and Grievable Suffering.” In *Hidden Genocides: Power, Knowledge, and Memory*, edited by Doug Irvin, Alexander Hinton, and Tom LaPointe, 21-51. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2013, 22.

well-established genocides such as the Holocaust, the Armenian genocide, and the Rwandan genocide. Furthermore, the museum did not shy away from interpreting other countries' historical treatment of their Indigenous populations as genocide, which further supports Logan's statements about the exclusion of the word genocide being a wilful omission.

2.3.2.2 Raphael Lemkin and the Characterization of non-Canadian Indigenous Populations as Victims of Genocide at the CMHR

Ironically, although museum text about Canadian Aboriginals in no way indicated any sort of institutional support for the conception of Canada's treatment of Aboriginals as a 'genocide,' 'cultural genocide,' or 'settler colonial genocide,' the museum did not shy away from this characterization when talking about Indigenous peoples in countries other than Canada who underwent experiences similar to those undergone by Canadian Aboriginals in residential schools. In the section of the "Examining the Holocaust" gallery where Raphael Lemkin, the man who coined the term 'genocide,' and his ideas are discussed, genocide was defined and concrete examples of how different types of genocide are effected were supported using the experiences of Indigenous people around the world as examples. Lemkin's conception of 'cultural genocide' was explained in the following sentence. "Cultural methods of genocide aim to destroy the specific life patterns and institutions that help to shape a group's identity." In the following panels, examples of how cultural genocide has been effected were given using the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust, The Colonisation of Tasmania and the Spanish Conquest of the Americas. In the panel about the Spanish Conquest, titled "Cultural Methods of Genocide in the Spanish Conquest, 1492-1898" the panel read,

The Spanish destroyed Indigenous peoples' cultures in the Americas by attacking their political leaders, as well as their temples, religious symbols and cultural centres. The invaders tried to replace Indigenous cultures with Spanish and Catholic institutions and traditions. Raphael Lemkin argued that replacing an oppressed people's culture with that of the oppressor is a key feature of genocide.

If Lemkin argued that replacing an oppressed people's culture with that of the oppressor is a key feature of genocide, then this panel begs the question of why the treatment of Aboriginal peoples in Canada should not be considered a genocide by the museum. Was the museum suggesting that there were no attempts to replace Aboriginal cultures with European ones in Canada, or that residential schools did not attempt to replace Indigenous cultures with European Christian

institutions and traditions? The irony of this exhibit was further crystallized in the panel about the British colonization of Tasmania, titled “Cultural Methods of Genocide in the Colonization of Tasmania, 1803-1901”. In this panel, these ‘cultural methods of genocide’ further mirror events that took place in Canada’s residential school system.

As the British took over Tasmania, they used cultural methods of genocide to destroy the Aboriginals’ way of life. The settlers imposed their own culture, including clothing and language, on the Tasmanian Aboriginal population.²⁰⁴

It is surprising that these events were unquestioningly described as genocide when similar or identical events that occurred in Canada in residential schools were not. While European clothing and language were imposed on Aboriginal children in many residential schools, and while Christianity was similarly imposed, the museum did not address the question of why it portrayed these types of events as examples of “cultural methods of genocide” with regard to Indigenous peoples in other countries, but did not extend the same privilege to the experiences of many Canadian Aboriginal peoples.

One of the reasons for this may be the status of the museum as a national institution. As Erica Lehrer puts it, the CMHR risks being a

self-aggrandizing national museum that is by nature the antithesis of self-critical. A museum dedicated to dialogue and debate about the capacity for human atrocity, the CMHR thus risks being what Edward Linenthal calls “comfortable horrible”—allowing us to cringe, sigh, and rebuke, but not be challenged on how our own cultural beliefs and political systems may be bound up in the suffering of others.²⁰⁵

Atrocities in other countries are easy to write about and engage because they are less likely to trigger settler-Canadian discomfort at the realization that, not only are modern settler-Canadian lives bound up in the history of mistreatment of Aboriginal peoples, but that these mistreatments continue and that the lives of settler Canadians are still bound up in them, as voters for people who continue to allow abuses, as people who do not raise their voices for human rights in their own country, as people who live on lands traditionally occupied by Indigenous people, and so on. Lehrer writes later in her review that, in the museum “difference is framed as uniformly colorful

²⁰⁴ The panel continues: “Aspects of the new culture, such as alcohol, proved to be deadly, undermining the health and unity of the group.” Although this is not relevant to the issue of residential schools, alcohol has had similar negative effects on Canadian Aboriginal populations.

²⁰⁵ Lehrer, “Thinking through the Canadian Museum for Human Rights,” 4.

and enriching, not challenging.”²⁰⁶ This lack of challenge was in part due to a structure that privileged narratives that did not cast residential schools in as negative a light as they could be cast, and that did not put Indigenous narratives of a genocide against Aboriginal peoples on par with institutional narratives.

Conclusion

In this section, I have discussed how the terms ‘genocide’ and terms containing the word ‘genocide’ are legitimized in comic books written by and about Canadian Aboriginal people. I have also discussed how use of the term was legitimized with regard to Indigenous people at the CMHR, as long as those Indigenous people are not Canadian Indigenous people. If the difference between the level of moralization in comic books and at the CMHR was not sufficiently made clear by the first two sections of this chapter, it is likely clear by now that the CMHR, while willing to negatively moralize residential schools, certainly did not moralize them as negatively as the Aboriginal authors who are responsible for the creation of the comic books in this survey do. In the next chapter, I will make conclusions about the effects that these differences in portrayal and level of negative moralization have, particularly with respect to public encounters with residential school narratives and the question of whether Aboriginal perspectives are truly given space in official discourses of residential schools in Canada.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 10.

Chapter 3: Findings

Introduction

Two questions motivated my analysis of moralization in this paper, and in this chapter I will present my findings. The first question was (1) whether differences exist between how young people, older people, Aboriginal Canadians and non-Aboriginal Canadians are encountering histories of residential schools in Canada, as well as the degree of negative moral judgement present in these narratives. The second question (2) is whether Aboriginal perspectives line up with the officialised perspectives on residential school history displayed at the CMHR.

3.1 Different Ways of Encountering Residential School Narratives

I noted in my introduction that research points towards typical museum visitors being over the age of 35, and typical comic book readers being aged under 30. In Chapter 2, I discussed the differences between how the CMHR and my comic book sources are moralized and how, although both media are negatively moralized, comic books tend to portray more negatively moralized representations of residential schools than the CMHR overall and that the CMHR's negative moralizations were subject to a hierarchy of information that reduced their power to convince museum visitors. Although more research must be performed to confirm this hypothesis, this comparison suggests that young people in Canada who encounter narratives about residential schools and their legacy may be encountering narratives quite different than those being encountered by Canadian adults, and may be more likely to interpret residential schools and the residential school system as being uniformly wrong with few or no mitigating factors. They may make stronger moral judgements about residential schools, residential school staff, and the residential school system than people who consume more adult-oriented media such as that at the CMHR.

My introduction also pointed to the idea that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians trust different sources of historical information to different degrees. Non-Aboriginal Canadians tended to rate museums as being "very trustworthy" while Aboriginal Canadians were much less likely to rate museums as "very trustworthy" and tended to rate family stories as the best sources of historical information. If the content at the CMHR is widely considered by Aboriginal people to be less trustworthy than family stories (which comic books resemble to a greater degree), and considering

that the comic books tended to negatively moralize residential schools with less ambiguity than is found in the CMHR, it is therefore likely that this is a pattern that repeats itself in other Aboriginal-centred media that address Aboriginal histories.

The question of whether Aboriginal people are encountering residential school histories differently than settler-Canadians raises another question I alluded to in my introduction: that of connotations of authority to represent the past. The CMA survey I cited in my introduction indicated that most Canadians thought that museums were “very trustworthy” sources of information, and while there is a possible disconnect between media designed to tell stories about residential schools for youth, and media designed for adults, it is also possible that the great amounts of trust afforded to such authoritative structures as museums may mitigate the difference in level of negative moralization, particularly in cases where the audience is composed of settler-Canadians. This means that the authoritative voice of the CMHR, particularly where the use and legitimization of the word ‘genocide’ is concerned, may drown out the sound of the perspectives championed in comic books if the displays are not updated to reflect the perspectives championed and/or legitimized by comic book authors in ways that move beyond simple exposure to the content for visitors to visitors’ active engagement.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ I reached out to the museum to ask about whether the exhibitry has been updated since I visited in May 2015. I was assured that it had, and I received two e-mails, parts of which I quote here: “Indeed we have updated our exhibits to reflect the release of [the TRC] report, as well as the Commission’s position that the IRS system in Canada constituted cultural genocide. [. . .] our updates have occurred in two separate galleries. In one gallery called Inspiring Change, we display the Bentwood Box carved by Luke Marston that accompanied the TRC across Canada. [. . .] The text panel below the Bentwood Box discusses the TRC report and the finding of cultural genocide. The other exhibit that examines the IRS system within the context of genocide is located in a gallery called ‘Breaking the Silence’ and provides an overview of this issue through primary documents, photographs, and related materials on the history of Indian Residential Schools as well as contemporary items, such as the 2013 Toronto Star column by Phil Fontaine, Michael Dan, and Bernie Farber entitled ‘A Canadian Genocide in Search of a Name.’ We have updated this content as well to reflect the issuing of the TRC’s final report and calls to action, as well as its declaration of cultural genocide.”

When I asked if it was possible to have a copy of the text in the updated exhibitry, I received another e-mail: Hello Kate, I’m afraid we do not generally share exhibition text via email. Each exhibit is comprised of a number of elements, [. . .] and these are intended to be experienced as a whole. The broader context of the particular gallery is also key to the specific approach and messaging of the exhibits. [. . .] Our language is framed quite similar to a blog that our Curator wrote to correspond with the Bentwood Box exhibit, however, which you can read on our website and might find useful: <https://humanrights.ca/blog/new-exhibit-explores-reconciliation-canada>. (Personal Communication, Jodi Giesbrecht, August 9, 2016).

3.2 Aboriginal Perspectives vs. Non-Aboriginal Perspectives

This brings me to another key take-away from my research, which is that my sources demonstrate a fundamental disconnect between typical Aboriginal perspectives on residential school history and morality, and official government perspectives. As I noted in my introduction, Aboriginal people were the only group in Canada that tended to give museums' trustworthiness a lower rating, and they were also the only group who tended to rate "family stories" as being the most trustworthy sources of historical information. In my introduction, I also stated that, as the surveyed comic books were without exception created by Aboriginal people, they veer much closer to the media of family stories than they do to museums. However, although the CMHR certainly had and has Aboriginal curators, the people who made the calls about what to display are not exclusively Aboriginal and, as Tricia Logan wrote, were closely linked to government interests, and particularly their interest in mitigating narratives of rights abuses against Indigenous people in Canada.²⁰⁸

This has caused me to conclude that, at least at the time I collected my primary sources, official government perspectives on the relative morality of residential schools were very different from popular/dominant Aboriginal perspectives on this same topic, and that official museum perspectives did not legitimize Aboriginal perspectives as much as it did other, government-serving, perspectives. For example, the CMHR did not particularly legitimize the use of the term 'genocide' with regard to Canadian Aboriginal peoples or place it in easily accessible areas of the museum, even

Since I was not able to look at the new exhibitry and its framings of the term 'genocide' myself, I did read through the blog post that Dr. Giesbrecht suggested framed the term 'genocide' similarly to how it was framed in the updated exhibitry. The mentions of 'genocide' in the blog post say this, "The report also concluded that residential schools amounted to cultural genocide. The Museum invites visitors into a conversation about genocide in relation to residential schools and colonization. Many advocates are encouraging every Canadian to read this report and think about their role in the reconciliation process. [. . .] In the report, the TRC also encouraged the Canadian Museum for Human Rights to be actively involved in promoting an understanding of reconciliation in Canada. We take this call to action very seriously."

While I cannot comment on the changes that the museum has made to its exhibitry in the wake of the TRC report, as I have not seen them with my own eyes, the language in the blog post still raises serious questions. As far as I remember, none of the other genocides addressed in the "Breaking the Silence" gallery invited 'conversation,' and indeed, the use of this word still betrays a calculated neutrality which leaves room for the legitimization of the perspective that the residential school system did not constitute a component of genocide. Indeed, since the Federal government has not, as yet, recognized a genocide against Aboriginal peoples in Canada, it is possible that governmental pressure to mitigate certain narratives is still at work.

²⁰⁸ Logan, "National Memory and Museums" 120.

while similar events in other countries were described as ‘genocide.’ However, two of the surveyed comic books do both legitimize and present the idea in areas of the comic book that are likely to be read.²⁰⁹ The CMHR also did not portray as high a proportion of harm of Aboriginal children as the comic books do, which suggests a lower level of negative moralization. This implies that Aboriginal perspectives continue to be marginalized or even implicitly or explicitly²¹⁰ discredited by settler and government narratives, while official perspectives still bear colonialist markers by ordering Aboriginal perspectives in ways that serve the purposes and support the assumptions of settler Canadians. Settler Canadians can rest easy in the belief that there are no problems with the way that Aboriginal histories are ordered in the museum and that settler Canadian hegemony of perspective is a worthy way to interpret colonial histories as well as present day relations between Aboriginal people and settler Canadians. By refusing to present Aboriginal perspectives in legitimizing ways, the museum provided weaker negative moralizations of residential school history and narratives than comic books, which championed Aboriginal perspectives.

Conclusion

Aboriginal conceptions of residential school history appear to differ from official government ones, and despite the numerous statements of regret and apology that the Canadian government has directed towards Aboriginal people, highly negatively moralized Aboriginal narratives of Canadian history have not become officialised and do not enjoy equal pride of place in national institutions such as the CMHR. A further dichotomy appears to exist between how media directed towards young people portray residential schools versus how media directed towards older audiences represent them, although this dichotomy may be somewhat mitigated by the authoritative connotation of government museums. Finally, Aboriginal people may be less likely to put their trust in an institution like the CMHR than in narratives of other Aboriginal people, especially since such

²⁰⁹ Interestingly, as of June 16, 2016 all parties in the Canadian government have already stated that Daesh is committing genocide against Yazidi people in Syria, and a motion has been put forth to officially recognize this genocide. However, the TRC-mandated ‘cultural genocide’ of Aboriginal people has not been accepted by any of the major parties, nor has it been discussed in parliament despite the change of government. For more information on the government’s acceptance of a genocide against Yazidi people, see Tasker, John Paul. "Stéphane Dion Declares ISIS Killings of Yazidi People a Genocide." Politics - CBC News. January 16, 2016. Accessed August 6, 2016. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/dion-yazidis-genocide-isis-1.3638928>., particularly the document at the bottom of the page.

²¹⁰ Logan provides a good example of this on the first page of her review, when she discusses Stephen Harper’s statement that “Canada has no history of colonialism.” See Logan, “National Memories and Museums,” 112.

large differences between the Aboriginal-directed narratives in the comic books and officialised national narratives appear to exist.

Conclusion

Questions of historical narrative in Canada are particularly controversial when it comes to settler atrocities against Aboriginal people. How are different Canadians encountering these historical events? What differences between these encounters can be observed? And to what factors or mechanisms can those differences be attributed? In this paper, I contrasted two different media with different target ages and likelihood of being seen as trustworthy by Aboriginal people: comic books and the CMHR. I focused only on the history of residential schools, and specifically about levels of negative moralization of residential school history. Overall, I found that residential schools were more negatively moralized in Aboriginal-directed comic books than they were at the CMHR. Comic books were more likely to provoke the moral emotion of sympathy, more likely to use moralized language, and more likely to define residential schools as components or as the main events of a genocide against Indigenous people, and to legitimize this idea. I determined that there existed a disconnect between typical Aboriginal narratives of residential school and the officialised narrative at the CMHR at the time of my field work, and that it is likely that younger Canadians and Aboriginal Canadians are encountering residential school histories in ways that moralize it more negatively than in more official media that older adults are more likely to consume. This raises questions about the future of how residential school and Aboriginal history is represented in Canada, and particularly whether Aboriginal perspectives are still ordered within colonialist frameworks, as they appeared to be at the CMHR.

If we assume that these colonialist frameworks should be deconstructed, how could this be done in Canada?⁹ At the beginning of Chapter 2, I cited some scholarship about how people make judgements and decisions. Judgements arrived at through a great deal of thinking tended to endure longer.²¹¹ These judgements were correlated with an interest in the subject and with a formal education approach.²¹²²¹³ However, judgements arrived at through a small amount of thinking did not endure as long.²¹⁴ These kinds of judgements were correlated with (among other things) acceptance of the word of an authority, and merely being exposed to a topic.²¹⁵ In the case of the CMHR, those

²¹¹ Petty, "The Elaboration Likelihood Model," 227.

²¹² Ibid, 229.

²¹³ Mayr, "Supporting Information Processing in Museums," 1289.

²¹⁴ Petty, "The Elaboration Likelihood Model," 227.

²¹⁵ Ibid, 232.

without a vested interest in histories of residential schooling are likely to make undeliberated judgements as they will merely be exposed to these histories, histories which are mediated by a national authority. It does not need to be this way. Many changes could be made at the museum in order for visitors to gain an experience beyond mere exposure: content about residential schooling could be placed together, videos about residential schooling could have seating or could be played in an enclosed space, panels that mention the word ‘genocide’ vis-à-vis Aboriginal people could be as prominent as the other panels about the Canadian government’s officially recognized genocides,²¹⁶ and content curated by Aboriginal people could be privileged in wall-text. The exhibit about Raphael Lemkin’s work could become larger in order for people to understand that not all genocides mirror the Holocaust, and the examples of genocides and genocidal activities could include content about Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Finally, exhibitry could clearly show how colonialism and colonial legacies has personal relevance for Canadians, irrespective of ancestry.

In my view, there is hope for a truly democratic CMHR, one where Aboriginal people are not ordered within a colonial framework that favours settler Canadians, as they have so often been throughout the colonial history of the Canadian museum, but are instead given the space to speak in ways that give visitors the space to truly consider their words and ideas. The museum at the time of my field work allowed for comparatively little by way of reasoned conclusion from its visitors; however, that also means that visitors’ conclusions could be easy to change. In the museum, difference could be uncomfortable and unsettling and Canadians, whether or not they change their views on atrocities committed against Aboriginal people or their views on Aboriginal people themselves, could come to a more reasoned conclusion based on something more than an insipid “uniformly colouring and enriching difference”²¹⁷ that does not allow Aboriginal people the same space to speak that they enjoy in comic books where they are allowed complete control of the content.

²¹⁶ Again, I have been told that updates have been made to the exhibitry, but I doubt that the updates have made a cultural genocide against Indigenous people in Canada as prominent as the other genocides that are exhibited, most notably the Holocaust.

²¹⁷ Lehrer, “Thinking through the Canadian Museum for Human Rights,” 1203.

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