

Humanitarianism in the age of Capital and Empire:
Canada, 1870-1890

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a history of humanitarianism in Canada in the 1870s and 1880s. It examines the rise of the first Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) in 1869 in Montreal and the destruction of the buffalo on the Canadian prairies by 1879. These two case studies on the historical treatment of animals are complemented by two other case studies which explore “man’s humanity to man” in these years. One chapter examines how Montrealers responded to the indigent poor on their city streets, focusing particularly on the nature of humanitarian child-saving efforts which led to the removal of many poor children from their families. The last chapter investigates the nature and limits with which central and eastern Canadians responded to reports from the prairies of “starving Indians” following the destruction of the buffalo.

The dissertation makes sense of the seeming contradictory contemporary impulses which led to the protection of the domestic animals of the “uncivilized” urban poor on the one hand and the destruction of the buffalo (as a free roaming species) to make way for “civilization” on the other. It shows how both the SPCA movement and the destruction of the buffalo were the result of “civilization,” signs of the emerging capitalist and colonial order. It demonstrates that contemporaries recognized and were dismayed by the central role played by civilized white hunters in the destruction of the buffalo. Once the buffalo disappeared, a new narrative emerged that blamed the Indians for the destruction, helping to justify Canadian domination of the prairies. The thesis also demonstrates that as dominant culture took on the mantle of humanity to animals, through the establishment

of SPCAs and game protection, Indian hunting was criminalized and worked to further dispossess indigenous people.

The dissertation demonstrates that despite differences between the east and the west, man's responsibility to ease the suffering of his neighbor took on the same forms in both locations, including policies of "no work, no food" and the removal of children from their families. In this history, the language of humanitarianism emerges as a strategy for the domination of humans and animals.

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Civilized Man's Humanity to Man and Beast: An introduction

This narrative is an exploration of the history of humanitarianism in Canada during the 1870s and 1880s. It is composed of four case studies on the humanity toward, and the treatment of, man and beast. Chapter one explores the rise of the anti-cruelty to animals movement in 1869 Montreal, when the first Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) was established in Canada. The second chapter explores Anglo-Protestant philanthropic responses to poverty in Montreal in the years following the establishment of the SPCA and charts the rise of the movement for the protection of children. The narrative then faces west.¹ One section is concerned with the almost complete disappearance of the buffalo on the prairies by the 1870s and 1880s. The closing chapter explores Canadian responses to reports of "starving Indians" in the years following the destruction of buffalo and Canada's promise to be her brother's keeper.

This thesis is innovative because it tells a number of stories together which are generally considered separately by historians. Each of its central themes (the SPCA, the destruction of the buffalo, work for rations as a philanthropic strategy, the rise of the movement for the protection of children, native-newcomer relations in the west) has emerged as a distinct theme of inquiry; each with its own historians, with separate historiographical traditions and concerns.² Like other historians, I was concerned with the fragmentation of knowledge, resulting from increasingly specialized fields of study and the

¹ This wording is inspired by Richard Drinnon's *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980).

² Historians have noted the links between industrial and residential schools. In his 1988 article on the Victoria Industrial School Paul W. Bennett argues that "the 'industrial school' model employed to rescue poor street children believed to be drifting into the 'criminal class' became the preferred method for reforming a sizeable minority of Indian children." In her 1999 book, *From Our Mothers' Arms*, Constance Deiter argues that "the residential school model was expanded to include non-Indians" and that "the first residential schools were called industrial schools." J. R. Miller writes, "residential schools followed a pattern common to custodial institutions of all kinds in the nineteenth-and twentieth-century Canada. So-called industrial homes for needy or problem children, for example, were structured much like Native residential schools." See, Paul W. Bennett, "Taming 'Bad Boys' of the Dangerous Class": Child Rescue and Restraint at the Victoria Industrial School, 1887-1935," *Histoire Sociale – Social History*, XXI, no. 41 (mai-May 1998), 94; Constance Deiter, *From Our Mothers' Arms: The Intergenerational Impact of Residential Schools in Saskatchewan* (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1999), 13 & 15; J. R. Müller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 193.

lack of dialogue between historians of different themes and fields.³ I was inspired by the idea of relational history and lateral analysis for writing a new political history. I began with the premise that drawing these disparate stories together, examining them in unison and as contemporaneous, would shed light on how each was historically constituted, how they all fit together and therefore would be instructive of the larger ethos of the time.⁴ In this dissertation, each theme is explored in its own chapter. Each tells a component of the history of humanitarianism in Canada during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Each chapter is a thread in the nation's moral fabric. I see this dissertation as a history of the moral foundations of the nation.⁵

The historical developments under investigation in this history of humanitarianism followed on the heels of Canada's establishment as a nation and its colonial expansion into the west. In 1983, Canadian historian John Tobias challenged "the myth of Canada's just and honourable Indian policy from 1870 to 1885" – what he characterized as "one of the more persistent myths" perpetrated by Canadian historians.⁶ Canada's reputation as a humane nation continues to frame how Canadians conceive of the history of their nation and their ethical treatment of others, despite intervention from some historians. Popular understandings of humanitarianism in Canada continue to require intervention. Humanitarianism was also important in late nineteenth century dominant culture. My work shows that the take over of the lands from present day Ontario to the Rocky Mountains was framed in humanitarian terms and was justified on humanitarian grounds. Humanitarianism was one language in the emerging relations of ruling, in rhetoric if not in practice. The language of humanitarianism was a regulatory discourse; it was a discourse of domination. As Mary-Ellen Kelm succinctly argues,

³ See, Jack L. Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History?* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1998) & Michael Bliss, "Privatizing the Mind: The Sundering of Canadian History, the Sundering of Canada," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 26 (1991), 5-17. For a non-Canadian version of this argument, See, Keith Windschuttle, *The Killing of History: How Literary Critics and Social Theorists are Murdering Our Past* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2000).

⁴ In their book, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination*, John and Jean Comaroff describe their work as "drawing fragments together and situating them within a wider historical field, thus to make sense of the embracing totality of which they were part." John and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Boulder, CA: Westview Press, 1992), 42.

⁵ Neal McLeod, "Rethinking the Spirit of Treaty Six in the Spirit of Mistahi Maskwa (Big Bear)," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* XIX, no.1 (1999), 85-86.

⁶ John L. Tobias, "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree, 1879-1885," *Canadian Historical Review* LXIV, no.4 (1983), 519 & 548.

humanitarianism was “integral to the colonial project, not in some cynical self-aggrandizing way but in a sincere fashion that saw ‘doing good’ as inextricably linked with racial superiority and the right to rule.”⁷ Humanitarianism was based on the hierarchical ranking of man and beast and between men of different nations. It provided the moral basis as well as intellectual rationale for nation-building, colonial expansion, establishing institutions, domesticating animals and civilizing the citizenry.

This introductory chapter is composed of four sections. The first part explores my personal odyssey and academic pursuits in writing this history. The next section provides a general description of the evidence and sources from which this history is drawn and the nature of the story I am telling. The third section situates the rise of the anti-cruelty to animals movement, the destruction of the buffalo, and man’s responsibility to ease the suffering of his neighbor on the same historical, ideological and moral map. The final section provides a brief outline of each of the chapters.

How I came to this history

The moment I understood that my identity and self-understanding were tied up with history, I ran away from my own past. I am the daughter of Greek peasants from the village of Tholopotami, Xios, a small Greek island off the coast of Turkey. In chain migration, first my father, then my mother with my eldest sister Effie came to Canada in the late 1950s. My parents worked very hard ‘to put meat on the table.’ My sister Anna and I were born in Canada in the 1960s. Throughout my youth in Montreal, I straddled at least two worlds, the Greek world of my home, neighborhood, and community and the Anglo-Franco dominant cultures of Montreal into which I assimilated by growing up in a French city, by attending the Protestant English public school system by day (and Greek school in the evenings), as well as by watching plenty of American television. I rejected the legacy of my Greek heritage and my parents’ hopes for me. It caused a painful rift between us. In 1989, my parents moved back to Tholopotami and I stayed in Canada.

⁷ See, Mary-Ellen Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia 1900-50* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998), 101. See also, Kenton J. Clymer, “Humanitarian Imperialism: David Prescott Barrows and the White Man’s Burden in the Philippines,” *Pacific Historical Review* 45 no. 4 (1976), 495-518.

Despite my rejecting their way of life, before they returned to Greece my parents offered my dowry to support my undergraduate training.

When I arrived at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto to pursue my MA, with the help of my parents and a major Quebec scholarship (FCAR), my course work with Harold Troper focused on ethnic and minority studies. I was poised to work on a history of being Greek in Canada. But the pain of loss and separation from my family and the Greek community was too raw. I had rejected the rudiments of their culture and ways of life. I feared interviewing people who would judge me negatively because I was young, unmarried and not living under my father's roof. Because I assimilated in many important ways, I felt I would be unworthy to hear their stories. I turned my back on understanding my own past.

I had recently become a cat-lover and had adopted a kitten from the Toronto Humane Society (THS) when I arrived to begin my graduate training. Years earlier, one of my acts of rebellion against my parents was to become a vegetarian. The THS records were available and substantial and I chose this anti-cruelty to animals society as my MA thesis topic. I thought it would lead me away from all those messy and painful questions about cultural practices, ethnicity, and assimilation. I was wrong. My roommate in Toronto, Les Tager, a Jewish lesbian feminist, tried to tell me that for her eating chicken matzo ball soup was an important part of being Jewish and that adopting a vegetarian diet was a form of assimilation: It took me years to understand her point of view. The historical narrative that follows has been part of that process of understanding.

For my doctoral thesis at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, I set out to place the anti-cruelty to animals movement within its broader historical and cultural context. To do this work, I returned to Montreal where the first Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) was established in 1869. I traveled through the American and Canadian West in the course of my doctoral studies with a twenty-five cent thrift store copy of Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* and the then recently published *Loyal Till Death: Indians and the North-West Rebellion* by Blair Stonechild and

Bill Waiser.⁸ The destruction of the buffalo and the dispossession and repression of the prairie First Nations was contemporaneous with the establishment of the SPCA movement. The question of how it was possible that these seemingly contradictory practices toward animals and people were contemporaneous, guided the contours of my research.

In 1999, when animal rights⁹ activists were reported to be in the water trying to stop the Makah people in Washington state from embarking on a whale hunt,¹⁰ the historical links between the protection of animals, culture and power were clearly at play. Although animal rights activists sometimes challenge the practices of dominant culture, their politics and practices are also rooted in and can support dominant culture, including their attempts to malign, prohibit or criminalize indigenous practices.¹¹ Animal rights activists attempting to stop the renewal of the Makah whale hunt support imperialism rather than challenge it.¹² In "Fighting for Native Rites" Greg Colfax, a Makah carver and writer, argues that "it's a racist attack for environmentalists to make the claim that 'if you loved it you wouldn't eat it'." It is a moral assertion rooted in culture; love, respect and honour of animals can and

⁸ Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970); Blair Stonechild and Bill Waiser, *Loyal Till Death: Indians and the North-West Rebellion* (Calgary: AB: Fifth House Ltd., 1997).

⁹ The SPCA movement, animal rights and conservation are all distinct but interrelated settler ideas and institutions. One can consider the animal rights movement as a radical offshoot of the SPCA movement. Indeed, Peter Singer who distinguishes his animal rights position from the SPCA movement traces his historical antecedent to Henry Salt's 1892 *Animal Rights*. See, Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* 2nd ed. (1975. Reprint. London: Jonathan Cape, 1990), viii.

¹⁰ Beth Hege Piatote, "Fighting for Native Rites: Renewal of the Makah Whale Hunt," *Native Americas: Akwe:kow's Journal of Indigenous Issues* (Fall, 1998), 43 & Ben Heizer, James Johnston & Jeff Shaw, "Indigenism and the Environmental Movement: An Interview with Ward Churchill" *Earth First!* 20, no 6 (June-July, 2000), 23.

¹¹ For example see, Alan Herscovici, *Second Nature: The Animal-Rights Controversy*, (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing, 1985), 22 & 24. Herscovici examines the anti-sealing campaigns beginning in 1964 by animal welfare (New Brunswick SPCA and Ontario Humane Society) and then animal rights (International Fund for Animal Welfare and Greenpeace) groups. The campaign was successful in persuading the European Economic Community to ban the import of white-coat pelts into the EEC. For both Newfoundland sealers and the Inuit of the Canadian Arctic, "the destruction of the market for sealskins has brought considerable hardship and animal-rights groups may succeed in doing what half a century of corporate and government manipulation have as yet failed to accomplish, in wiping out the last vestiges of traditional Inuit culture....The Inuit say that the philosophy of animal rights is merely the latest outburst of the cultural and economic imperialism they've come to expect from Europe and the South."

¹² Herscovici explains that "the mounting campaign against fur trapping now threatens to disrupt the lives of some one hundred thousand trappers in Canada. Up to sixty per cent of these trappers are Indians or Metis. For many, fur income is a main source of cash to subsidize the traditional hunting-based economy; this is income that can not be readily replaced in the north. Fur trapping is one of the few activities through which native people have been able to participate successfully on their own terms in the dominant economy. Moreover, trap lines often represent the Indians' single most powerful *de-facto* claim to the land." (emphasis in the original) Herscovici, *The Animal-Rights Controversy*, 23.

do take many different forms.¹³ When the Canadian state took up arms against the people of Burnt Church, New Brunswick in the name of “conservation,”¹⁴ and white Canadians articulated a position in the name of the protection of the lobster, the incident demonstrated how the discourses of stewardship and protection continue to function as part of the uneven distribution of power and access to resources which support the dispossession of indigenous people in Canada.

What has become clear in the writing of this dissertation is that this history is also part of my personal inheritance, as well as part of our national one. The historical accident of my birth in Montreal rather than the Greek village of Tholopotami irrevocably shaped my destiny. As a citizen today, I know my everyday life was shaped by the historical developments of the 1870s and 1880s, which laid the foundations for some of today’s national institutions and practices, including industrial capitalism, dependence on wage labour for adults and the institutionalization of children through mass schooling. From the take over of the west to the establishment of the animal and child protection movements, as Canadians we continue to live with these century-old foundations. Canada’s colonial foundations should be an issue for every Canadian citizen concerned with justice. In an academic voice, this is protest narrative calling for Canada to live up to the best spirit of its own laws. This historical reassessment of the quality of mercy and protection in rhetoric and practice in the past is driven by the theme of and hope for justice, in our time.

Sources and other questions of evidence and storytelling

In compiling the evidence for this history, I culled material from a variety of different sources from libraries and archives located in a number of Canadian cities, Montreal, Regina, Ottawa, and Victoria. The research began with a reading of the Montreal English daily press between 1869 and 1890, alternating each year between the

¹³ Piatote, "Fighting for Native Rites: Renewal of the Makah Whale Hunt"; See also, Robert Brightman, *Grateful Prey: Rock Cree Human-Animal Relationships*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). Brightman’s text provides an important challenge to the animal rights’ anti-hunting paradigm. See also, Paul Nadasdy, "Transcending the Debate over the Ecologically Noble Indian: Indigenous Peoples and Environmentalism," *Ethnohistory* 52 no. 2 (Spring 2005), 291-331.

¹⁴ Alison Blackduck, "Trouble on the Water," *Hour* 8, no. 39 (Sept. 28 to Oct. 4, 2000), 4 & *Is the Crown at War with Us?* Alanis Obomsawin, dir., Montreal: National Film Board, 2002.

Montreal Star, Gazette, Herald and Daily Witness.¹⁵ It was the reading of that press which wove the first threads of an eastern narrative about the west in the name of nation. It was also in Montreal that I first read through the Canadian state's collection of *Sessional Papers* from the late 1860s to 1900. Published annual reports by various departments which managed the city of Montreal, police, recorder's court and sanitary state, were mined to explore contemporary responses to need and suffering. Although the early Minutes of Meetings for the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (CSPCA) have not survived, I was granted access to the CSPCA's surviving private holdings covering the Minutes of Meetings for the years 1887-1900, and their collection of newspaper clippings from 1897-1917. While in Montreal I benefited from access to all the collections at McGill University Library, Concordia University as well as the numerous branches of Les bibliotheque et archives nationales du Quebec.

My research greatly benefited from a research trip to then Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, now First Nations University of Canada. While there I had access to their rich library holdings, their microfilm collection of Department of Indian Affairs correspondence as well as their indexed oral history transcripts from the 1970s *Film History Project*. I was also privileged to read through a selection from the more recent interviews done for the Resistance Project, on which *Loyal Till Death* was based. While in Regina, I was blessed with meeting indigenous historians Neal McLeod, Blair Stonechild and Rob Nestor, all of whom have generously shared their work and time with me since that initial meeting years ago. Years later, at the University of Victoria, I read through the early territorial press of present day Saskatchewan and Alberta, including the *Saskatchewan Herald* (1878-1890), *Edmonton Bulletin* (1880-1888), *Qu'Appelle Progress* (1885-1888), *Regina Leader* (1883-1885), and the *Calgary Herald* 1888-1889.

By and large, the evidence which supports this history of humanitarianism is drawn from the public and published record. Although parts of this history are drawn from unpublished sources, for instance, from the records of philanthropic societies, government

¹⁵ *Montreal Star* 1869, *Montreal Gazette* 1870, *Montreal Herald* 1871, *Montreal Star* 1872, *Montreal Daily Witness*, *Montreal Star* and *Toronto Daily Star* 1874, *Montreal Herald* 1875, *Montreal Daily Witness* 1876, *Montreal Star* 1877, *Montreal Herald* 1878, *Montreal Daily Witness* 1879, *Montreal Gazette* 1880, *Montreal Star* 1881, *Montreal Herald* 1882, *Montreal Star* 1883, *Montreal Daily Witness*, *Montreal Gazette*, *Montreal Star* and *Toronto Globe* 1884, *Montreal Star* 1885, *Montreal Daily Witness* 1886, *Montreal Herald* 1887, *Montreal Daily Witness* 1888, *Montreal Star* 1889, *Montreal Herald* 1890. I also read *The Manitoban* 1870-1874.

departments, and oral interviews with Elders, the narratives in them are confirmed in and complemented by the public and published record. In many ways the history that is outlined in this dissertation is available in plain view. It is not hidden in the details of a private archive. Instead many of the narratives that I employ as historical evidence were circulated among contemporaries and therefore both provided a record for as well as shaped people's understanding of the world around them. Published narratives of scientific expeditions, personal recollections, missionaries' accounts, newspapers, as well as annual reports of various regulatory bodies including those by government officials and voluntary organizations were all manicured texts which were intended for public consumption. These texts were printed and circulated sources and informed how people in the past made sense of and organized their world.

This history then is predominantly made up of narratives and evidence created and circulated by and representative of dominant culture. Although diverse, the record of dominant culture under analysis is also essentially capitalist, colonial, expansionist, and Christian. This is not to suggest that the record is monolithic or that it does not contain important interventions as well as differences between nineteenth century writers. Rather, I suggest that it is useful to consider these differences as a variety of narratives within a shared ideological spectrum which at its base supported the taking of the land and claiming of the resources of indigenous people. Consider the Montreal English Daily press as an example. The different newspapers came to contemporary events and concerns from a variety of vantage points, some focused on business rather than social issues. The *Daily Witness* was evangelical while the others were more secular, but they also shared a number of fundamental commonalities: They were Christian, colonial, expansionist and supporters of industrial capitalism. There were no socialists or anarchists among them.

Although I did consult both published and unpublished First Nations narratives, the subject/object of knowledge at the center of this narrative is Canada, and more specifically the political, cultural, and ideological threads which made up the nature of humanitarianism in colonial culture. I do not see this work as native history, because many of the stories I relate emerge from the colonial record rather than from within indigenous communities. This is one of the main reasons that I retain the use of the word Indian in this thesis, because the word contains the connection between Indians as objects of knowledge

produced and authored by a white colonial imagination and administration. In contrast to prevailing practice, this work takes the spotlight off Indians and puts the lens of inquiry onto the nation. In this work, the problem is colonial history and colonial culture.

This approach may look like a return to top down history, a style of writing that was critiqued beginning in the 1970s in part because it was concerned only with the powerful and did not attend enough to how everyday people negotiated, struggled and sometimes triumphed over the conditions of their lives. My work is concerned with the making of those conditions. Therefore the work focuses on the articulations and mandates of various movements as a way of understanding the historical context and ideological setting which framed the experience of the human (and animal) figure. The agency of the individual in history is not a central organizing principal of this work because I am primarily concerned with making links between rhetoric and practice in the east and in the west, rather than between those on the top and those on the bottom of the nation's hierarchy. In this work, "history is", as Linda Tuhiwai Smith explains, "mostly about power. It is the story of the powerful and how they became powerful, and then how they use their power to keep them in positions in which they can continue to dominate others."¹⁶ It all begins with the stories we tell.¹⁷

Civilized Man, Humanity to Animals, and Humanitarian Imperialism

Humanity to animals was inextricably linked to a concept of civilization which favored Europe.¹⁸ Embedded within an idea of progress, civilization demarcated "the last stage of mankind's development" from savagery to barbarism and then to civilization.¹⁹ Humanity to animals linked ethics and evolution²⁰ with the refinement of moral feelings.²¹ By the nineteenth century "compassion and a reluctance to inflict pain became identified

¹⁶ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 34.

¹⁷ Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative* (Toronto: Anansi Press Inc., 2003).

¹⁸ Bruce Mazlish, *Civilization and its Contents* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 7-8

¹⁹ Mazlish, *Civilization and its Contents*; See also, Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 23-25; Crane Brinton, *A History of Western Morals* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1959), 349.

²⁰ Thomas H. Huxley explored the "ethics of evolution" or the "evolution of ethics" in his essay 1893 Romanes Lecture "Evolution and Ethics. See, Thomas H. Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1903), 79-80.

²¹ For an overview of authors and their ideas on these issues see, Peter Kropoktin, *Ethics: Origin and Development* trans. by Louis S. Friedland and Joseph R. Piroshnikoff (1924rpt., New York: Benjamin Bloom Inc., 1968), 261-321.

as distinctively *civilized* emotions, while cruelty was labeled *savage* or *barbarian*.”²² For instance, in his 1869 *History of European Morals* in two volumes, William E. H. Lecky explained that “the tastes and habits of civilization [tend] to promote comfort and diminish pain.”²³ According to Lecky, with civilization comes compassion because the intellectual and imaginative capacities are so developed that civilized man can understand “the thoughts, feelings, and characters of others, with a vividness inconceivable to the savages.” According to Lecky “in proportion to their civilization, men realize and recoil from cruelty.”²⁴ Cruelty, he argued, “diminished with advancing civilization.”²⁵ Charles Darwin confirmed the basic thrust of Lecky’s argument in his 1871 book, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*. Darwin argued that “most savages are indifferent to the sufferings of strangers, or even delight in witnessing them...Some savages take a horrid pleasure in cruelty to animals, and humanity with them is an unknown virtue.”²⁶ Darwin confirmed the centrality of civilization to the humane treatment of animals. He explained, “Sympathy beyond the confines of man, that is humanity to the lower animals, seems to be one of the latest moral acquisitions. It is apparently unfelt by savages, except toward their pets.”²⁷ This remark on pet-keeping was probably more fitting of eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe,²⁸ and as such would have had resonance with readers. Nonetheless, these narratives linked humanity to animals with civilization and cruelty as a central characteristic of the savage other. These discourses had real consequences in the distribution of power.

Civilized man’s humanity to animals distinguished man from beast and it also served to distinguish between men of different nations, who were considered to be at different stages of human development. At its base, humanitarianism was a hierarchal impulse and its ideals supported white supremacy at the apex of a descending hierarchy of

²² Karen Halttunen, “Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture,” *American Historical Review* 100, no.2 (April 1995), 303.

²³ William Edward Hartpole Lecky, *History of European Morals: From Augustus to Charlemagne* Volume I, 3rd ed., (1869rpt., New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1898), 130.

²⁴ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, 134.

²⁵ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, 134.

²⁶ Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871. Reprint. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981), 94.

²⁷ Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 101.

²⁸ See, Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes of French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 1984). When the master and mistress gave the go-ahead to the workers to kill the cats, their only concern was that their pet, “la grise,” be spared the same fate.

beings. As historian Norman S. Fierling argued, the rise of sympathy and humanity “contributed to the spread of humanitarianism by establishing an image or idea of human nature that made humanitarian feelings insistently ‘natural.’ If human beings were by nature irresistibly moved to relieve suffering, then those who were coldly indifferent to suffering were, by definition, something less than human.”²⁹ In his history of man and beast, Keith Thomas concurs that if “the essence of humanity was defined as consisting in some specific quality, then it followed that any man who did not display that quality was subhuman, semi-animal.”³⁰ Savages in the colonies, these “not fully human”³¹ groups also included “other animals nearer home” like “small children,” and “still more beastlike were the poor.”³² In the emerging nineteenth-century taxonomy, Indians, the poor, children and animals were cast as lesser beings than civilized man and as such dependent upon him for protection.

I suggest that ideas of humanity and evolved morality underpinned the emerging colonial hegemony in Canada. Christianity and social Darwinism both provided a rationale for stewardship; the former focused on responsible use of (and sympathy with) God’s creatures under man’s care³³ and was based on the golden rule, the latter on the premise that those at the apex of the hierarchy of races warranted their supremacy and demonstrated their superior humanity through the humane treatment of those over whom they had power. Civilized man distinguished himself from other animals and other men in part by his moral sensibility in general and by the latest moral acquisition of humanity to animals, in particular. This distinction seemed to confirm civilized man’s legitimacy at the apex of the moral order of the world. His capacity to feel and respond to the suffering of others became a hallmark of his civility and legitimized his right to rule. His evolved

²⁹ Norman S. Fierling, “Irresistible Compassion: An Aspect of Eighteenth-Century Sympathy and Humanitarianism,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 37, no.2 (1976), 196. More recently, Laura M. Stevens, argues, in her work *The Poor Indians: British Missionaries, Native Americans, and Colonial Sensibility* that “pity became a crucial component of the British people’s developing sense of themselves as a people whose boundaries would extend as far as their ability to feel sorrow for suffering did.” See, Laura M. Stevens, *The Poor Indians: British Missionaries, Native Americans, and Colonial Sensibility* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 17.

³⁰ Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800* (London: Penguin Books, 1983), 41.

³¹ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1999), 25.

³² Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 42-45 & Stevens, *The Poor Indians*, 131.

³³ “SPCA – Ladies Committee,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 14 February 1873, 2.

moral sense would ensure that power would be ethically wielded and therefore legitimate. The supremacy of civilization rested on the ideals of humanity, mercy and justice. It was civilized man's duty to be merciful to those over whom he held power. Benevolence to those beneath him elevated the humanity of civilized man and justified his hegemony. These ideas were part of the "moral claims which related to the concept of civilized 'man.'"³⁴

Interestingly, humanity to animals and the destruction of the buffalo were both natural consequences of civilization. Although humanitarian groups like the SPCA opposed "the wanton destruction of the buffalo," the civilization and colonial culture of which the SPCA was a part made the buffalo's disappearance, as a free roaming species, inevitable. The extermination of local animal and plant life, indigenous fauna and flora, to be replaced by familiar (European) plants and animals was part of the spread of colonization and settlement.³⁵ The inevitability of the destruction of the buffalo was a matter of fact in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The famous Canadian naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton described the destruction of the buffalo as "one of the most remarkable results of civilization." He explained that

It was absolutely inevitable. The Buffalo ranged the Plains that were needed by the outcrowded human swarms of Europe. Producing Buffalo was not the best use to which those Plains could be put. The Buffalo, possessed of vast size and strength, of an obstinate, impetuous disposition that would stampede in a given line and keep that line to the utter destruction of all obstacles or of himself, was incompatible with any degree of possession by white men and with the higher productivity of the soil. Therefore he had to go.³⁶

Not everyone agreed³⁷ with Seton's analysis but he articulated a widely held belief and captured the ethos of his day. The destruction of buffalo rather than being a contradiction

³⁴ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 26. I explore the gendered nature of civilized man's humanity in Chapter One through an analysis of the male-centered male-led anti-cruelty to animals movement in Montreal.

³⁵ See, Alfred Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

³⁶ Ernest Thompson Seton, *Life Histories of Northern Animals: An Account of the Mammals of Manitoba, Volume 1: The Grass-Eaters* (New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1909), 301-302. Emphasis in the original.

³⁷ *Edmonton Bulletin* editorials supported the preservation of the buffalo as a "truly" national policy, arguing that the land could be put to good use in this way. The paper advocated for the domestication of the buffalo where "the soil too poor, water and wood too scarce to admit of it ever becoming good agricultural country." The buffalo were "neither as wild or as vicious as those alleged tame cattle." See, Editorial,

to civilization was, as Seton explained, “the result of civilization” because it was “incompatible with any degree of possession by white men.”

Just like the destruction of the buffalo, “the transfer of the country [the west] to the Dominion of Canada” was also considered “inevitable” by expansionists.³⁸ In keeping with contemporary ethics, it was the duty of civilization to deal justly with the weaker, lower orders. Critics of “the brutality of the US expansionist campaign” considered it “unfit for a self-professed civilized nation.”³⁹ As the Rev. George Grant explained in his nationalist and expansionist travel diary, *Ocean to Ocean* (1872), “for a nation to be great” it must “rule inferior races mercifully and justly... Their [Indian] feebleness makes it more incumbent on the Government of a Christian people to treat them not only justly but generously.”⁴⁰ At the polar ends of the expansionist spectrum, “civilization or extermination”⁴¹ were cast as two options for dealing with the “Indian problem,”⁴² which was in fact the settler or “colonial problem.”⁴³ It was the humanitarians (of the Aborigines’ Protection Society) in Britain who first “advocated the

“Buffalo,” *Edmonton Bulletin*, 18 March 1882, 2. See also, Untitled, *Edmonton Bulletin*, 15 September 1888, 2.

³⁸ George F.G. Stanley, *The Birth of Western Canada: A History of the Riel Rebellions* (1939 Reprint. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), 18. In his 1921 history of North West Mounted Police, *Policing the Plains*, R.G. MacBeth wrote: “It is inevitable in the progress of human history that higher civilizations should supercede the lower. Wherever the contrary has been the case and a lower civilization overran the higher the movement of humanity was retrograde. Hence, if the Indian type of civilization in Western Canada was to be superseded by the British type and this effected without injustice and hardship for the original dwellers in the country, the Government of the Dominion must proceed by the process of treaty.” See, R. G. MacBeth, *Policing the Plains: Being the Real-Life Record of the Famous Royal North-West Mounted Police* (Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1921), 66.

³⁹ Scott Laderman, “‘It is Cheaper and Better to Teach a Young Indian Than to Fight an Old One’: Thaddeus Pound and the Logic of Assimilation,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 26, no. 3 (2002), 85.

⁴⁰ Although he considered the taking of the land as “inevitable,” Grant argued that “in the name of justice, and of the sacred rights of property, is not the Indian entitled to liberal, and if possible, permanent compensation?” Grant, *Ocean to Ocean*, 48-49 & 347-8.

⁴¹ Robert Winston Mardock, *The Reformers and the American Indian* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1971), 83. In *Ocean to Ocean* Rev. Grant presents “three ways of dealing with the less than half a million red men still to be found on the continent of America.” See, Grant, *Ocean to Ocean*, 103-106.

⁴² See Stanley, Chapter X “The Indian Problem: The Treaties” and Chapter XI “The Indian Problem: The Reserves” in *The Birth of Western Canada*, 194-242; Noel Dyck, *What is the Indian ‘Problem’: Tutelage and Resistance in Canadian Indian Administration* (St. John’s, Newfoundland: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1991), 11-23.

⁴³ See, Taiaiake Alfred, *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2005), 105-108.

need to protect and civilize the Indian,"⁴⁴ through their segregation on reservations, their Christianization and Europeanization. In this way, the "moral difficulty"⁴⁵ of taking the land was resolved in Canada through a policy of protection, civilization and assimilation.⁴⁶ Contemporary whites championed it as a humane solution.⁴⁷

Canadian Indian policy was an approach for taking the land that had moral validation. In his official history of the negotiations of the numbered treaties, Alexander Morris presented making treaty as a moral "duty,"⁴⁸ and he promised to be his "brother's keeper."⁴⁹ The Canadian state did not deliver what Morris promised. In February of 1879, when the buffalo failed to return to the Canadian prairies and Indians were reported to be starving, the *Montreal Daily Witness* encapsulated contemporary Christian social Darwinist thinking when it argued that "The future lies in our own hands, and no plea of the manifest destiny of the Anglo-Saxon race, no indifference nor intolerance should blind us to the fact that a once powerful people [Indians] are at our mercy, that we shall be recreants to a most binding and solemn duty if we fail to reconcile them to civilization."⁵⁰ In its editorial on the accusations of the government's "cruel treatment of Indians" in April 1886, the *Montreal Herald* argued that "the just and humane treatment of the Aborigines is one of the most sacred duties devolving upon a Government that annexes their territory and deprives them of their customary modes of living."⁵¹ In the name of humane treatment, these commentators reaffirmed the moral duty to make

⁴⁴ See, John L. Tobias, "Protection, Civilization and Assimilation: An Outline History of Canada's Indian Policy," *Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology* 6, no. 2 (1976), 13-30 in J. R. Miller ed., *Sweet Promises: A Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 128-129. After 1870 in the west, "directed and aggressive civilization" was a crucial component of official Canadian government Indian policy. Tobias, "Protection, Civilization and Assimilation," 136. See also, Bruce Wilson, "Benevolence from afar: The Aborigines Protection Society and the Lennox Island Indian Reserve," *The Archivist* 15, no.6 (Canada, 1988), 10-11, 15.

⁴⁵ Doug Owrain, *The Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 132.

⁴⁶ Tobias, "Protection, Civilization and Assimilation," 127-144.

⁴⁷ See, the protest narrative by Helen Hunt Jackson, *A Century of Dishonor: Sketch of the United States Governments Dealings with some of the Indian Tribes* (1881 Reprint. Minn. Minnesota: Ross and Haines Inc., 1964).

⁴⁸ Alexander Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, Including the Negotiations on which they were based and other information relating thereto*, (Toronto: Belford, Clarke & Co., Publishers, 1880: rpt Fifth House, 1991), 232-233.

⁴⁹ Morris, *The Treaties of Canada*, 232.

⁵⁰ "How the Indians are Becoming Civilized," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 1 February 1879, 3; See, Lorraine Vander Hoef, "John Dougall (1808-1886): Portrait of an Early Social Reformer and Evangelical Witness in Canada," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society* 43, no. 2 (2001), 115-145.

⁵¹ Editorial, "A Broken Promise," *Montreal Herald*, 18 January 1887.

provision for the Aborigines who were dispossessed by civilization. In a sense, all these arguments were articulation of an “ethical” imperialism. There was consensus regarding the right to claim indigenous lands and take away “their customary modes of living” – the duty would have been to offer succor in the face of impending famine, which was anticipated with the inevitable disappearance of the buffalo with the take over of the land.⁵²

As we have seen, the distinguishing mark of civilized man’s superiority was his capacity to respond with sympathy to suffering both in animals as well as in “the case of the starving stranger.”⁵³ In the Canadian west, the ethical question of man’s responsibility to ease the suffering of his neighbour was resolved by applying eastern philanthropic ideas and practices directed at “the poor” at home, to “starving Indians” on the prairies. According to Steven Marcus, it was also the way the British responded to the Irish Famine of 1845-1850, when over one million people starved to death.⁵⁴ As the prime minister and Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, John A. Macdonald argued in the House of Commons in 1882, “when they [Indians] fall into a state of destitution we cannot allow them to die for want of food. It is true that Indians so long as they are fed will not work.” As Dean Neu and Richard Therrien argue, “Victorian sensibilities prevented the outright

⁵² It is an important but often missed point that the Canadian state’s mandate was to protect Indians from Europeans. According to Tobias, Canadian Indian policy recognized that Europeans were exploiters from whom Indians needed to be protected. Tobias, “Protection, Civilization, Assimilation,” 127 & 129. Doug Owrarn argues that expansionists argued that by transforming “the Indian as a ward of the state, steps could taken to protect him from the harmful effects of white culture while teaching him the benefits.” See, Owrarn, *The Promise of Eden*, 132. See also, Richard Drinnon, *White Hunter: The Case of John Dunn Hunter* (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), 39; Norman Shrive, *Charles Mair: Literary Nationalist* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), 202.; William Francis Butler, *The Great Lone Land: A Narrative of Travel and Adventure in the North-West of America* (1872 Reprint. London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, 1891), 241.

⁵³ Thomas L. Haskell, “Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 1,” *American Historical Review* 90, no.2 (1985), 353.

⁵⁴ According to historian Steven Marcus, when Charles Edward Trevelyan, the British administrator of relief was confronted with eight million starving Irish, wrote “‘dependence on charity is not to be made an agreeable way of life’...poverty was the result of improvidence on the part of the poor for which they were not to be rewarded but punished. One of the results of such thinking is that by the nineteenth century in England poverty had come to be regarded as a kind of crime, and the poor were treated as criminals – if relief were made as ‘unattractive and difficult to obtain as possible,’ then the poor would presumably not be so willing to seek it. This more or less insane solution was applied wholesale to Ireland.” See, Steven Marcus, *Representations: Essays on Literature and Society* (New York: Random House, 1974), 13; See also, Scott W. See, “‘An unprecedented influx’: Nativism and Irish Famine Immigration to Canada,” *The American Review of Canadian Studies* (Winter 2000), 429-453; David Arnold, *Famine: Social Crisis and Historical Change* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988). For other historical work on British responses to famine, see, Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World* (New York: Verso, 2001).

elimination of indigenous people.”⁵⁵ But Macdonald was sure that Indian Agents “are doing all they can, *by refusing food until the Indians are on the verge of starvation, to reduce the expense.* The buffalo has disappeared during the past few years.”⁵⁶ The rhetoric of Canadian humanitarianism and benevolence did not match Canadian state practice.

In 1888 when British Catholic Cardinal Manning argued that “a starving man has a natural right to his neighbor’s bread,”⁵⁷ a *Saskatchewan Herald* editorial accused the Cardinal of converting “to the teachings of Anarchy.”⁵⁸ Manning’s assertion was directly relevant to the situation on the Canadian prairies. The disappearance of the buffalo in 1879 left the indigenous population in dire circumstances and in need of assistance. Instead of the starving man’s right to his neighbor’s bread, in the midst of starvation the

⁵⁵ Dean Neu and Richard Therrien, *Accounting for Genocide: Canada’s Bureaucratic Assault on Aboriginal People* (Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing 2003), 105 & 77. The authors argue that “the plains Cree were seeking assurance that the Queen’s representatives wouldn’t let them starve to death.” According to his biographer, “for Vankoughnet, [deputy superintendent general of Indian affairs 1874-93] fiscal considerations came ahead of human ones.”

⁵⁶ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, (27 April 1882), 1186 (Macdonald). Emphasis mine.

⁵⁷ Editorial, “A Starving Man...” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 4 January 1888, 4. According to his biographer, Robert Gray, Cardinal Manning detested the 1834 “Poor Law which forced men into the workhouse” and preferred the Elizabeth I approach to aid wherein “each town and city the justices of the peace should order a ‘competent stock of wool, hemp, flax, iron and other stuff – by taxation of all – so that every poor and needy person, old and young, able to work and standing in need of relief, shall not, from want of work, go abroad begging, or committing pilferings, or living in idleness.’ He [Manning] conveniently ignored the fact that many of the sixteenth-century poor had preferred to wander the countryside rather than submit to beating hemp under the eye of the local magistrate, even though the penalty for persistent vagrants was whipping until ‘their backs be bloody.’” Robert Gray, *Cardinal Manning: A Biography* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1985), 302; In her defense of Emma Goldman, who served one year at Blackwell’s Island penitentiary for her speech in Union Square New York where she advocated that unemployed workers should “ask for work; if they do not give you work ask for bread; they do not give you work or bread then take bread,” anarchist contemporary Voltarine de Cleyre asked “When Cardinal Manning wrote: ‘Necessity knows no law, and a starving man has a natural right to his neighbor’s bread’, who thought of arresting Cardinal Manning? His was a carefully written article...No one for an instant imagined that Cardinal Manning put himself at the head of ten thousand hungry men to loot the bakeries of London. It was a piece of ethical hair-splitting to be discussed in after-dinner speeches by wine-muddled gentlemen who think themselves most competent to consider such subjects when their dress-coats are spoiled by the vomit of gluttony and drunkenness.” See, Voltarine De Cleyre, “In Defense of Emma Goldman and the Right of Expropriation: A Lecture,” (Philadelphia 1893): <http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist/bright/cleyre/indefenseofeg.html>; Paul Avrich, *An American Anarchist: The Life of Voltarine de Cleyre* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978), 85-86.

⁵⁸ Editorial, *Saskatchewan Herald*, 21 January 1888, 2. This mention of Cardinal Manning’s pronouncement was next to an editorial against the preserving buffalo or any scheme involving the domestication of other wild animals because it “would continue their [Indians] migratory and unsettled habits with the duties and responsibilities of farmers.” Since the 1850s, Indians were asking white visitors on the prairies to protect the buffalo. The buffalo was their food source and its preservation their assurance against starvation.

Canadian government and its supporters carried out “the just principle of ‘no work, no food.’”⁵⁹ Middle class protestant Anglo-Saxon Canadians considered themselves humanitarian, but the ethic of “a starving man’s right to his neighbor’s bread” threatened the nation’s imperial and capitalist foundations.

In the east, a *Montreal Daily Witness* editorial also rejected Cardinal Manning’s assertion of the natural right of the starving man to his neighbor’s bread and championed instead “the communism of scripture [which] coupled two things: the natural right to be fed with the natural duty to toil.” Relief should only be dispensed on that condition: “if any would not work: neither should he eat.”⁶⁰ Ultimately, access to food was contingent on work. This was the standard philanthropic response to hunger and need, in the cities and on the prairies in the 1870s and 1880s. This philanthropic approach was based on “the justice of the ancient fiat, that if a man shall not work neither shall he eat.”⁶¹ At the level of state policy and local philanthropic practices, Canadians considered work for food a “just principle”⁶² rather than a punitive approach to man’s responsibility to ease the suffering of his neighbor. Two philanthropic approaches to dealing with poverty in the east, work for rations for able bodied adults and institutionalization of children in industrial schools, were advocated as humane remedies to the starvation conditions in the west. This dissertation suggests that ideas about “the poor” and poverty at home, in the east for instance, shaped how Canadians responded to reports of “starving Indians.” In so doing, the Canadian state dismissed its nation-to-nation treaty obligations and treated “starving Indians” contemptuously as beggars, both of which worked to facilitate the dispossession of indigenous people on the prairies.

Theorists and historians have pointed to the “remarkable similarity” between reform efforts for the poor at home and in the colonies.⁶³ Describing nineteenth century

⁵⁹ “Progress of the Indians,” *Saskatchewan Herald*, 9 December 1882, 2; It is important to note, that the practice of philanthropy on the prairies was not unique but as Hugh Shewell has shown that ‘*Enough to keep them Alive*’ was part of the general Canadian approach to Indian welfare. See, Hugh Shewell, ‘*Enough to Keep Them Alive*’: *Indian Welfare in Canada, 1873-1965*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

⁶⁰ Editorial, “A Starving Man...” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 4 January 1888, 4.

⁶¹ “Indian Starvation,” *Saskatchewan Herald*, 20 September 1884, 2.

⁶² “Progress of the Indians,” *Saskatchewan Herald*, 9 December 1882, 2.

⁶³ John and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1992), 42 & 291. The Comaroffs refer to this similarity as “the architecture of othering for the metropole as well as the colony.” Ann McClintock has also argued that “colonial discourse was systematically deployed to map urban space” and that there was an “analogy between slum and colony.”

Paris, Hayden White has argued that there was a “general tendency to deny to these new classes [urban masses created by industrialization] or urban poor the status of humanity; they are viewed as wild and savage, and are turned into grotesque objects of fear and anxiety.”⁶⁴ White suggests that these paupers “play[ed] the same role in European thought in the nineteenth century that the natives of the new world played in its counterpart in the eighteenth century. Like the ‘wild men’ of the New World, the dangerous classes of the Old World define the limitations of the general notion of ‘humanity.’”⁶⁵ That essential quality of humanity possessed by civilized man was missing in both the poor and Indians. In late nineteenth-century Toronto, “the tramp” and the “savage” were conflated as “outside the bounds of civilized society.”⁶⁶ American historian John Seeley argued that “by the 1880s the tramp had replaced the Indian as a threat to American civilization.”⁶⁷ My work shows that in the Canadian context these similarities in the representation of the tramp and of the Indian were concurrent. When citizens/Settlers/reformers wrote about Indians and the poor,⁶⁸ they employed a set of images, ideas and logic which at base shared a number of commonalities. One, it was assumed that people were poor because they refused to work or squandered their resources; two, it was believed that the poor and Indians needed to be taught the habits of industry and thrift, key parts of the civilizing process. In the east and the west, work for rations policies were articulated as humane and just, based on the notion that helping a man help himself was the greatest kindness. Lastly, the removal of children from the “pernicious influences” of their parents, into institutions where they could be tamed and trained into useful citizens, was proposed both east and

See, Ann McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 52 & 120.

⁶⁴ White states, “a deep and abiding anxiety over the very concept of humanity itself, a concept which in turn, has its origin in an identification of true humanity with membership in a specific social class.” Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 193. Louis Chevalier, *Laboring Classes and Dangerous Classes: In Paris During the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* trans. by Frank Jellinek (New York: Howard Fertig, 1973), 361-372; White, *Tropics of Discourse*, 193.

⁶⁵ White, *Tropics of Discourse*, 193.

⁶⁶ James M. Pitsula, “The Treatment of Tramps in Late Nineteenth-Century Toronto,” *Canadian Historical Association* 15 (1980), 116-117.

⁶⁷ Pitsula, “The Treatment of Tramps in Late Nineteenth-Century Toronto,” 117; See also, John D. Seeley, “The American Tramp: A Version of the Picaresque,” *American Quarterly* XV (Winter 1963), 541.

⁶⁸ Douglas Lorimer has argued that “the nineteenth century discussion on the racial question rested upon values and assumptions moulded by this hierarchical, class consciousness, social order.” See, Douglas A. Lorimer, *Colour, Class and the Victorians: English Attitudes to the Negro in the mid-nineteenth century* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1978), 15-16.

west. Responses to the adult poor had consequences for their children. The evidence suggests that when it came to the dangerous and endangered classes, the civilizing process was considered necessary in the east and the west.⁶⁹

The Chapters

The establishment of the SPCA in Canada occurred in Montreal in 1869, two years after the birth of the young nation. It was called the Canadian SPCA linking its own emergence with that of the new state. Through the establishment of the anti-cruelty to animals movement settler dominant culture assumed the mantle of humanity to animals. Chapter One explores the CSPCA efforts to eradicate cruelty perpetrated by ‘barbarians in the midst of civilization.’ Most often, these were working men, often male youth, who transgressed the anti-cruelty statute. The historical record suggests that their crimes of cruelty to animals were often related to their poverty. Despite the evidence of cruelists in the midst of civilization, rhetorically at least cruelty to animals was projected onto savages and had real consequences in the dispossession of indigenous people. The chapter situates the anti-cruelty to animals movement as part of the emerging hegemony of colonial culture.

The question of man’s humanity to man in the age of man’s humanity to animals in Montreal is the central driving question of Chapter Two. The history of the punitive approach to charity, including work for rations schemes, has been well drawn by historians. The chapter contributes to this historiography by linking contemporary disdain for the poor and its consequences for their children. The evidence suggests that poverty was central to the emergence of the movement for the protection of children. This challenges the prevailing idea which links the origins of the child protection movement as a movement against what we call child abuse today, or physical violence. The evidence in Montreal suggests that it was their parent’s poverty – often that of single mothers - which made children vulnerable and led to intervention in the name of protection. Physical cruelty does not appear to be the salient characteristic. The denigration of the adult poor and the suspicion of the seeker of alms created the context in which it was possible to remove poor children from their parents and place them into industrial schools.

⁶⁹ Historian Norbert Elias described “the civilizing process” as human mastery over what is animal about them. See, , reaching a state of civility. Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners, Volume I* Trans. Edmott Jephcott. (1939 Reprint. New York: Urizen Books, 1978). On Norbert Elias, see, Bruce Mazlish, *Civilization and Its Contents* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2004), 84-90.

At the same historical moment that children come to be protected from their parents, children were also disempowered. In Montreal, industrial capitalism and the emergence of the male breadwinner ideal led to the demise of the family economy which shifted the role of children from contributors to dependents. This shift disempowered youth and made them vulnerable because dependence was enforced through regulation, detention, and institutionalization. Protection was conceived as institutionalization, through the industrial school movement, where the poor children would be treated with kind and firm treatment and be civilized and thereby tamed.

The narrative then takes up the question of civilized man's treatment of man and beast in the west. Within ten years of the establishment of the movement for the protection of animals from cruelty in the east, the buffalo disappeared from the west. The first part of my investigation into the destruction of the buffalo focuses on shifting historical narratives. It shows that while the destruction of the buffalo was ongoing on the prairies, many white writers posited white man and his civilization as detrimental to the fate of the herds. Once the buffalo disappeared in the 1880s, narratives emerged which implicated Indians in the herds' disappearance. These narratives did not replace other narratives which blamed white hunters, but were concurrent and had their own proponents. Beginning in the 1930s and into the 1960s, historical narratives focused on the centrality of white hide hunters to the demise of the buffalo. Then in the 1990s, almost a hundred years after the events, the Indian blaming / implicating discourse was reincarnated by the new bison revisionists, who argue that Indians were not ecologically sound in their practices, their hunting unsustainable, and they were therefore implicated in the destruction of the buffalo.

Chapter four demonstrates that the white written record cannot sustain the narratives produced by new bison revisionists. Evidence shows that First Nations people were the first to be concerned about the destruction of the buffalo, for which they blamed white encroachment and white hunting. Despite having recently fallen out of vogue, the contemporary written record is replete with narratives about the white man as the greedy hunter. It was this hunter's cultural worldview which considered the disappearance of the buffalo as an essential and inevitable aspect of the spread of civilization. The evidence suggests that the advent of the Indian blaming discourse arose at a particular historical

moment. The discourse marked the ascendancy of settler and colonial culture over the land and the power to write the past in ways that sustained the new colonial order.

Despite the Canadian state representatives' "posture of benevolence,"⁷⁰ reports of "starving Indians" were met with a military solution, from the increase in police to military mobilizations and the use of flour sacks as barricades against hungry people. Chapter five demonstrates that white colonial settler imagination linked the destruction of the buffalo with the threat of an armed Indian resistance to starvation. Long acknowledged by historians, the Canadian state spent minimal amounts of money and kept the people on the verge of starvation. In turn, reports of "starving Indians" kept the threat of an Indian war by the starving people prominent in the settler imagination. This historical context explains the siege mentality⁷¹ that led to Battleford's white residents holing themselves up in the town fort – and the state responded by sending a military column to "free" the town in the spring of 1885. My chapter shows that the military mobilization on the prairies began in 1879 when the buffalo first failed to return to the Canadian prairies. Canadians responded to reports of starvation by taking up arms and organizing militarily against "starving Indians."

Once the buffalo disappeared from the prairies, then, new narratives emerged which essentially blamed Indians for their own suffering. Blaming the poor for their poverty had a long European heritage. The fact that Indians were represented as destroying their own food source, transgressing the cardinal Protestant virtue of thrift, cast them as unworthy supplicants. This discourse precluded the possibility of sympathy and compassion. The idea that Indians as savages were used to starvation as a way of life also worked to normalize famine conditions. At the level of rhetoric, representation and ideal, both the Indian and the child became wards of the state as dependents. Although promised protection, this history demonstrates that on the prairies many people, including children, suffered and starved to death when Canada failed in her duty to be her brother's keeper.

⁷⁰ Norma Sluman and Jean Goodwill, *John Tootoosis: A Biography of a Cree Leader* (Ottawa: Golden Dog Press, 1982), 24.

⁷¹ See, Walter Hildebrant, *Views From Fort Battleford: Constructed Visions of an Anglo-Canadian West* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1994), 28-31. Hildebrant describes "the Wacousta Syndrome and the Garrison Mentality" among settlers.

Chapter 1

The Anti-Cruelty to Animals Movement: a Canadian History

Following the tradition begun in Great Britain in 1824, the first Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) in Canada was established in Montreal in 1869.¹ Its members named it the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (CSPCA). According to CSPCA historian Beatrice Johnston, it was “natural” that this Montreal society used the name “Canadian,” as two years after Confederation “the word was in the air.”² In this chapter, I suggest that there was more to the name: the CSPCA was part of a larger nation-building process and the entrenchment of dominant settler cultural norms. Kindness to animals and the “civilization” of dominant culture were mutually reinforcing. SPCA rhetoric emphasized that animals depended on the “civilized” for merciful treatment and that civilization was defined by and dependent on the merciful treatment of animals. For those involved in the anti-cruelty to animals movement, cruelty to animals challenged the alleged superiority, civility and the humanity of the colonizing dominant culture. Cruelty to animals revealed the presence of “barbarians” in the midst of “civilization.”³ The twin goals of kindness to animals and civilizing human behaviour were inextricably linked. This is not to suggest that SPCAs were not concerned with animal victims of cruelty, but that their mandate and approach was broader. The SPCA hoped to “educate persons to a higher humanity, and to remind them of their duty to the dumb creatures about them.”⁴ Both of these goals worked to distinguish between man and beast. The SPCA movement was also concerned about the

¹ The first SPCA on the North American continent was New York’s American SPCA in 1866, followed by the Pennsylvania Society in 1867 and George T. Angell’s Massachusetts SPCA in 1868. These sister Societies were important mentors, providing precedent, example, and literature to the Canadian scene. The Montreal’s CSPCA was the first of many SPCAs to be established in Canada. It was followed by the Quebec Society in 1870, the Metropolitan Society in Ottawa in 1871, the short lived Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Toronto 1874 and the Nova Scotia SPCA in 1876. In 1878, the Nova Scotia Society dropped “the word ‘animal’” and became “simply S.P.C. to all animal creation,” animals, men, women and children. McGill University Library, The Nova Scotia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty, *Ninth Annual Report*, 1885, 16. The Nova Scotia SPC is the only Canadian Society to be explored by a trained Canadian historian. See Judith Fingard, “Halifax Belongs to God and John Naylor: The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty,” *The Darker Side of Victorian Halifax* (Porters Lake: Pottersfield Press, 1989), 171-186.

² Beatrice Johnson, *For Those Who Cannot Speak: A History of the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 1869-1969* (Laval, Dev-Sco Publishers, Ltd, 1970), 1.

³ “Cruelty to Animals,” *Montreal Gazette*, 10 December 1870, 2.

⁴ “CSPCA: Aims and Objects,” *Montreal Star*, 24 March 1869, 2.

degradation of the public that would result from witnessing scenes of violence and cruelty to animals and its effects on other social relationships. Cruelty and kindness to animals became a way to regulate everyday public behaviour in ways that helped to solidify the emerging power regimes of industrial capitalist colonial power.

In this dissertation, I situate the anti-cruelty to animals movement within its larger historical context and in relation to other humanitarian concerns of its day, including the destruction of the buffalo. Within a decade of the establishment of the SPCA in the east, the buffalo was brought to the brink of disappearance in the west. These two contemporaneous facts are illustrative of the treatment of animals in this historical period. In the same historical period in which ethics and the law were widened to afford some protection to some domestic animals,⁵ the buffalo as a free roaming species came under threat of extermination. This seeming contradiction in the history of the treatment of animals illuminates the ruthless treatment of animals by some Anglo-Saxon Protestants and why some among their very own people tried to restrain this proclivity.⁶ The new Canadian nation-state was premised on an expansionist ideal that considered the disappearance of the buffalo “inevitable.” At the same time, through the establishment of the Montreal SPCA, the movement added its mantle of humanity to animals into an evolving discourse of Canada as a humane nation. The chapter explores the contours of the anti-cruelty to animals movement and begins this inquiry into the nature of humanitarianism in the 1870s and 1880s.

For the most part, this chapter explores the everyday work of the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals on the ground in Montreal from its inception in 1869 to the early 1890s, with a focus on its early years.⁷ The chapter begins

⁵ In his book *Man and the Natural World*, Keith Thomas writes that “the historian’s task is to explain why the boundary encircling the area of moral concern should have been enlarged so as to embrace other species along with mankind.” See, Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England, 1500-1800* (London: Allen Lane, 1983), 150.

⁶ For an overview of the “complexity,” the “ambivalent” and “contradictory” nature of the western Christian tradition on the treatment of animals, see, Rod Preece, *Animals and Nature: Cultural Myths, Cultural Realities* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 70 & 124. Preece is writing in response to narratives which privilege “Aboriginal and Oriental Harmony with Nature” and is trying to rescue the Western Christian tradition from being equated solely with a tradition of abuse. He writes “a careful reading of that tradition [Western] would suggest that we need to recognize a complex and inconsistent whole, rather than merely a tradition of abuse.”

⁷ Unfortunately the first volume of the CSPCA minutes of meetings has not survived through time. I gratefully acknowledge permission to consult the surviving material privately held by the present Canadian

with a broad overview of historical narratives about the anti-cruelty to animals movement. Then the local history unfolds by incorporating primary evidence to show how conditions in Montreal, in the 1870s and 1880s, reflect larger trends described by historians, including the mingling of man and beast in everyday city life, and the SPCA as a way of asserting civilized man's primacy over the animal and human world.

In composition, the Montreal CSPA included members of Montreal's business and political elite, as well as middle class men. In contrast to popular belief, humane leaders were men, not women. In Montreal, although the CSPA worked to enlist women to the cause of anti-cruelty, it remained a male-centered organization in which some men were cast as humane while others were cast as cruel. The evidence shows that Montreal continued the British anti-cruelty tradition of criminalizing only "uncivilized" amusements which were imagined to rouse the "savage" instinct, rather than "healthy manly" sports in which men exercised the qualities necessary for nation-building and civilization. Sportsmen, editors, magistrates, Recorders, and SPCA supporters shared a language about "manliness" and "cruelty" but they differed in their conceptions of cruel practices in need of legal suppression. This work demonstrates that although there was no consensus among middle-class contemporaries about what constituted cruelty to animals, somehow, despite this apparent non-hegemony of the emerging bourgeoisie, the law and its application was stacked against the poor. It was the poor working man who was often brought before the Recorder for the crime of cruelty to animals. In Montreal, like elsewhere, SPCA prosecutions focused on male workers and "the poor", rather than on masters, corporations or industry in general. The cruelist emerges as a working man dependent on his horse. I suggest conditions rooted in poverty were cast as cruel.

Working-class male youth were particularly maligned by the anti-cruelty to animals movement. The SPCA was in step with larger developments regarding shifting

Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Montreal. Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Minutes of Meetings, January 10 1887 to July 6 1900; Minutes of the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals vol. 3 August 3 1900 to August 2 1912; Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Scrapbook, Newspaper Clippings, 1897-1917. Although the present study makes only limited reference beyond the 1890s, it was instructive to have read the material to see the developments of some of the issues over a longer period time. I also examined the 1874 *Toronto Daily Mail* because the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was established in that year. Surviving Annuals Reports from the Ottawa, Quebec, Ontario and Nova Scotia Societies were also consulted.

ideas of childhood as a time of innocence and enforced dependence. Throughout the period under study, the CSPCA had on-going campaigns to dissuade employers from hiring boys in animal-related industries. From its inception to the late 1880s, the CSPCA argued that boys were especially vulnerable to cruelty, either as practitioners or as witnesses. In the name of the protection of animals and society, if such practices continued unchecked, boys' employment opportunities were undercut. I suggest that as employment possibilities were limited, protection functioned to make boys vulnerable and dependent. At leisure, working class boys were closely watched, represented as savages or as engaged in savage practices, and in need of civilizing. These working class boys roused reformers' anxieties about the future of the nation as they imagined cruel boys growing into men.

From the outset of the movement, cruelty to animals, although difficult to define and distinguish from the everyday treatment of animals, was presented as the work of aberrations, men in evolutionary regression in the midst of civilization. Rhetorically, these men were considered aberrations, objects of regression to a historical time (barbarism or savagery) when man's moral sense had not yet developed his sense of sympathy for animals (civilization). Cruelty was projected outward, onto an imagined other. In the last section of this chapter I explore how ideas about cruelty to animals fit into larger contemporary practices of nation building and colonial expansion into "the west." Cruelty and kindness to animals served to distinguish man from beast as well as reinforced a hierarchical ranking among men which supported the ascendancy of settlers over the land. What follows is an exploration into the nature of kindness and cruelty in the age of capital and colonial expansion in Canada.

Historians of the anti-cruelty to animals movement

Historical narratives on the anti-cruelty to animals movement were produced in three main periods. The texts produced on the British and U.S. SPCAs in the 1920s and then in the 1960s were largely celebratory, descriptive expositions on the work of the movement.⁸ Some were written by humane society members and all were written with

⁸ Roswell McCrea, *The Humane Movement: A Descriptive Survey* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1910); The following three texts mark the RSPCA centennial, being as they are published in 1924: Sydney Coleman, *Humane Society Leaders in America* (New York: Frank H. Evory & Co., 1924); Edward Fairholme and Wellesley Pain, *A Century of Work For Animals: The History of the RSPCA, 1824-1924*

the intent that the texts be useful to the movement.⁹ These early texts anchor the beginning of the movement in the rise of an ethic of kindness to animals, or man's duty to animals, without necessarily asking 'why?' This new sentiment, according to these authors, spurred the development of SPCAs. Originally, these were prosecutorial societies which were responsible for the enforcement of their local anti-cruelty to animals statute. By the mid-to-late nineteenth century, the movement shifted its mission to educating the public about kindness to animals. E. S. Turner argues that the shift emphasizing education may have been because the RSPCA did not want to be viewed solely as "a body of meddling hypocrites employing spies and informers to prosecute the poor."¹⁰ By the twentieth century, SPCAs shifted their focus from the prevention of cruelty predominantly to horses and cows to the animal welfare of dogs and cats. The work shifted from mainly warning and prosecuting offenders to providing shelter and adoption services. These early texts are testaments to the movement. The authors declare that it is an unfinished story with much cruelty still to be eliminated, but nonetheless it is a story of triumph for humanity and "civilization."¹¹ As the secretary of the Royal SPCA, Edward Fairholme and his co-author Wellesley Pain explained in their 1924 centennial history of London's RSPCA, indifference to animals was found among "uncivilized races" and cruelty to animals lowered the standards of the "civilization."¹²

In the 1980s, the history of the anti-cruelty to animals movement in Britain and in the US began to be critically reevaluated. In *Reckoning with the Beast: Animals, Pain and Humanity in the Victorian Mind* (1980), James Turner argued that the movement was the displacement of guilt over industrial urban poverty, the displacement of guilt from the

(London: John Murray, 1924); William Shultz, *The Humane Movement in the United States, 1910-1922*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1924); Arthur Moss, *Valiant Crusade: The History of the RSPCA*, (London: Cassell, 1961); E.S. Turner, *All Heaven in a Rage*, (London: Michael Joseph Ltd., 1967); Charles D. Niven, *History of the Humane Movement* (London: Johnson Publications, 1967). Sydney Coleman was a president of the American Humane Association.

⁹ For instance, texts produced in the first quarter of the century included copies of SPCA constitutions and other empirical tools to help those who wanted to establish a local SPCA.

¹⁰ E. S. Turner, *All Heaven in a Rage*, 141.

¹¹ Georgia Sitara, "'Kindness, Mercy and Justice: A History of the Toronto Humane Society, 1887-1917,'" Master of Arts, University of Toronto, 1994), 15-17.

¹² Edward Fairholme and Wellesley Pain, *A Century of Work For Animals*, 1 & 42; Georgia Sitara, "'Kindness, Mercy and Justice,' 15-22.

“exploited worker” to the “maltreated brute.”¹³ According to Turner, the movement was “harmless, unoffending and cheerfully hopeless” but provided “psychological relief” for the masters.¹⁴ In contrast to Turner, Brian Harrison in *The Peaceable Kingdom* (1982) and Coral Lansbury in *The Old Brown Dog* (1985) argued that the SPCA movement demonstrated a profound concern for social order and stability. Rather than turning away from industrial ills, the SPCA was one way of confronting them. Anti-cruelty to animal reformers believed that working class self-regulation, self-discipline and the internalization of new moral standards towards animals would stabilize and harmonize the entire social order.¹⁵ The movement was meant to “civilize the lower orders.”¹⁶ All historians agree that the SPCA focused on the cruelties inflicted on animals by working class men.

Each of these historians has made important contributions to the historiography of the movement. In *Reckoning with the Beast* Turner situated the movement’s concern for suffering in relation to the contemporary ability to alleviate pain, through the development of anesthetics for instance. Harrison situated the SPCA in relation to Victorian philanthropy in general and examined its success in gaining state intervention.¹⁷ Lansbury’s text examined the anti-vivisection movement in Battersea, London in 1907 and argued that middle-class women and workers came together in protest because each group saw itself in the fate of the old brown dog: “the Brown Terrier Dog Done to Death in the Laboratories of University College in February, 1903, after having endured Vivisection extending over Two Months and having been handed over from one Vivisector to Another Till Death Came to his Release.”¹⁸ Lansbury concluded that the

¹³ James Turner, *Reckoning with the Beast: Animals, Pain and Humanity in the Victorian Mind* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1980), 54.

¹⁴ Turner, *Reckoning with the Beast*, 57, 68-69, 77-78.

¹⁵ Brian Harrison, *Peaceable Kingdom: Stability and Change in Modern Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982) & Coral Lansbury, *The Old Brown Dog: Women, Workers and Vivisection in Edwardian England* (Wisconsin: Wisconsin University Press, 1985).

¹⁶ Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 186; Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, 23, James Turner, *Reckoning with the Beast*, 44-55; Harrison, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 116; James Turner, *All Heaven in a Rage*, 228; Fairholme and Pain, *A Century of Work For Animals*, 55 & Georgia Sitara, “Kindness, Mercy and Justice,” 18-21.

¹⁷ Three important chapters include Chapter II, “Animals and the State in Nineteenth-Century England,” Chapter V, “Philanthropy and the Victorians,” & Chapter VIII, “The Rhetoric of Reform,” Brian Harrison, *Peaceable Kingdom*.

¹⁸ This is part of the inscription on the water fountain erected in his memory which led to rioting in Battersea in 1907. Coral Lansbury, *The Old Brown Dog*, 14.

cause of animals was ultimately lost because each group projected its own concerns onto animals: according to Lansbury, “if we look at animals and see only the reflection of ourselves, we deny them the reality of their own existence. Then it becomes possible to forget their plight.”¹⁹

In her book *The Animal Estate* (1987), Harriet Ritvo argues that the anti-cruelty to animals movement “confounded two missions: to rescue the animal victim and to suppress the dangerous elements in human society.”²⁰ The two tasks were inextricably bound. Anti-cruelty to animal reformers believed that unchecked cruelty to animals would lead to cruelty to humans.²¹ Ritvo’s work is innovative because it provides critical readings of a number of animal-related discourses and practices, from aristocratic cattle breeding to natural history, as well as examines “exotic” animals in captivity, menageries in England and big game hunting narratives abroad. Ritvo shows how these last three served as “symbols of British domination both of vast tributary territories and of the natural world.”²² Ritvo was the first historian to provide an analysis of the SPCA movement within its imperial context.²³ Ritvo concludes that “Brits” were “brutal as well as kind.”²⁴

The SPCA movement in Canada is understudied. Beatrice Johnston’s centennial history *For Those Who Cannot Speak: A History of the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 1869-1969*, fits into the older tradition of celebratory expository texts. Johnston was an insider who wrote from “the informed viewpoint of the

¹⁹ Coral Lansbury, *The Old Brown Dog*, 188.

²⁰ Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures of the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 131.

²¹ Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, 131-132; The most publicized form of this idea was in William Hogarth’s plates *The Four Stages of Cruelty* (1751). The stages follow Tom Nero as he flogs his horse, murders his mistress and after he is hung for his crime, his body was given over to dissectors. Lansbury, *Old Brown Dog*, 52-52; The idea that cruelty to animals will result in cruelty to humans continues to have contemporary resonance. See, Stephen Kellert & Allan R. Felthous, “Childhood Cruelty toward Animals Among Criminals and Non-Criminals,” *Human Relations* 38, no. 12 (1985), 1123-1129.

²² Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, 243. For historical studies of animals in Paris, See, Louise E. Robbins, *Elephant Slaves and Pampered Parrots: Exotic Animals in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002) & Kathleen Kete, *The Beast in the Boudoir: Petkeeping in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1994).

²³ See also a newer piece but very much in the same spirit as her book: Harriet Ritvo, “Animals in Nineteenth Century Britain: Complicated Attitudes and Competing Categories” in Aubrey Manning & James Serpell, eds., *Animals and Human Society: Changing Perspectives* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994), 106-126.

²⁴ Ritvo, “Animals in Nineteenth Century Britain,” 108.

lifetime of loyal support that she (together with her husband, Col. H. Wyatt Johnston) has given to the needs of the C.S.P.C.A.”²⁵ Canadian historian Judith Fingard devoted one chapter of her book *The Darker Side of Life of Victorian Halifax* to the local Society for the Prevention of Cruelty but focused on its efforts toward men, women and children.²⁶ My MA thesis explored the early history of the Toronto Humane Society, 1887-1917. The Canadian anti-cruelty to animals movement awaits its historians. This chapter is one step toward writing the history of the Canadian anti-cruelty to animals movement. It begins by charting the rise and make-up of the Montreal CSPCA using primary evidence and situates the history of the Montreal CSPCA in relation to historical analysis of the British and American movements.

On the Ground and in Theory: the Montreal CSPCA

Although some branches were established in smaller town by vigilant residents, by and large the SPCA was an urban movement in that it was a city organization and its efforts focused on the experience of animals in an urban and industrial context. My work supports Arthur Moss and Harriet Ritvo’s contention that animals continued to be part of the city landscape after the establishment of SPCAs, in contrast to James Turner and Keith Thomas who argue that whereas animals had been central to rural agricultural life, industrialization marginalized and relegated animals to the periphery.²⁷ Bettina Bradbury’s work on industrializing Montreal shows that animals, many that we now consider to be farm animals, like cows and pigs, were only starting to be expelled from the city limits beginning in the late 1860s.²⁸ Horses continued to be the main transportation mode for people and goods in Montreal, including the City Passenger

²⁵ Edgar Andrew Collard, “Forward” in Johnston, *For Those Who Cannot Speak*, vi.

²⁶ Fingard, “Halifax Belongs to God and John Naylor: The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty, *The Darker Side of Victorian Halifax*, 171-186.

²⁷ Roberta Kalechofsky has argued that the industrial revolution intensified animal cruelty. She writes, “the modern slaughterhouse, with its semi-automatic machinery, conveyor belts, elevator and lift systems, the railroad systems...transportation systems gave rise to the huge meat export industry...the creation of vast zoos housing animals from all over the world...in vitro fertilization created new industries for breeding animals both in captivity and for the farm, for sport and for the pet industry. The animal became in the modern world totally a ‘thing,’ a ‘tool of science,’ whether for farm (sic) or in medicine...Modern technology, as the writer Isaac Bashevis Singer has written, ‘has made the life of every stray animal a daily Treblinka.’” Roberta Kalechofsky, “Animals: An Historical Perspective,” *Autobiography of a Revolutionary: Essays on Animal and Human Rights* (Marblehead: Micah Publications, 1991), 72. Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, 5, Moss, *Valiant Crusade*, 13, James Turner, *Reckoning with the Beast*, 25, Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 180.

²⁸ Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993), 166. Bradbury gives 1874 for the anti-pig legislation.

Railway, which was operated by horses until it was electrified in 1894. Bus horses on other routes continued for years.²⁹ Bradbury's work demonstrates the continued reliance of working-class people on animals in their everyday lives, as part of the family economy. In part, this explains the centrality of the horse in the story to come. The regulation of animals was part of the regulation of everyday life and work in transforming Montreal as a major industrial and urban center.

Animals, dead and alive, wild and domesticated were present in the city streets and alleys. For instance, in April of 1869 the *Montreal Star* reported that "a gentleman arrived yesterday afternoon at the Chaboillez Square Police station in great heat and indignation to state the body of a dead cow lay unburied in Guy Street. The gentleman, it is unnecessary to state, is a stranger."³⁰ The paper was not exaggerating. Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, dead animals littered the city's streets.³¹ Wild animals were also present in Montreal. "In the yard of the Central Police station, is a bear of a goodly size, and the antics and pranks of this bear which is a very funny bear, is the subject of much conversation and amusement to the force at large."³² In the article about the bear's antics, a child asks his mother "what sort of a beast is that...is that the kind of animal you said father was like when you called him a beast the other day?" In 1879 Joe Beef's Canteen housed a number of drinking bears.³³ When the buffalo had disappeared from the Canadian plains, one was confined in a room in Joe Beef's basement.³⁴ Dead and alive,

²⁹ Beatrice Johnston, *For Those Who Cannot Speak*, 10.

³⁰ "Dead Animals in the Streets of Montreal," *Montreal Star*, 9 April 1869, 3.

³¹ For instance, in 1883, there were 43 horses, 13 goats, 3 sheep, 3 cows, 472 dogs and 398 cats, found dead on the city streets. In 1884, there were 33 horses, 10 cows/ calves, 9 goats, 2 pigs, 264 dogs and 321 cats. In 1885, there were 51 horses, 8 cows, 5 goats, 2 pigs, 227 dogs and 337 cats found dead in the streets. See, City of Montreal Archives, *Annual Report of the Chief of Police*, 1883, 10, *Annual Report of the Chief of Police*, 1884, 12 & *Annual Report of the Chief of Police*, 1885, 11. The *Report of the Sanitary State of the City of Montreal* for the year 1885 gave even larger numbers of dead animals collected from the city streets. A total of 1181 dead animals had been collected that year: 224 horses, 57 cows and 900 "small animals." City of Montreal Archives, *Report of the Sanitary State of the City of Montreal*, 1885, 11. In 1888, 119 horses were found dead in the streets, as well as 10 cows, 16 goats, 9 sheep, 352 dogs and 190 cats. *Annual Police Report of the Chief of Police*, 1888, 11.

³² "Police: Bear at the Montreal Police Station," *Montreal Star*, 9 April 1869, 3.

³³ "A Daring Rescue from the Bears," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 13 June 1879, 8.

³⁴ Peter Delottinville, "Joe Beef of Montreal: Working-Class Culture and the Tavern, 1869-1889," *Labour/Le Travailleur* 8/9 (1981/1982), 9-40; "Encounter with a Buffalo," *Montreal Star*, 10 September 1883; "The Accident Record: A Man Gored by Joe Beef's Buffalo," *Montreal Star*, 26 November 1883 & *Montreal by Gaslight*, (Montreal, 1889), 115

wild and domesticated, animals and humans were present in nineteenth century Montreal. At Joe Beef's tavern, they even drank together.

The little boy's question to his mother about his father's beastly nature is indicative of the contemporary preoccupation with the relationship between man and beast, man's animal ancestry and man's humanity. In *Reckoning with the Beast*, James Turner argues that kindness was the surest refutation of human savagery or human animality.³⁵ Keith Thomas in *Man and the Natural World* argues that compassion and pity as well as the reluctance to inflict pain on either humans or animals were identified as distinctly "civilized" customs and emotions. Thomas writes that, "like morals and religion, polite education, 'civility' and refinement were also intended to raise men above animals."³⁶ The SPCA aimed to raise men above animals in a context in which man's animal ancestry was advocated by evolutionists. The SPCA movement argued that what distinguished man from beast was man's humanity to animals.

SPCAs' advocacy of man's duty to animals found support in both evolutionary theories of man's kinship as well as in biblical authority which advocated man's sympathy for God's creatures in his care.³⁷ Both science and religion provided its own sets of evidence and frameworks to support the anti-cruelty to animal movement. The assumption that Darwinian theories of evolution which linked man and animals would have underpinned the cause of anti-cruelty is tenuous.³⁸ In Montreal, Darwinian theories often served as a forum for white protestant middle-class men to separate themselves from animals and other "races." Anglophone Montreal editors took on "the question of the origin of man" and found "a great gulf between man and monkey," because of man's "peculiar mental constitution."³⁹ Contemporaries struggled with the haunting question of man's animality. Stories about men with "human tails" challenged the distinction

³⁵ James Turner, *Reckoning with the Beast*, 77.

³⁶ Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 188 & 37; Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners*, trans. by Edmund Jephcott (1939. Reprint. New York: Urizen Books, 1978), 120.

³⁷ "SPCA - Ladies Committee," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 14 February 1873, 2.

³⁸ While Darwin confirmed older understandings of kinship between humans and animals, his work did place *man* in a superior position. James Turner also argues that Darwin's work gave a new impetus to science and in that way "betrayed animals to vivisection." Darwin subscribed to the RSPCA, took a pro-vivisection position, battled against anti-vivisections, although it is said that he himself never performed vivisection. See, James Turner, *Reckoning with the Beast*, 63, 86 & 100; E.S. Turner, *All Heaven in a Rage*, 207; Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, 18 & 41; Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 136 & 165.

³⁹ "Question of the Origin of Man," *Montreal Star*, 26 March 1869, 2; See also, Editorial, "Man," *The Montreal Star*, 15 April 1869, 2 & "Man or Monkey," *Montreal Herald*, 23 August 1871, 1

between man and beast.⁴⁰ Another distinction was the human capacity for speech, but birds and beasts were found to have a language of their own.⁴¹ Despite evidence of similarities, contemporaries were reluctant to accept the idea of man's animal origins. Rev. Talmage, in his Toronto lecture, "reviewed Darwin's theories, and said they were brutalizing."⁴² In Montreal, the *Herald* argued that "we should look at it as a misfortune to mankind if the idea prevailed that we were only improved monkeys...we object to such ancestry, with the utmost aversion."⁴³ The editorial echoed the local lecture on "The Descent of Man." The Rev. Prof. Campbell argued for divine creation as opposed to the doctrine of evolution. Campbell argued that "the existence of savage and barbaric races proved, if anything, devolution rather than evolution." While Darwin had argued that man and animals had a "similar nature," according to Campbell's lecture "man is more than animals." As an "intellectual being," man also possessed a "moral sense," a "religious sense" and a "spiritual nature."⁴⁴ In keeping with these contemporary objections, it was man's moral, spiritual and intellectual nature which necessitated kindness to animals. The logic inherent in the work of SPCAs was that one of the things that distinguished man and beast was man's capacity for kindness to animals.⁴⁵

In the 1880s, in Salem Church in Montreal, Reverend Samuel Massey outlined the role of moral duty in the hierarchical ranking between men and beast in his address "A Plea for Man's Dumb Friends."⁴⁶ First of all, cruelty to animals leveled the distinction between man and beast because, according to his argument, "a man puts himself much lower than a brute, when he abuses his horse." Furthermore, SPCAs were to work toward "the protection of helpless animals from the cruelty of man, and men themselves from the brutalizing effects which cruelty begets."⁴⁷ This was a key idea in the SPCA movement: cruelty to animals would lead to cruelty to humans; that cruelty would spread to infect all relationships and practices. Scenes of cruelty brutalized onlookers; therefore cruelty impacted all who witnessed it and lowered the standard of civilization. Cruelty to

⁴⁰ "Human Tails," *Montreal Star*, 27 January 1869, 4.

⁴¹ "Can Brutes be Taught to Talk," *Montreal Star*, 24 December 1883, 6.

⁴² "The Theory of Evolution," *Toronto Globe*, 21 November 1884.

⁴³ Editorial, "Charles Robert Darwin," *Montreal Herald*, 24 April 1882, 4.

⁴⁴ "The Descent of Man," *Montreal Star*, 19 November 1883.

⁴⁵ Sitara, "Kindness, Mercy & Justice," 15 & 17.

⁴⁶ Massey, "Dumb Animals: A Plea for Man's Dumb Friends," 1.

⁴⁷ "OSPCA - First Annual Meeting," *Toronto Daily Mail*, 10 July 10 1874.

animals also challenged the “civilization” of the colonizers, and the logic upon which their expropriation of the land was based. As Massey argued, “our boasted civilization seems in some respects little better than common barbarism, for we often see dumb, innocent and helpless animals abused in a manner so heartless and cruel, that it would make an uncivilized Indian from the backwoods ashamed of his white brethren.”⁴⁸ Cruelty to animals leveled the distinctions between civilization and barbarism, between the uncivilized Indian and his white brother, and challenged the hierarchy among men and also between man and beast. The anti-cruelty to animals ethic worked to support these distinctions.

The hierarchical nature of the Society is evidenced in many different ways. When the CSPCA was incorporated in Montreal on 5 April 1869, its petitioners included numerous members of Montreal’s male elite, business and middle class.⁴⁹ Sir G. E. Cartier and John A. Macdonald were listed as patrons in the CSPCA’s reports from 1870-73.⁵⁰ The head of the CPR and President of the Bank of Montreal, G.W. Stephen appeared among the original members in 1869 and was a “general committee member” from at least 1886 to well into the 1900s.⁵¹ Other elite businessmen on the CSPCA committee included Peter Redpath and W. Markland Molson. Although supporting the cause of anti-cruelty to animals, Redpath was no friend to the environment, judging from the criticism leveled at the smoke pouring out of his sugar refinery.⁵²

The elite nature of the movement shaped its approach. For instance, just as the CSPCA was getting established, in October of 1869, CSPCA patron Sir G. E. Cartier and executive member George Stephen⁵³ were present at the Montreal Fox Hunt. Fox hunting continued for years within the city landscape and came to a stop primarily

⁴⁸ Massey, “Dumb Animals: A Plea for Man’s Dumb Friends,” 4.

⁴⁹ *An Act to incorporate the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*, Statutes of Quebec 1869, CAP. LXXIX. Thomas Workman, MP., H. J. Joseph, Henry Bulmer, T. J. Claxton, E. A. Prentice, H. L. Routh, J. J. C. Abbott, James Ferrier jr., R. Moat, A. M. Foster, F. Mackenzie, George Stephen, James Hutton, G. W. Weaver, Jesse Joseph were listed.

⁵⁰ McGill University Library, *Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*, (Montreal: John Lovell, 1870); *Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*, (Montreal: Protestant Institution for Deaf-Mutes, 1873).

⁵¹ *Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*, (Montreal: Witness Printing House, 1886); *Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*, (Montreal: Witness Printing House, 1896); *Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*, (Montreal: Witness Printing House, 1898); *Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*, 1901.

⁵² “Smoke,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 4 August 1879, 2.

⁵³ “Montreal Fox Hounds,” *Montreal Star*, 28 October 1869, 3

because fences and buildings eventually made it impossible to pursue a fox. In March of 1869, when Montrealers read a fox hunting anecdote, which centered on a lost watch found in a horse's hoof,⁵⁴ possible cruelty to the fox or the horse was not a concern. In 1884, when fox hunters were prosecuted in the working-class suburb of St. Henri,⁵⁵ the magistrate decided that a fox hunt was not a "fight." According to his findings, "English authorities" did not consider that two animals were baited to fight, "if they are both free to run." For the same reason, it was not possible to "prosecute a man for shooting pigeons or coursing rabbits."⁵⁶ This logic worked to support some forms of entertainment, leisure, sports and work and to criminalize others.

Like the London RSPCA, the CSPCA "was certainly timid in its approach to aristocratic sports like steeplechasing and hunting."⁵⁷ No inspector attempted to break up the annual steeple chase of the Alexandra Snow Show Club. The mayor, who was present, "reminded the members that they were to be the future men of our country, and if Canada was to advance in the future as it had in the past, it must be done through the exertions of the youth of our Dominion."⁵⁸ Some sports involving animals were considered debased but others were classed within the type of manhood which was desirable and necessary for nation building and colonial expansion. In another article, the issue of cruelty in steeplechases was raised. It described tales of dead men and horses with broken backs, only to announce an upcoming race at Carleton.⁵⁹

In *Man and the Natural World* Keith Thomas argued that in Britain sports with "a strong proletarian following" such as cock-fighting were criminalized, whereas "gentlemen's fox hunting, fishing and shooting survived unscathed."⁶⁰ This situation was not lost on contemporaries. In 1874, the *Toronto Daily Mail* critiqued the Ontario SPCA

⁵⁴ "A Fox-Hunting Anecdote," *Montreal Star*, 17 March 1869, 4.

⁵⁵ Terry Copp characterizes St. Henri as a "working class suburb." See, Terry Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty: The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal, 1897-1929* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), 17.

⁵⁶ "Fox-Hunters of St. Henri," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 10 May 1884, 1. In 1886, the CSPCA briefly took on an anti-fox hunting position when it published the list of cruelties outlined by the American Humane Organization in Chicago. By 1893, the hunt did not reappear among its concerns. See, McGill University Library, Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 1886, 8; Saint Sulpice, *Bibliothèque nationale et archives du Québec*, Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 1893.

⁵⁷ Harrison, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 117.

⁵⁸ "Cruel Cowards," *Montreal Star*, 23 January 1872, 8.

⁵⁹ "Steeplechase - Carleton," *Toronto Daily Mail*, 13 July 1874.

⁶⁰ Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 185-186.

for its prosecution of “one cad” for “exposing one wild bird for sale,” while at “the Gun Club at which twenty-three members were necessarily gentlemen...shot between them fifty-seven tame pigeons for sport. What a difference there is legally or morally, between the acts of gentlemen who shoot tame pigeons for sport, and that of cads who expose wild birds for sale.”⁶¹ In part, the distinction between “the cad” and “the gentlemen” was that only the cad was prosecuted and fined; the gentlemen’s sport was not against the law.

Despite its legality, pigeon-shooting had its humanitarian critics. Clearly, not all middle-class sports were tolerated. But as early as 1872 the *Star* reported that “humanitarians will learn with pleasure that...a sport quite equal to pigeon shooting, without its cruelty, had been introduced into England. It rests on the invention made by an ingenious Briton and called the ‘gyro pigeon.’”⁶² It was tested “and found to afford sport quite as agreeable as shooting at a real bird...provided the savage instincts of the Anglo-Saxon can be gratified by this innocent mechanical substitute.”⁶³ Despite this humanitarian invention, the shooting of captive pigeons continued to be practiced, often in secret because although it was “perfectly legal, those who pursue it do not want to excite any humanitarian outcry against them.”⁶⁴ Clearly, the savage instincts of the Anglo-Saxons were not so easily gratified. Rather, in the 1889 petition against a Bill to make trap pigeon shooting a crime, defenders argued that pigeon shooting was “a healthy manly sport which should not be classed in the category of cruelty to animals.”⁶⁵ The *Montreal Herald* editorial argued that the idea of it as a “sport” should not be used as a defense: “shooting birds from a trap lacks the first and most essential element of sport – that of allowing the thing pursued to use its instinct of self-preservation.”⁶⁶ The paper proposed that it was akin to “tying up a cat to be worried by terriers.” It was an “unnecessary cruelty.” The comparison of cat and dog baiting with pigeon-shooting challenged the sport’s civility. The *Toronto Globe* argued that pigeon shooting was indicative of “degeneracy,” of “symptoms of returning barbarism and brutality” when

⁶¹ “Pigeon and Crows,” *Toronto Daily Mail*, 21 June 1874

⁶² “Humanitarians,” *Montreal Star*, 13 June 1872, 2.

⁶³ “Humanitarians,” *Montreal Star*, 13 June 1872, 2.

⁶⁴ “Pigeon Shooting in Montreal,” *Montreal Star*, 31 July 1885.

⁶⁵ “Pigeon Trap Shooting,” *Montreal Star*, 22 February 1889, 4.

⁶⁶ Editorial, “Trap-Shooting,” *Montreal Herald*, 7 February 1890, 4.

“coarse, cruel amusements...are exalted as virtues.”⁶⁷ At the same time, a *Herald* editorial on pigeon-shooting argued, men objected to “having the ideas of others forced upon them by legislation...the feeling at the bottom of the opposition...[was the] natural dislike of people to be legislated into good behaviour.”⁶⁸

From the 1870s to the late 1890s there were also voices raised for “the protection of the amusements of the people,”⁶⁹ some were more likely than others to be legislated into good behaviour. Cock-fights held in the fields of working class neighborhoods were ended by the humane inspector.⁷⁰ Montrealers certainly participated in cock-fighting, but a segment of the population hoped that this “brutal sport” was “dying among us.”⁷¹ Cock-fights were represented as “exhibitions of the brutal class” even though onlookers included both “ruffians and people who should have known better.”⁷² Although projected onto the working class, “people who should have known better” were present at cock-fighting events. As Brian Harrison argues, “cruel sports were never patronized exclusively by the poor as their defenders alleged.”⁷³ Cock-fighting continued to be suppressed and even onlookers were liable to paying a penalty. When cock-fighters were caught in the act on 22 January 1872, “seventeen game cocks were found – of these three were dead, and several badly maimed – with three legs broken, eyes destroyed, and mangled bleeding heads.”⁷⁴ The local priest gave the inspector his blessing when the game was broken up. As late as 1893, the CSPCA agitated against “the cruelty and savage instinct aroused by pugilism, cock and dog fighting.”⁷⁵ The politics of class and a language of evolution -civilization, savagery, barbarism, and brutality ranking man as he evolved from his animal state - frame this history. Its central actor, civilized man is at the apex of the hierarchy. Where are the women?

⁶⁷ Editorial, “The Lords and Pigeon Shooting,” *Toronto Globe*, 23 May 1884.

⁶⁸ Editorial, “The Pigeon Shooting Bill,” *Montreal Herald*, 3 March 1890, 4.

⁶⁹ “Cock Fighting,” *Montreal Star*, 26 January 1869, 1.

⁷⁰ From the CSPCA minutes it is possible to suggest that the working class neighborhood of Pointe- St. Charles was over-policed and a favorite locale for cock-fights. CSPCA collection, newspaper clippings, *Montreal Gazette*, 18 March 1897.

⁷¹ “Cock-fight,” *Montreal Star*, 20 August 1869, 3.

⁷² “Cock-fight,” *Montreal Star*, 20 August 1869, 3.

⁷³ Harrison, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 117.

⁷⁴ “Cruel Cowards,” *Montreal Star*, 23 January 1872, 8.

⁷⁵ Saint Sulpice, *Bibliothèque National au Québec*, Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 1893, 16.

In 1869, at the Montreal Fox Hunt where Cartier and Stephens were present, there were also “several ladies” who “joined in the sport” and a “Miss King received the brush and was complimented in her gallant riding.”⁷⁶ The participation of ladies at fox hunts and Miss King’s excellent performance challenge simplistic formulations of femininity or natural affiliation between women and animals. In sharp contrast to the stereotype of animal lovers as elderly English ladies sipping tea and eating ham sandwiches,⁷⁷ the Montreal Society, like other SPCAs, was an establishment of the male elite.⁷⁸ Another form of this stereotype of the SPCA movement as a feminizing or somehow womanly movement is replicated by Andrew Isenberg in his book *The Destruction of the Buffalo*. Isenberg argues that “animal protection was a decidedly feminizing movement,”⁷⁹ whereas “the preservation of the bison was not an end to itself but a means to an end: the preservation of an imagined, masculine, frontier culture.”⁸⁰ Isenberg’s formulation is seductive because of his clever use of gender but it is superficial and misleading. Branding the anti-cruelty to animals movement as feminine distorts the fact that most of these organizations were headed by men with mixed gender committees at best, or more generally, segregated women to the work of fund raising or ladies’ auxiliaries.⁸¹ SPCAs

⁷⁶ “Montreal Fox Hounds,” *Montreal Star*, 28 October 1869, 3

⁷⁷ Peter Singer opens his manifesto *Animal Liberation* with a meeting with two such ladies. He distinguishes his vision of animal liberation from their “interest” in animals. He writes, “We told her we didn’t own any pets. She looked a little surprised, and took a bite of her [ham] sandwich. Our hostess, who had now finished serving the sandwiches, joined us and took up the conversation: ‘But you *are* interested in animals, aren’t you, Mr. Singer?’ We tried to explain that we were interested in the prevention of suffering and misery; that we were opposed to arbitrary discrimination; that we thought it wrong to impose needless suffering on another being, even if that being were not a member of our own species; and that we believed animals were ruthlessly exploited by humans, and we wanted this changed. Otherwise, we said, we were not especially ‘interested in’ animals. Neither of us had ever been inordinately fond of dogs, cats or horses in the way that many people are. We didn’t ‘love’ animals. We simply wanted them to be treated as independent sentient beings that they are, and not as a means to human ends – as the pig whose flesh was now in our hostess’s sandwiches had been treated.” See, Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* 2nd ed. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1990), i-ii. Emphasis in the original.

⁷⁸ Caroline White of Pennsylvania and Emily Appleton of Massachusetts worked to establish SPCAs in their respective cities. Their husbands were given a place on the board in their honor. James Turner, *Reckoning with the Beast*, 48-49. In some instances women formed their own separate organizations. See for instance, Mary F. Lovell, *Outline of the History of the Women’s Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals* (Philadelphia: 1900).

⁷⁹ Andrew C. Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Buffalo: An Environmental History, 1750-1920*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 144.

⁸⁰ Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Buffalo*, 168.

⁸¹ When American women began their own SPCAs it was because they were excluded from the main executives of the established SPCAs. See, Roswell McCrea, *The Humane Movement: A Descriptive Survey* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1910); William Shultz, *The Humane Movement in the United States, 1910-1922* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1924); William Alan Swallow, *Quality of*

worked to reform male subjectivity into “tender hearted men” and “merciful” manliness. As Gail Bederman has argued in her history of masculinity, this new manliness was meant to civilize not to feminize. Contemporary ideology imagined “Civilized white men were the most manly ever evolved – firm of character, self-controlled; protectors of women and children.” It was only with “over-civilization” that white men risked becoming feminine.⁸² As Lisa Surridge argues in her study of marital violence in nineteenth-century literature, self-discipline and self-control “over both sexual and aggressive urges” were central to the “ascendant bourgeois script” of manliness.⁸³ If “bravery” and “manliness” were once defined by force, cruelty came to be seen as “unmanly.” Cruelty degraded man to the level of “brutes.”⁸⁴ Conversely, the ability to make an animal obey a man’s will through kind words and good treatment was presented by the humane movement and its supporters as a hallmark of civilized manhood. Although women were sometimes described as humane, they often failed to live up to this prescription.⁸⁵

Although women were not convicted of cruelty to animals⁸⁶ (see Appendix A), a historical link between women and animals is absent in the early years of the Canadian anti-cruelty to animals movement.⁸⁷ In the 1870s, the CSPCA had difficulty recruiting

Mercy: History of the Humane Movement in the United States (Boston: Mary Mitchell Humane Fund, 1963). The Toronto Humane Society had a mixed gender executive until 1917 when they adopted a new constitution modeled on American Societies. See, Georgia Sitara, “‘Kindness, Mercy, and Justice’: A History of the Toronto Humane Society, 1887-1917,” Master of Arts, OISE, University of Toronto, 1994, 79.

⁸² Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 23-31. See also, Tina Loo, “Of Moose and Men: Hunting for Masculinities in British Columbia, 1880-1939,” *Western Historical Quarterly*, 32 (Autumn, 2001), 296-319 & 303. Tina Loo argues for instance that white imperialist bourgeois industrialist big game hunters’ masculinity required that they be “ethical hunters.” This required that “If the hunter succeeded only in wounding the animal, he was responsible for tracking it down and putting it out of its misery.”

⁸³ Lisa Surridge, *Bleak Houses: Marital Violence in Victorian Fiction* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2005), 82.

⁸⁴ Turner, *Reckoning with the Beast*, 22 & 24 & Sitara, “‘Kindness, Mercy and Justice,’” 24.

⁸⁵ For instance, horse racing was denounced because it was where “all the gamblers, male and female, gathered together.” This contemporary explicit description of gamblers of both sexes at horseracing demonstrates that women were present in arenas which we might consider unfeminine. See, “Horse Racing,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 23 July 1873, 2.

⁸⁶ Sitara, “Kindness, Mercy and Justice,” Appendix: Arrests for Cruelty to Animals, 121. In Toronto, from 1887 to 1917, 11 539 men were charged with cruelty to animals in contrast to a total of 35 women. The predominance of men as “cruelists” reflects the fact that men were the ones who most often worked with animals, as carters, for instance. For Montreal statistics, see, Appendix A.

⁸⁷ There is an entire body of (non-Canadian) literature which links these two categories of analysis and experience. Among the key authors in this area is Carol J. Adams. See, Carol J. Adams, *The Pornography*

women to support the anti-cruelty to animals movement. At the first annual meeting of the CSPCA, "Mr. Weaver suggested that the assistance of the ladies should be obtained, as in Philadelphia and Boston, where they did a great deal of good."⁸⁸ When the CSPCA presented their annual report in January of 1873, it remained an all-male organization with the new addition of a Ladies' Auxilliary following in the work of "the Ladies Humane Education Committee in London under the Presidency of the Baroness Burdett Coutts."⁸⁹ It is important to note that the ladies' efforts would be "wholly of an educational character, and as such are distinct from the punitive work of the Society to which they are attached."⁹⁰ The main work of the Society was "punitive" work, work that was considered exclusively male terrain.

The following month, on February 13, 1873, "a large and influential meeting of ladies was held in the Natural History Society Hall...to take into consideration the formation of a Ladies' Committee in connection with the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals."⁹¹ "Mr. Weaver took the chair" and explained that the work of the Ladies' Committees in London and Philadelphia was "eminently successful in diffusing knowledge among all classes of Society especially the young." Through the distribution of the SPCA literature, "the people were led to take an interest in the character and requirements of the domesticated animals, and to sympathize with them as fellow creatures placed under man's care by the beneficent Creator."⁹² The CSPCA secretary Frederick Mackenzie addressed the ladies and explained that Baroness Coutts's educational branch was "entirely under the management of ladies, whose labors had been productive of the greatest benefit, not only in mitigating the hardships and cruelties that were inflicted on the dumb associates of man, but also in elevating man himself to a

of Meat (New York: Continuum Publishing, 2003); Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan, eds., *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Perspectives* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1995); Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist Vegetarian Critical Theory* (New York: Continuum, 1991); Theresa Corrigan & Stephanie Hoppe, *And a Deer's Ear, Eagle's Song and Bear's Grace: Animals and Women* (Pittsburgh & San Francisco: Cleiss Press, 1990); Theresa Corrigan & Stephanie Hoppe, *With a Fly's Eye, Whale's Wit and Women's Heart: Animals and Women* (Pittsburgh & San Francisco: Cleiss Press, 1989).

⁸⁸ "SPCA," *Montreal Gazette*, 21 January 1870, 1

⁸⁹ McGill University Library, Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Pamphlet (Montreal: printed at the protestant institution for deaf-mutes, Cote St. Antoine Road, 1873), np.

⁹⁰ McGill University Library, Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Pamphlet (Montreal: printed at the protestant institution for deaf-mutes, Cote St. Antoine Road, 1873), np.

⁹¹ "SPCA - Ladies Committee," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 14 February 1873, 2.

⁹² "SPCA - Ladies Committee," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 14 February 1873, 2.

higher standard of humanity.” The work had two goals: to protect animals and to elevate man. Both helped to distinguish between man and beast through a “higher humanity.” Women as mothers had an important role to play in the formation of their sons’ masculinity because “by educating children to show mercy and kindness to animals, they grow up to be merciful and tenderhearted men.”⁹³ Women, the ladies were told by the male officers of the CSPCA, “were more fitted for this work [the education of the young] than men (who were more apt to neglect their more merciful tendencies); they understood how to influence household servants and children.”⁹⁴ It was women’s role in social reproduction, the education of children and the management of servants, not women’s nature that best fitted women for the work of anti-cruelty. The ladies were warned that if cruelty to animals was left unchecked the results could be murderous: “some of the most diabolical murderers that blackened the pages of history, were tyrants of insects and animals during their childhood.”⁹⁵ After each contributed one dollar the ladies present formed a local Ladies Committee.

Three years later, shortly after its establishment, the Ladies’ Committee “regretfully reported that ‘insuperable obstacles have prevented them from accomplishing their Association’ and that ‘their enterprise for the time be abandoned.’”⁹⁶ According to Beatrice Johnston, “with two or three exceptions” the Ladies’ Committee’s appeals to clergymen and teachers to include protection of animals among other moral lessons were “made in vain.”⁹⁷ The Ladies were unsuccessful in fulfilling their mandate. From time to time, clergymen did deliver sermons on anti-cruelty and man’s duty to animals.⁹⁸ Yet despite the London’s RSPCA’s historical attempt to Christianize the leadership of the

⁹³ “SPCA – Ladies Committee,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 14 February 1873, 2.

⁹⁴ “SPCA – Ladies Committee,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 14 February 1873, 2.

⁹⁵ “SPCA – Ladies Committee,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 14 February 1873, 2. Sociologists and criminologists continue to explore the link between cruelty to animals and criminality. See, Stephen R. Kellert and Allan R. Felthous, “Childhood Cruelty Towards Animals Among Criminals and Non-Criminals,” *Human Relations* 38.12 (1985): 1123-1129.

⁹⁶ Beatrice Johnston, *For Those Who Cannot Speak*, 6.

⁹⁷ Beatrice Johnston, *For Those Who Cannot Speak*, 6.

⁹⁸ For Christian appeals on behalf of anti-cruelty, see, McGill University Library, Rev, Samuel Massey, “Dumb Animals: A Plea of Man’s Dumb Friends, Being the Substance of Address Delivered in Salem Church, 188-? & Bibliotheque Nationale du Quebec a Montreal, Archibald McBean, “A Petition and Prayer in (sic) Behalf of the Lower Animals,” (Winnipeg, H. Buckle, Sons & co., Printers, 1889).

movement⁹⁹ and its content, the clergy as a whole did not match SPCA efforts to enlist its support. This is not to say that the Society was wholly unsuccessful in its appeals to the clergy - clearly Rev. Massey's address proves otherwise. But the objects of the Society were not consistent subjects of the pulpit. Discouraged, the Ladies' Committee disbanded, leaving all the work, punitive and educational, to the men of their class.¹⁰⁰

The Montreal CSPCA was not unique in its male make-up. Four years after its establishment in Toronto, the Ontario SPCA report for 1878 echoed Weaver's wish for their very own Ladies' Committee.¹⁰¹ Shortly afterward, the OSPCA disappears from the historians' view. The ladies did not take up the work and the gentlemen themselves appear to have given it up as well. Most Canadian SPCAs were male organizations.¹⁰² The work of humanity to animals was the work of civilized man.

Women had to be educated in humanity to animals and tender-heartedness.¹⁰³ Cruelty in the hat trade is a case in point. The use of feathers and entire bird bodies as ornaments necessitated the destruction of many birds. The industry itself was not targeted in these early years, but its consumers were. Although women were said not to be cruel, their hats proved otherwise. The *Montreal Daily Witness* reported on the "great hue and cry in some papers about the wicked and wanton cruelty of women in wearing

⁹⁹ Lewis Gompertz had sustained the London's RSPCA in its critical early years. In the 1830s, he was forced to "resign" because he was a Jew and the RSPCA desired its Society to be based in "Christian principles." For the details of his resignation, see, James Turner, *Reckoning With the Beast*, 41-42; Charles Niven, *History of the Humane Movement*, 70; Arthur Moss, *Valiant Crusade*, 28; Brian Harrison, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 102. In an 1899 sermon, Rev. Meloda de Sola quoted from the Talmud and the Bible and argued that "Judaism demands the humane treatment of animals." In this sermon Gompertz was remembered as an "Israelite." This article was in the CSPCA Scrapbook from the late 1890s. In 1910, the Toronto Humane Society targeted their local Jewish population by publishing a pamphlet on kindness to animals in Yiddish as well as in English. Rabbi Jacobs was an officer of that Society at the time of the pamphlet's publication. See, Sitara, "Kindness, Mercy and Justice," 136 & 159. For a study on Judaism and animal rights see, Roberta Kalechofsky, ed., *Judaism and Animal Rights: Classical and Contemporary Responses* (Marblehead: Micah Publications Inc., 1992).

¹⁰⁰ Beatrice Johnston, *For Those Who Cannot Speak*, 6. The CSPCA Women's Branch was reorganized in 1889 and disbanded in 1936.

¹⁰¹ Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, *Report of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*, 1878 (Toronto Canada), 7.

¹⁰² The Toronto Humane Society was different in this respect. It had a mixed gender executive from their establishment until 1917. Only then were women relegated to a Ladies Auxiliary. See, Sitara, "Kindness, Mercy and Justice," 79.

¹⁰³ In advice directed to the "ladies of the household" who were responsible for the selection and purchase of meat, women were implored not to purchase white veal. The "thoughtful, benevolent women of the community would be shocked to learn that the white veal" is made through a practice that is "cruel as well as unwholesome - that of bleeding the calf two or three days before killing it." See, "Bleeding Calves - A Word to Housekeepers," *Montreal Star*, 3 June 1872, 1.

the prepared skins of birds on their hats.” But the paper defended women and argued that although “she does sometimes overleap the bounds of good sense in following foolish fashions...woman is not cruel.” It was “men and boys” who are held responsible for procuring the birds for the hat trade.¹⁰⁴ This analysis neglects the important fact that women were principal workers and artists in the hat and millinery trade.¹⁰⁵ True women wore these “foolish fashions” the editor argued, because women were not always rational creatures. “Woman is not cruel.” This assault on the rationality of women would not have endeared them to the movement. Three years later, in 1886, the *Montreal Daily Witness* noted that the “bird death” for hat ornaments was evidence of “depraved taste” in “tenderhearted women.”¹⁰⁶ Yet despite this critique women continued to wear these fashionable hats. As late as 1903 the CSPCA lamented at its annual meeting that

no task could be more difficult or more discouraging than that of convincing the majority of women that the thing which is in fashion is not the right thing to wear...it will be far easier to induce the average sportsman to lay aside his gun for the sake of saving his favorite game birds from annihilation than it will be to persuade the average girl or woman to refrain from wearing upon their hats the badly stuffed birds and hideous composites of wings, tails and feathers which occupy but do not adorn them.¹⁰⁷

By this formulation, sportsmen were more ethical than these hat-wearing women. We take up the ethics of the white hunter in chapter 4 where contemporary descriptive evidence casts the white man as a greedy hunter. Here the ethical sportsman as an ideal is championed. And the men gained their “higher humanity” through the observation of game laws (laying aside their guns). The sportsman is cast as more reasonable and therefore more humane than the bird-ornamented hat wearing woman.

Critics charged that civilization and higher humanity were stalled because of this fashion trend. In 1906 an article in the *Victoria Daily Colonist* explained that “the feathers sold in London alone to deck the hats of the women of ‘Christian’ England involved the torture and death of millions of beautiful birds.” This appeal against the fashion went out to the “so-called civilized countries...[W]hen we have persuaded the

¹⁰⁴ “Cruelty to Animals,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 30 May 1876.

¹⁰⁵ See, Reginald Abbott, “Birds Don’t Sing in Greek: Virginia Woolf and the Plumage Bill” in Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan, eds., *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Perspectives* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1995), 274.

¹⁰⁶ Editorial, “Bird Death,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 31 July 1886, 4.

¹⁰⁷ CSPCA collection, newspaper clippings, “Cruelty of Fashion,” *Montreal Gazette*, 18 April 1903.

fair sex to give up the fashion of wearing heads, wings and other portions of a bird's anatomy in their hats, we may begin to look forward to the dawn of a new era of humanity."¹⁰⁸ This fashion challenged British civilization, Christianity and humanity. The "cruelty" of using birds and bird parts as hat fashions continued well past the turn of the century and only went out of vogue with a change in style, not morality, about 1910. It is no wonder that Virginia Woolf, a British "champion of women," resented the "gender-biased anti-plumage argument" and argued that she "would 'buy an egret plume, and stick it – is it in the back or the front of the hat' ... as a rhetorical symbol of defiance [at what she saw as]...an assault on the integrity of her sex."¹⁰⁹

Man, rather than woman, was the central most important figure in the history of the prevention of cruelty to animals. The most public figure of the humane movement, besides the Society secretary, was its humane inspector.¹¹⁰ The humane inspector was a working man earning eight dollars a week.¹¹¹ From the Society's inception in 1869 to his retirement due to illness in January of 1892, inspector Arthur Galey held this position at the CSPCA.¹¹² SPCAs argued that without a humane inspector walking his beat and mandated to investigate reports of cruelty from citizens, the law was a dead letter.

¹⁰⁸ CSPCA collection, newspaper clippings, "Cruelty of Wearing Birds," *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 9 June 1906.

¹⁰⁹ This was in context of an 1920 anti-plumage Bill. See, Reginald Abbott, "Birds Don't Sing in Greek: Virginia Woolf and the Plumage Bill," 271.

¹¹⁰ The SPCA aimed "to employ persons to investigate, arrest and prosecute for the society, and to reward persons who, acting for it, shall secure conviction and punishment when necessary, in cases of cruelty, or to furnish the Society with evidence to enable its officers to do it." See, "CSPCA: Aims and Objects," *Montreal Star*, 24 March 1869, 2. Historian Timothy Gilfoyle argues that the policing nature of the anti-cruelty movement served to exclude women, making this reform unpalatable to them. Timothy Gilfoyle, "The Moral Origins of Political Surveillance: The Preventive Society in New York City, 1867-1918," *American Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (1986), 634-649.

¹¹¹ It was difficult for SPCAs to find suitable men to fulfill this position. The Metropolitan SPCA in Ottawa experienced some difficulty in filling the spot of inspector even though "several persons have been tried." In order to find a suitable man the committee had decided they could not pay him less than four hundred dollars a year, \$8 a week. Metropolitan Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, *Annual Report*, 1872, 3. In 1898, the CSPCA committee struggled with finding suitable inspectors when another one of their inspectors was discovered on duty "very drunk." According to the minutes, "The discipline of the force require that men should clearly understand that getting drunk and taking bribes were offences that could not be overlooked." CSPCA, Minutes of Meetings, 8 July 1898, 352-3.

¹¹² Minutes of Meetings, Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, January 4, 1892, 162. (Hereafter noted as Minutes.) He was given a \$100 as a gift for his dedication to the work. In 1895 and 1896 there were three inspectors. In 1897 four men were employed. Minutes, August 7, 1895, 245 & February 3, 1897, 298-9.

Although the city police constables were mandated to enforce the law,¹¹³ it could be argued that they had much other work to do and were not necessarily looking for cruelty to animals. Not only did the humane inspector struggle to warn, castigate or apprehend offenders of the anti-cruelty to animals statute, he sometimes failed to gain a conviction.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, where the inspector walked his beat, the local market rather than scientific laboratories,¹¹⁵ helps to explain where he looked and found cruelty.

¹¹³ Section 5 of the Act to incorporate the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals outlines that "the police force of the city of Montreal, and elsewhere within this province, shall, as occasion may require, aid the society, its members or agents, in the enforcement of all laws, which are now or may thereafter be enacted for the protection of dumb animals." See, *An Act respecting Cruelty to Animals, Statutes of Canada*, 1869, c. 27, s. 5.

¹¹⁴ In its report for 1872 the Metropolitan SPCA in Ottawa regretfully wrote that "opposition was experienced from quarters least expected...some of the most prominent city officials, who must needs deal with the carrying out of the law, actively or passively thwarted the working of the Society." According to the report, there had been no cooperation between "constables, police and magistrates," "the ordinary ministers of the law," and the Ottawa Society. See, Metropolitan Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Annual Report, 1872, 3-4. In Montreal, a custom "accepted by the trade" but which the CSPCA considered cruel, was leaving cows unmilked at the market. But in 1876, when the CSPCA prosecuted the practice, the Recorder fined the complainant. The following summer a similar case came before the Recorder in which a cattle dealer was "charged with having left a cow, put up for sale at Viger market, unmilked and consequently suffering...in order to give them an attractive appearance to purchasers." Despite the alleged "intense suffering," "the prosecution failed to make out the case, owing to the defendant securing four witnesses who swore that the cow suffered no inconvenience, that her appearance was quite natural, and that there were cows which part naturally with their milk." In 1888, in "the case of Lambert vs Watkins" the Recorder again fined the complainant almost \$150 dollars. The CSPCA was circulating a subscription to help pay the fine. There was profound disagreement between contemporaries over whether this custom of industry was cruel, and the CSPCA was unsuccessful in changing the practice. This was still an issue in 1889. "Cows," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 9 June 1876; Editorial, "Cruelty to Cows," *Montreal Star*, 5 July 1877, 2; "Cruelty to Animals," *Montreal Herald*, 5 January 1878, 4. See also, CSPCA, Minutes of Meetings, 1 May 1889, 65.

¹¹⁵ Scientific laboratories were not included in the humane inspector's beat even though animals were killed in Montreal for scientific purposes. The CSPCA argued only against the "unnecessary dissection of living animals": yet at this historical juncture the medical profession and scientists argued that vivisection was "a necessary part of scientific research." When the Medical Congress in England decided that "vivisection is to be practiced in the interests of science," the *Montreal Star* editorial suggested that "the civilized world will say quite right." It was "Not because we like the brute creation less but because we like ourselves a great deal more, that vivisection is necessary. If the life of a human being can be saved by experiments on a rat or a pigeon, then there is enough of human nature in our humanity to save the life of a human being, pained as we might be to inflict unnecessary pain on the rat or pigeon. If a rat or pigeon could think, they would go in for treating us as we treat them if they could." More often when the issue of vivisection was raised its cruelty was projected elsewhere. The English scientist was imagined to use anesthetics in his practice. On the other hand, "in his accounts of wanton and needless torture inflicted on poor helpless creatures by the tyrant savants of France" the Rev. Moffat projected "The Exhibition of Horrors" onto the other. The *Montreal Gazette* editorial argued that Moffat's account was enough "not only to make one's flesh creep with horror, but to make one's blood boil with indignation." Vivisection by civilized Anglo-Saxon Protestants was "quite right" but when the French undertook it made "one's blood boil with indignation." See, "CSPCA: Aims and Objects," *Montreal Star*, 24 March 1869, 2; Lansbury, *The Old Brown Dog*, 152-153 & R.D. French, *Anti-Vivisection and Medical Science in Victorian Society*. See, also "Protection of Game," *Montreal Gazette*, 7 June 1880, 4. This issue was raised in the press because there were "those who have obtained licenses to kill game for scientific purposes and who abuse their privileges

Despite being armed with the law,¹¹⁶ the inspector's main tool was "moral suasion" and prosecution was only a last resort.

Although the humane inspector was mandated to enforce the law, the public at large was called upon to help in the work. The anti-cruelty to animals statute was circulated and the general public was called upon to help in this project of policing cruelty to animals. The CSPCA urged "all persons" to "cooperate with its officer by promoting the welfare of dumb creatures, by remonstrating kindly but firmly with those persons who are guilty of cruelty to animals in their presence." Kindness coupled with firmness was a hallmark of the day. Public intervention needed to be "widely done" because the "scattered" and "numerous" nature of "the great majority of cases of cruelty" made it "neither desirable nor possible to inflict punishment for them in the courts." Intervention required members of public to police each other's treatment of animals. For more serious cases of "gross and undoubted cruelty" the public was urged to alert the police. Detailed instructions were issued about how to proceed and what information was necessary to report, including "the name, number and residence (where possible) of the offender, and the circumstances of the case to the Secretary-Treasurer." The public was assured that such communication would be confidential, and "the name of the informant

by endeavouring to supply the local market." Editorial, "Vivisection," *Montreal Star*, 1 September 1881, 2; Editorial, "The French Exhibition of Horrors," *Montreal Gazette*, 26 May 1880, 2.

¹¹⁶ When the CSPCA was formed the anti-cruelty statute was already in place. The "Act respecting Cruelty to Animals" targeted anyone who "wantonly, cruelly, or unnecessarily beats, binds, illtreats, abuses or tortures any Horse, Mare, Gelding, Bull, Ox, Cow, Heifer, Steer, Calf, Mule, Ass, Sheep, Lamb, Pig, or other Cattle, or any Poultry, or any Dog, or Domestic Animal or Bird" and criminalized "any mischief, damage or injury" that is done "by negligence or ill-usage in the driving" to any cattle or other animal. The Act specified that its infraction would result in penalty "not exceeding *ten dollars*, nor less than *one dollar* and costs." In default of payment, the offender faced imprisonment, "not in excess of thirty days." See, *An Act respecting Cruelty to Animals, Statutes of Canada*, 1869, c. 27. The first Canadian legislation was enacted in 1824 Nova Scotia, "entitled 'An Act to punish Persons guilty of maliciously killing or maiming Cattle.'" The penalty against this crime against property was imprisonment or public whipping. Preece argues that that 1869 Act "applied 'cruelty to animals' more broadly than before but was a great deal more lenient than the Nova Scotia (sic) of 1824." Rod Preece, *Animals and Nature: Cultural Myths, Cultural Realities* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 1999), 142 & 144. Canadian SPCAs consistently worked to expand the power and reach of the law, in which they experienced considerable opposition. There is a book to be written here, mapping the shifts in the law, public practice and SPCA advocacy. The attempts to regulate pigeon shooting are explored only briefly in this chapter. See, for instance, Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, (20 February 1889), 240-247; Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, (27 February 1889), 367-369; Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, (13 March 1889), 607; Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, (27 February 1890), 1203-1219; Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, (12 March 1890), 1823-1850; Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, (2 February 1893), 222; Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, (4 June 1894), 3647-4099; Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, (18 June 1894), 4515-4546; Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, (12 May 1899), 2963.

[would] not be disclosed without his and her consent.” The SPCA hoped that the public would comply and “so afford the Society much valuable assistance in its work.”¹¹⁷

Identifying and prosecuting cruelty to animals was neither simple nor straightforward. Cruelty, it is worth repeating, is a cultural concept, not one that exists in nature. Activities which we might consider cruel, when we gaze into the past, may not have been considered so by contemporaries.¹¹⁸ Among its first publications, the CSPCA circulated the “excellent directions” given by London’s RSPCA.¹¹⁹ It was hoped that the circulation of this information would further the Society’s efforts by helping the public identify cruelty as well as to dampen critiques that cruelists were evading the law. Montrealers were urged to provide detailed notes of the “offense” they witnessed. For example, it was cruel to drive a horse with “galled neck or shoulders, or other wounds especially when they are raw, discharging and in contact with the harness.” In a case of “flogging or beating” onlookers were counseled to “note the number of blows”, where on the body the blows were inflicted, and “the effect” on the animal. Was there suffering? Was there pain? “In a case for overloading, it is indispensable to show painful distress to the animal, e.g., trembling, falling, unusual perspiration or exhaustion, or to show violence on the part of the driver.”¹²⁰ Lameness on its own could not be equated with suffering. Cruelty, although pervasive, was difficult to distinguish from the every day treatment of animals.

Montreal evidence suggests that its CSPCA corroborates historians’ consensus about the centrality of the working class or poor man to the crime of cruelty to animals.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ “CSPCA: Aims and Objects,” *Montreal Star*, 24 March 1869, 2.

¹¹⁸ For instance, the story of the elephant who wet his onlookers at the Paris zoo was meant to demonstrate his intelligence, not any issue with his captivity for their amusement. In another article which argued for the complexity of emotional and intellectual responses in animals, the author described the following story. “In the Zoological gardens I saw a baboon that got into a furious rage when its keeper took out a letter or book and read it loud to him (sic), and his rage was so violent that, as I witnessed on more than one occasion, he bit his own leg until the blood flowed.” The observer, a scientist, witnessed the torture the baboon experienced when he was read to, more than once. The self-mutilation of wild animals in captivity received no critique. See, “The Elephant,” *Montreal Star*, 4 June 1872, 1; “Curiosities of Animal Life,” *Montreal Star*, 15 January 1872, 7.

¹¹⁹ Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, (Montreal: 1870), 6.

¹²⁰ Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, (Montreal: 1870), 6.

¹²¹ In the first Annual Report of the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals for the year ending June 30, 1874, “fifty-two cases of working horses with galled shoulders and backs have been dealt with – by remonstrance with the drivers, appeal to the masters, or in extreme cases, by prosecution. In more than one case the appeal to the masters has resulted in their interference with its officer.” In the Quebec Society report for the year 1875, there were a total of 41 prosecutions: 13 were identified as carters,

Wealth and poverty were central to how justice was administered in late nineteenth century Montreal; the case of cruelty to animals was no exception. Intra-middle class dialogue about changing uses of animals took different forms (humane literature and advice) than the contest between the poor man, the humane inspector and the Recorder. Owners of animals often determined the conditions under which the work took place, but it was the men who worked with the animals who were liable to being charged with cruelty. Ownership of the animal did not exempt working class people from suspicion. Many poor people owned animals. Even when the practices of the elite were questioned, the focus was most often on the working poor man. I suggest that poverty was central to cruelty to animals. The lack of material and cultural capital made working men with animals vulnerable to the charge of cruelty to animals.

In humane advice, working men served as a foil for cruelty to animals. In his letter to the press on the theme of “the housing of animals in winter” Frederick Mackenzie, CSPCA secretary, argued that horses suffered in very cold weather because “of the coldness in their stables, among those cold stables are the majority of the stables, even of persons who keep horses for their own use.”¹²² He admonished Montrealers because “nearly all our stables are built as if the climate were the same as England or New York” with no special provisions for the cold conditions. He called on “owners of horses to pay *frequent* visits to their stables in all seasons, for the purpose of seeing that their horses are properly taken care of in every respect.” Mackenzie argued that “[m]any coachmen discharge their duties in a most praiseworthy way, but there are some who from laziness and drunkenness, &c, fail to give the horses food and water regularly, and who maltreat them in other ways.” Clearly, the article was meant for “owners of horses.” By Mackenzie’s formulation, and it must be clear that his intent was to further the work of the Society as well as to ameliorate the lot of horses, cruelty to horses came at the hands of workers, who were drunk and lazy, rather than owners. Nonetheless, Mackenzie was also telling middle class people how to go about their own business, including the supervision of their animals and workers. “The torture inflicted on these poor dumb

3 as labourers, and “eleven farmers and drovers.” The ten people convicted for cock-fighting were not identified by their work. See, Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, *First Annual Report of the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*, (Toronto, 1874), 6 & Quebec Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, *Annual Report*, 1874, 5-6.

¹²² F. Mackenzie, Letter to the Editor, *Montreal Daily Witness*, 8 January 1873, 1.

beasts by these wretches is too often for a long time seen only by God.”¹²³ When violence and cruelty, what the paper characterized as “torture,” occurred in middle-class houses, the worker served as a foil.¹²⁴ Clearly it was servants rather than masters who were cruel.

From the outset of the establishment of the CSPCA, the moral and political question of penalizing the poor man for cruelty to animals was a matter of debate at the local level. The task of defining practices as cruel was difficult to begin with. When the charge was against a poor man, the issue of cruelty became even more complex. In a letter to the editor, a Mr. W.C. Fisher argued that “the policy of arresting and prosecuting everyone who is apparently guilty of cruelty to horses is open to some objections.” He argued that for a horse with a sore on his body “where the harness does not reach...exercise is absolutely necessary to cure the horse. If a horse belongs to a poor man he has but one way of exercising the horse, and that is work. If the horse is not overworked there cannot certainly be any cruelty in working him.” Although a poor man was financially unable to keep “an idle horse” and may even be “absolutely dependent on the daily work of his horse for the necessaries of life,” two outcomes were possible. One, because of “the fear of being arrested and fined,” the owner would not work his horse and instead reduce his feed “and the horse not only suffers from want of sufficient food, but from his sores.” On the other hand, when a man worked his horse with sores “that do not entirely disable him, [because] the man very naturally considers that it is better for the horse to suffer,” the man risks being arrested for cruelty to animals. The writer asked “where is the benefit of arresting a man in this situation? He pays his fine, goes home, ties his horse in the stable, and half starves him until he either dies or gets well. In the meantime the man and his family suffer for the necessaries of life. The arrest and fine, instead of being a benefit to the horse, has increased his suffering and caused human beings to suffer also.”¹²⁵ He suggested that the most appropriate approach to ease suffering was “first to raise the people to a higher moral and intellectual condition,” and

¹²³ F. Mackenzie, Letter to the Editor, *Montreal Daily Witness*, 8 January 1873, 1.

¹²⁴ Similarly, the “Canary Story,” published in the *Star*’s “Natural History Column,” argued that “nothing is more cruel than to keep birds and to leave servants to attend them.” See, Natural History Column – Canary Story,” *Montreal Star*, 1 August 1874, 3.

¹²⁵ W.C. Fisher, letter to the editor, *Montreal Star*, 31 July 1869, 2.

the rest would follow.¹²⁶ His letter outlined some crucial contemporary critiques of the SPCA: the poor were dependent on their animals, and fining a poor man could harm his animal more rather than provide respite. As late as 1907, the question remained - "how to prevent an animal being even more cruelly used after an offender has been punished." After a driver was arrested for "beating a horse in public, there is the danger that when that driver and his horse are behind closed doors in the stable, the poor horse will have reason to wish that no humane effort had been made on his behalf."¹²⁷

In October of 1869, a "gentleman" saw a horse drawing coal near the Canal Basin and went closer to inspect him and found an "open wound under the saddle."¹²⁸ "A boy" was driving the horse.¹²⁹ The wound was not visible but the youth of the driver may have drawn the gentleman's attention. For the Recorder, it was the poverty of the driver which was central. The Recorder said the case was "one of hundreds" which came before him and "placed him in a very puzzling position. The men were always as poor as Job, and if he fined them it meant two months in jail, and their families starving; yet if he did not fine them he was violating his oath of office."¹³⁰ His solution was the issuance of fewer licenses to carters, although in this instance it would not have made a difference since the driver was working without one. The Recorder "intended, in consideration of the prisoner's poorness, to discharge him, but his persistence in denying the charge, when it had been proved by competent and disinterested evidence, obliged him to teach the man a lesson. The horse must not be worked until quite cured, and a fine of \$2 be paid."¹³¹ It is important to note that the age of the offender fluctuates between age categories. He is at once a "boy" and a "man." The prisoner's poverty remains consistent. A \$2 fine and enforced rest for his horse could very well have contributed to his further impoverishment. It is important to note that the man himself denied the charge of cruelty.

¹²⁶ W.C. Fisher, letter to the editor, *Montreal Star*, 31 July 1869, 2.

¹²⁷ CSPCA collection, newspaper clippings, "Warning to Cruel Drivers," no reference, no date, 1907ca.

¹²⁸ "Cruelty to Animals," *Montreal Star*, 3 November 1869, 3.

¹²⁹ "Cruelty to Animals," *Montreal Star*, 3 November 1869, 3.

¹³⁰ "Cruelty to Animals," *Montreal Star*, 3 November 1869, 3.

¹³¹ "Cruelty to Animals," *Montreal Star*, 3 November 1869, 3. Fining the poor for cruelty to animals continued to be an issue. In 1898, a poor hack man of Beaudry St. was fined four dollars for not providing feed for his horse for two days and two nights. Officers visited his home to investigate, and decided that the "offense was more due to his extreme state of destitution than to cruelty...a delay of a few days had been given him to pay the fine." CSPCA, newspaper clippings, *Sunday Sun*, 24 April 1898.

In another case, a constable was called to St. James Street where a carter was carting wood and “his horse had fallen and could not rise. On removing the harness his large open sores were seen, the prisoner in broad Irish said that he was a poor man and had a large family to support and admitted that the horse was not fit for work.”¹³² The Recorder argued that “the prisoner’s poverty was no reason why he should be cruel, and cautioned him against working the horse until he was quite recovered.”¹³³ Race, economic and cultural capital all played a role in this man’s conviction: His accent of “broad Irish” marked him, as did his family’s poverty. The Recorder fined the poor man “only” two dollars, at least a quarter of the standard adult male’s weekly wage.¹³⁴ SPCA convictions further impoverished and marginalized those who were already vulnerable; in this instance it was a poor Irish man with a large family. In another case a “driver” was brought before the Recorder and charged with “cruelly ill-treating a horse, by working it with three sores on its back.”¹³⁵ Inspector Gailey of the SPCA “testified to the condition of the sores, which must have caused great suffering to the animal. The prisoner was fined \$20 and costs and two months in jail.” A twenty dollar fine would have placed a tremendous burden on a working man. The addition of two months imprisonment must have caused great suffering to the driver and his human and animal relations.

In 1869, T. J. Claxton was listed among the petitioners who called for the incorporation of the CSPCA.¹³⁶ Several years later, he found himself on the other side of the anti-cruelty equation. Although the Society had prosecuted drivers of the Montreal City Passenger Railway a number of times, as some contemporaries complained throughout the early 1870s, the Railway appeared to be above the law that regulated other carters.¹³⁷ The *Witness* argued that the horses of the city passenger railway were overworked and overloaded, “cruelly beaten while in harness” - yet there was an

¹³² “Cruelty to Animals,” *Montreal Star*, 22 October 1869, 3.

¹³³ “Cruelty to Animals,” *Montreal Star*, 22 October 1869, 3.

¹³⁴ Bettina Bradbury suggests that a dollar a day was a usual wage in the 1880s for an adult male. Terry Copp suggests that working men could earn \$8.25 a week in the 1890s. See, Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families, 80-89* & Terry Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty: The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal, 1897-1929* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974), 21.

¹³⁵ “Cruelty to A Horse,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 3 February 1873, 3.

¹³⁶ *An Act to incorporate the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*, Statutes of Quebec 1869, c. LXXIX.

¹³⁷ “Alleged Cruelty to Animals,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 5 March 1873, 2 & “Cruel Treatment of Horses,” *Montreal Star*, 7 March 1874, 4.

“immunity of the city passenger railway as opposed to other carters” which was inconsistent with equity before the law.¹³⁸ In 1875 on Montreal’s city transit, a driver was convicted of beating his horse. His employer, T. J. Claxton, pleaded with the magistrate to consider the man’s indigent family. Claxton paid his fine and asked that the driver be reinstated to his position as he had learned his lesson.¹³⁹ Again, it is the poor man who is cast as cruel to animals. In this case, he was fortunate that his employer paid his fine and supported his reinstatement.

While there were those like the Recorder who feared the impact of fines on poor offenders - although he found compelling reasons to penalize some of them nonetheless - there were others who complained that the law was not severe enough. According to the *Montreal Gazette* in December of 1870, the SPCA “has done a great amount of good in this city and vicinity in impressing on those barbarians who live in the midst of civilization that there are certain limits of ill-treatment of the poor dumb creatures who so faithfully serve them or supply their wants.”¹⁴⁰ On the whole, the CSPCA was considered a “boon to these dutiful servants of man, for which if they had reason and could know of it, they would be undoubtedly grateful.” What was problematic was that some people “though they do not absolutely infringe the law, nevertheless make as much use of the margin of liberty which is left to them as they possibly can.” Animals were overburdened, overworked, and underfed “up to the very point of illegality, and only stop there from the dread of restrictive justice.”¹⁴¹ The editor urged the society’s inspector to “keep a sharp look out for such owners of horses, who habitually ill-use them, and to seize the first opportunity afforded by illegal cruelty to make them pay old arrears of

¹³⁸Editorial, “Cruelty to Animals,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 13 March 1876. In Toronto, despite “remonstrance,” nothing had changed regarding “the overcrowding of street cars” during rush hour. “Daily at certain hours and especially toward six p.m., the street cars may be seen crowded on every available spot of the passage and platform, thereby involving a cruel overloading of the horses.” According to the report, “the Superintendent of the Street Railway Company throws the blame upon the public.” Since the Company could not be persuaded to add more cars, the moral burden to ease the horses’ suffering was placed on consumers. See, Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 1874, 9. See also, Christopher Armstrong & H. V. Nelles, *The Revenge of the Methodist Bicycle Company: Sunday Streetcars and Municipal Reform in Toronto, 1888-1897* (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates Limited, 1977) & David B. Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 134-140.

¹³⁹“Cruelty to Animals – A Driver of the City Passenger Railway Convicted,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 10 March 1876.

¹⁴⁰ “Cruelty to Animals,” *Montreal Gazette*, 10 December 1870, 2.

¹⁴¹ “Cruelty to Animals,” *Montreal Gazette*, 10 December 1870, 2.

punishment.” The *Montreal Gazette* editorial argued that “long continued slow torture of this kind” was considered worse than “actual cruelty – the result of a hasty temper.”¹⁴² I think the paper was right to conclude that “It is still possible to be cruel both to man and beast and still keep on the safe side of the law.”¹⁴³

In May of 1870, the *Gazette* argued that despite the presence of both the SPCA and the Fish and Game Protection Club,¹⁴⁴ “the robins and other small birds...rightly complain that, so far, no ‘protection’ whatsoever has been extended to them, as they are still the sport and prey of every hulking vagabond who can steal or borrow a gun.”¹⁴⁵ Clearly the protection of animals was cast as an issue of class. The paper drew a distinction between legitimate sportsmen and the poor who were imagined as criminal, the assumption being that the poor even, on occasion had to steal their guns. The editors suggested that these societies should send “two or three constables in plain clothes to the woods in the vicinity, with instructions to arrest every scamp or older ruffian who goes about with a fowling piece.”¹⁴⁶ In another column on the same page the *Gazette* assured readers that the SPCA would in future work to protect insectivorous birds.¹⁴⁷ The fine for the offense of injuring a bird or removing the eggs from a bird’s nest was not less than one dollar and not more than ten dollars, “with all fee and costs incurred, and in default of payment [the subject] may be imprisoned for not less than two and no more than twenty days.”¹⁴⁸ For the poor without money to pay the fine, conviction would result in imprisonment. In this way, their implied criminality was actualized. In April of 1871, when on a Sunday afternoon a detective and a sergeant went into the bush near Hochelaga in search of a man for aggravated assault, they found instead “several young fellows amusing themselves by killing insectivorous birds.”¹⁴⁹ The two who were arrested, 18 and 27 years old, pleaded guilty and were each fined \$10 and costs or twenty

¹⁴² “Cruelty to Animals,” *Montreal Gazette*, 10 December 1870, 2.

¹⁴³ “Cruelty to Animals,” *Montreal Gazette*, 10 December 1870, 2.

¹⁴⁴ Tina Loo provides a brief history of fish and game clubs in her piece, “Making A Modern Wilderness: Conserving Wildlife in Twentieth Century Canada,” *Canadian Historical Review* 82, no. 1 (March 2001), 92-121.

¹⁴⁵ Editorial, “The Robins and Small Birds,” *Montreal Gazette*, 18 May 1870, 2.

¹⁴⁶ Editorial, “The Robins and Small Birds,” *Montreal Gazette*, 18 May 1870, 2.

¹⁴⁷ “The Protection of Small Birds,” *Montreal Gazette*, 18 May 1870, 2.

¹⁴⁸ “The Protection of Small Birds,” *Montreal Gazette*, 18 May 1870, 2.

¹⁴⁹ “Killing Insectivorous Birds,” *Montreal Herald*, 25 April 1871, 1.

days in jail.¹⁵⁰ It is interesting that the two are described as youth, yet, at 18 and 27, they were not children. Possibly the fine was as high as it was because the infraction of the law happened on Sunday, violating the Christian Sabbath and the prohibition of recreation on Sunday. Like the magistrate, the *Gazette* did support the 1871 New York statute which criminalized “the destruction of birds” on Sunday.¹⁵¹ Clearly, cruelty to animals was not only about minimizing cruelty and harm to animals but also about shaping public behaviour more broadly.

Cruelty to animals was found to be central to poor boys at leisure as well as boys at work. In its 1874 report, the Ontario SPCA wrote that “Acts of thoughtless cruelty by boys are by no means rare.” In their amusements, boys impaled frogs on sticks and wantonly destroyed small birds, “only to throw away the victims of such cruelty.” The writer argued that these practices demonstrated the “need for inculcating a respect for life, and a kindly sympathy with the happiness of God’s creatures.” If these practices were left “unchecked, habits of cruelty are formed which affect the whole character, and may be legitimately assigned as the cause of the violence, domestic tyranny and brutal conduct in various relations of life, which gives evidence to such depravity.”¹⁵² These tendencies needed to be reformed otherwise the thread of violence would bleed throughout the entire fabric of a man’s life and into all his relations, becoming a danger danger to the social order. In Montreal, the “barbarity” of “young men and boys” was evidenced at the Victoria Street Bridge, when stone throwing boys pursued a bird until it died. “From such youths naturally spring the street loafers, Sunday sportsmen, wife-beaters and penitentiary birds.”¹⁵³ The trope of youthful cruelty to animals leading to adult criminality is at least as old as Hogarth’s 1751 engravings.¹⁵⁴ Evoked in local scenes in Montreal, these practices were evidence of barbarity and these boys’ need of civilizing. Clearly, boys were seen as embodying the savage instinct within civilization. It was through aging and the civilizing process that boys evolved into civilized men. Cruelty to animals was tied into other social dangers and anxieties. Working class boys

¹⁵⁰ “Killing Insectivorous Birds,” *Montreal Herald*, 25 April 1871, 1.

¹⁵¹ “Destruction of Birds,” *Montreal Herald*, 8 May 1871, 1.

¹⁵² Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, First Annual Report, 1874, 8.

¹⁵³ “Barbarity – City Items,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 26 May 1876.

¹⁵⁴ In William Hogarth’s plates *The Four Stages of Cruelty* (1751), the stages follow Tom Nero as he flogs his horse, murders his mistress and after he is hung for his crime, his body was given over to dissectors. Lansbury, *Old Brown Dog*, 52-52.

and poor boys, in particular, were potentially dangerous to the state and to their neighbors if their tendencies were left “unchecked.” The humane movement cast boys under suspicion of being cruel to animals. Humanitarians did not wish “to punish the cruel human animal so much, but if possible, to ensure the safety of a far nobler brute [in this case a dog] who is faithful to this master, even to the end.”¹⁵⁵

Boys were marked as potential cruelists and their employment possibilities and liberty were constrained under this negative representation. From the outset, the CSPCA used the trope of boys as natural cruelists to advance its larger mandate. According to the 1870 report, the CSPCA considered its worst case of the year to be an incident where a boy “had stabbed an ox in both eyes and driven a spike into the animal’s body.”¹⁵⁶ The CSPCA used the case to argue for the need for public slaughterhouses. It employed the case to articulate its key concerns: “It is terrible to think of the suffering now endured by some of the animals in the markets, and of the hardening and degrading effects on boys of the atrocities committed in some of the private slaughterhouses.”¹⁵⁷ Cruelty caused suffering to animals and degraded humans who witnessed and participated in it. This position was reiterated at the 1872 CSPCA annual meeting. The Society was concerned about “the extremely injurious effect the sight of cruelty made upon the city youth.”¹⁵⁸ Mr. Alexander McGibbon condemned the practice of livery stable proprietors in hiring horses to boys, “who treated them with great cruelty in going round the mountain.”¹⁵⁹ In both instances, whether at leisure or at work, boys were represented as vulnerable to cruelty as witnesses and as practitioners. The call for the restriction of the employment and leisure of youth was made in the name of the protection of animals and of society.

In its 1886 report, the Montreal CSPCA included among its “suggestions to individuals who see or hear of acts of cruelty to animals” a position against the employment of boys. The CSPCA urged on “Master Carters, Coal and Wood Merchants, and others the importance of not employing young lads, under the age of fourteen years as drivers of loaded horses, both from their inability to assist the animal when backing, or

¹⁵⁵ Letter to the Editor, “Cruelty to Dogs,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 30 May 1873, 1. See also, “Stoning Dogs,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 30 April 1884, 5.

¹⁵⁶ the Society had prosecuted 32 cases, most of which involved horses and “convictions were obtained in 26 cases.” Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, (Montreal: 1870), 5.

¹⁵⁷ Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, (Montreal: 1870), 4.

¹⁵⁸ “Recorder’s Court,” *Montreal Star*, 19 January 1872, 1.

¹⁵⁹ “Recorder’s Court,” *Montreal Star*, 19 January 1872, 1.

on hilly places, and the thoughtlessness natural to youth, which frequently leads to racing the horses and using the whip unnecessarily.”¹⁶⁰ In this way, the CSPCA worked toward the enforced dependence of youth, which I explore in the next chapter. Cruelty to animals became one more reason to restrict the employment of youth and enforce their dependence. It was one of the prescriptions of civilization.

Empire, Nation and Cruelty to Man and Beast

The year after the CSPCA was established, the *Montreal Gazette* published an article entitled “Making Game of the Malays” which proposed that “English planters at Singapore” were about to set up a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to tigers.¹⁶¹ Readers were told that these “playful brutes” were man-eating tigers and averaged “a Chinaman or a Malay” each night. The problem was that “the natives have shot the tigers” which led to “an alarming increase of wild hog, which the tigers formerly kept down. Now the wild hogs destroy the crops, and the English planter who cares little for the Chinaman or Malay, regarding them a redundant population, but cares very much for his rice and corn, is averse to tigercide, desiring to protect rather than destroy the species.”¹⁶² The above news report, whether or not it reflected actual developments in Singapore, is useful as a way of reflecting on the establishment of SPCAs. The movement originated in England and branches were established in many British colonies. It became a widespread colonial institution. Edward Fairholme and W. Pain in their 1924 centennial book on the history of the RSPCA unabashedly explained that the spread of anti-cruelty to animals over the globe “is surely a tribute to the British race, and bears eloquent testimony to its civilizing influence...One of the first actions of the British authority when taking over a new country or colony is to adapt home institutions for growth in fresh soil, and one is proud to acknowledge this.”¹⁶³ By and large, SPCAs served to support the entrenchment and stability of the colonial enterprise. The movement for the protection of animals was part of the imperial enterprise. SPCAs spread with settlement.¹⁶⁴ Anti-cruelty concerns had a role in supporting settler power

¹⁶⁰ McGill University Library, Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 1886 (Montreal, Witness Printing House), 7.

¹⁶¹ “Making Game of the Malays,” *Montreal Gazette*, 11 April 1870, 4.

¹⁶² “Making Game of the Malays,” *Montreal Gazette*, 11 April 1870, 4.

¹⁶³ Fairholme and Pain, *A Century of Work for Animals*, 225.

¹⁶⁴ Sitara, ““Kindness, Mercy and Justice,”” 99n272.

over the land, establishing colonials as protectors of animals and criminalizing indigenous peoples' uses of animals.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, as is clear from the Singapore report, the impulse to protect animals did not reflect an extension of sympathy or kindness to one's fellow man.

Anti-cruelty to animals was not antithetical to imperialism but was an essential element in the idea of civilization which supported it. On March 24 1869, the *Montreal Star* editorialized on "How to acquire the North-West" in which they implored the "Young men of Canada" to "Go in and take possession."¹⁶⁶ That same edition announced the aims and objects of the newly formed CSPCA.¹⁶⁷ As we have seen, John. A. Macdonald and G. E. Cartier, both prominent nation builders and expansionists, were listed as CSPCA's patrons in the Society's 1870 report.¹⁶⁸ During that first November of the CSPCA's existence in Montreal, the newly formed Canadian state sent military troops to Red River, the frontier of Canada's recently acquired lands through the transfer of Rupert's Land from the HBC to the Dominion of Canada. According to press reports, the "Red River Row" was caused by a lack of consultation with the local inhabitants; it was an "insurrection against Canadian domination."¹⁶⁹ The paper argued that local residents resisted the transfer of power because "colonization and settlement would compel them [the Métis] to give up the chase as a means of living," because they "abhor sedentary occupations." The Red River Resistance of 1869-70 was set up as a "struggle of barbarism against the progress of the wave of civilization."¹⁷⁰ In many ways, the anti-

¹⁶⁵ On the SPCA's criminalization of the harp seal hunt in the 1960s see, Alan Herscovici, *Second Nature: The Animal-Rights Controversy* (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Co., 1985), 19, 22 & 24. Historically, fish and game protection laws have caused "great hardship" on indigenous people in Canada. See, *Is the Crown at War with Us?* Alanis Obomsawin, dir., Montreal, National Film Board, 2002; Bill Parenteau, "'Care, Control and Supervision': Native People in the Canadian Atlantic Salmon Fishery," *Canadian Historical Review* 79, no. 1 (March, 1998), 1-35; Brenda Ireland, "'Working a Great Hardship on Us': First Nations People, the State and Fur-Bearer Conservation in British Columbia to 1930," *Native Studies Review* 11, no. 1 (1996), 65-90; Diane Newell, *The Tangled Webs of History: Indians and the Law in Canada's Pacific Coast Fisheries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

¹⁶⁶ Editorial, "How to Acquire the North-West," *Montreal Star*, 24 March 1869, 2.

¹⁶⁷ Editorial, "How to Acquire the North-West," *Montreal Star*, 24 March 1869, 2.

¹⁶⁸ Johnston, *For Those Who Cannot Speak*, 127.

¹⁶⁹ Editorial, "The Red River Row," *Montreal Star*, 30 November 1869, 2.

¹⁷⁰ Editorial, "The Red River Row," *Montreal Star*, 30 November 1869, 2. This suggests that George F. G. Stanley used the language of his sources when he explained Métis resistance to Canadian ascendancy over the west as "the clash between primitive and civilized peoples." See, George F. G. Stanley, *The Birth of Western Canada: A History of the Riel Rebellions* (1936. Reprint. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), vii.

cruelty to animals movement was part of the larger project of the civilization of savage instincts at home and abroad.

Ten years earlier, in his 1860 expansionist narrative of his exploratory expedition to Red River, Toronto's Professor Hind articulated what would become an imperial literary tradition depicting Métis or Indian cruelty to dogs.¹⁷¹ This representation was underpinned by considerable emotive power in a context in which dogs came to be considered a "nobler brute" than man.¹⁷² Hind told readers that in the west, dogs "require long-continued and most severe punishment to make them obedient to the word of command. The treatment to which the poor beasts are subjected would give them a fair claim to the protection of a law against cruelty to animals."¹⁷³ The ascendancy of Canadian law in the west was made on behalf of the dog's claim to protection from cruelty. According to Hind, "The half-breeds trust to sticks and stones, or any object within reach on the road, which is picked up as they pass and thrown at the dogs." It was "painful" for Hind to witness "the sudden start of terror with which each animal, looking over his shoulder as he trots along, watches the mien and motions of the driver as he poises his stick, which [the driver] knows how to throw with certain dexterity at the

¹⁷¹ In his 1879 publication of *Sketches of Life in the Hudson's Bay Territory*, H. M. Robinson also described the "half-breeds" shouting "dire anathemas" while "the whip is mercilessly applied" on "the unhappy brutes." The Earl of Southesk, the English trophy hunter, who wrote self-consciously about humanity and cruelty to animals, in his travel narrative *Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains* (1875) argued that he himself had "never struck the poor creature nor spoke harshly to him in my life, but these Indian dogs are so fearfully beaten and ill-treated at home that they almost breathe in yells and squeaks. I have often seen children, four or five years old, take up the largest stick or stone they could lift, and dash it down on the wretched body of some unoffending dog – though it must be confessed, that at the forts or large camps the dogs are such a nuisance, so troublesome, dirty, and noisy, that no one can resist hurling an occasional stone at them." See, H. M. Robinson, *The Great Fur Land or Sketches of Life in the Hudson's Bay Territory* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1879), 233; Earl of Southesk, *Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains: A Dairy and Narrative of Travel, Sport and Adventure, During a Journey Through the Hudson's Bay Company's Territories in 1859 and 1860* (1875. Reprint. Edmonton: M. G. Hurtig, 1969), 211.

¹⁷² See, for instance, Kathleen Kete writes, "from the dawn of history through the Middle Ages, the dog was a practical companion, necessary for human beings' survival on an elemental level. Only in modern times, in urban society, did the dog begin to lose that function to become, in the nineteenth century, essential primarily for people's emotional life." See, Letter to the Editor, "Cruelty to Dogs," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 30 May 1873, 1. See also, "Stoning Dogs," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 30 April 1884, 5. For locally published stories which support Kete's reading, see, "The Dog of Montargis," *Toronto Daily Mail*, 10 August 1874, ; "French Dog Story," *Montreal Star*, 6 March 1869, 4; "A Dog Story," *Montreal Star*, 1 June 1869, 1; "A Good Dog Story," *Montreal Star*, 1 April 1874, 1; "A Conscientious Dog," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 9 June 1876; "A Remarkable Dog," *Montreal Herald*, 15 May 1878, 3.

¹⁷³ Henry Youle Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857 and of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition of 1858* Vol. II (1860. Reprint. New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 93.

terrified animals.”¹⁷⁴ Like other humanitarians, Hind was also concerned with his own pain as a witness to cruelty to dogs.¹⁷⁵ According to Hind, one of the results of this hideous cruelty was that “The faces of some of our dogs were dreadfully disfigured by the blows which their unfeeling masters inflict on them.” Cruelty to dogs would have repulsed readers who loved dogs, even though life for unlicensed dogs in Montreal could be cruel and harsh.¹⁷⁶ Images and representations of narratives about cruelty to animals functioned to support colonial expansion and Canadian political ascendancy over the west.

In contrast to Hind’s description of Métis cruelty to dogs, when the Ontario SPCA was established in Toronto in 1874, the *Toronto Daily Mail* extolled the virtues of Captain William F. Butler’s western expedition under the rubric of “A Great Dog.” The narrative explained that “One recalls Captain Butler’s dogsled with unalloyed pleasure; no horrid versions of cruelty disturb it; whenever he has undisputed authority God’s creatures are safe from ill-treatment.”¹⁷⁷ This characterization of the treatment of God’s creatures under Captain Butler’s authority masked the violence that occurred when Canadian authority was disputed in Red River in 1869-70. And Captain Butler served with distinction in the Canadian military expedition that was sent to quell the Resistance. The newly established Canadian state negotiated with the Red River provisional government which resulted in the Manitoba Act of 1870. The state then sent a military

¹⁷⁴ Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857 and of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition of 1858* Vol. II, 93-94.

¹⁷⁵ See, Karen Halttunen, “Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture,” *American Historical Review* 100, no. 2 (April 1995), 303-334.

¹⁷⁶ For instance, See, “The Dog Days: Homeless Canines and the Police: How Unlicensed Dogs are Disposed of,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 30 June 1888, 5. According to Constable Galarneau, a big dog will struggle five or seven minutes after he is shot, a small dog for five minutes. “The small dogs are hung up by means of a rope or pulley. The large dogs are first hoisted up, then another is tied to their hind parts so that fastened by both ropes, the animal cannot turn around to bite or balk the aim of the revolvers.” See also, “Dog Slaughter,” *Montreal Star*, 22 July 1869, 2; “The Man Who Killed the Cat,” *Montreal Star*, 4 August 1869, 2; Anti-Cruelty Society,” *Montreal Star*, 10 January 1872, 1; “More about Dogs,” *Montreal Daily Mail*, 24 July 1879, 3; In 1907 the CSPCA wanted to build a shed where dogs could be kept “until a sufficient number were on hand to fill the gas chamber and thereby save a great amount of gas.” CSPCA, Minutes of Meetings, Vol. 3, 1 March 1907, 204. More recently, according to an ex-SPCA volunteer, at least 50 000 animals are killed yearly by the Montreal CSPCA. “Montreal currently euthanizes more animals per capita than any other city in North America.” www.animalpeoplenews.org/94/7/hsus_prosecutes.html & www.animaladvocates.com/sPCA_stats.htm Kete, *The Beast in the Boudoir*, 39-47; Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, 188-194; John K. Walton, “Mad Dogs and Englishmen: The Conflict over Rabies in Late Victorian England,” *Journal of Social History* 13, no. 2 (Winter, 1979), 219-239.

¹⁷⁷ “A Great Dog,” *Toronto Daily Mail*, 27 February 1874.

expedition on the heels of that agreement. Depicting the story of Captain Butler's authority as intrinsically without cruelty masks the reign of terror that historians argue followed the expedition's arrival in Red River. No historian disputes the fact of the reign of terror: some historians argue that it was this reign of terror that forced the Métis from their homes in Red River.¹⁷⁸

No doubt, William Butler's "portrait of the splendid husky dog Cerf Vola," in his expansionist travel narrative *The Wild North Land* (1874), "excited animal lovers."¹⁷⁹ In that narrative, Butler also argued that "If an Indian has a fat dog, you may know that game is abundant; if the dog is thin, food is scarce; if there is no dog at all, the Indian is starving, and the dog has been killed and eaten by his master."¹⁸⁰ By casting himself as humane dog lover, his inscription of Indians eating of their dogs would have dehumanized¹⁸¹ these starving people whose lands were being expropriated and colonized.

To raise money for their new Society, in the spring of 1874 the Ontario SPCA in Toronto held a fund raiser which featured a lecture by Prof. Wilson, LL.D., on "the Peopling of America."¹⁸² The lecture situated 1492 as the foundation of American history, with the arrival of Europeans beginning with Columbus, and ended with the statement that "it was the fate of all her races to pass away, and their place to be taken by white people."¹⁸³ Reprinted in the *Toronto Daily Mail*, the lecture outlined how the English had come to dominate the world. Wilson's lecture articulated a popular contemporary idea, an imperial fantasy whereby indigenous people were doomed to extinction.¹⁸⁴ His lecture in support of the upcoming colonial institution the OSPCA

¹⁷⁸ The main proponent is D.N. Sprague. See his *Canada and the Métis, 1869-1885* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1988). For an oppositional view, see Gerhard Ens' explanation for the Métis dispersal from present day Manitoba. Ens does not challenge the fact that there was a reign of terror. Gerhard Ens, *From Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Métis in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

¹⁷⁹ Edward McCourt, introduction to *The Wild North Land: Being the Story of A Winter Journey, With Dogs across Northern North America*, by William Francis Butler (1874. Reprint. Edmonton: M.G. Hurtig, 1968), xiv.

¹⁸⁰ William F. Butler, *The Wild North Land*, 255.

¹⁸¹ See Linda Tuhiwai Smith, "On Being Human," in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1999), 25-28.

¹⁸² Prof. Wilson, "The Peopling of America," *Toronto Daily Mail*, 7 May 1874.

¹⁸³ Prof. Wilson, "The Peopling of America," *Toronto Daily Mail*, 7 May 1874.

¹⁸⁴ See, Patrick Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings: Discourses of the Extinction of the Primitive Races, 1800-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003.)

shows how the anti-cruelty to animals movement was woven into the imperial and colonial national project of its day. Many predicted that Indians “are fast going, and soon they will all be gone.”¹⁸⁵ What distinguished humanitarians, like William Butler and SPCA supporters, was their concern that “the wild red man, if more the savage, was infinitely less of the brute than was the white ruffian who destroyed him.”¹⁸⁶ The humanitarian hierarchical ranking of man and animals was challenged by the behaviour of the brutish white ruffian and threatened the moral and ideological grounds for colonial expansion. The work of the SPCA worked to uphold the moral authority for white man’s primacy over animals, Indians and the land.

The establishment of the SPCA was an important marker which supported some nations over others in an unequal world order. Historians Brian Harrison and Harriet Ritvo show that in the nineteenth century, cruelty came to be defined as something “Catholic” or “Latin” as the RSPCA focused on French vivisection, Spanish bull fights, and “Italian brutalities.” As cruelty was projected onto the “other,” kindness became racialized as an English or British characteristic.¹⁸⁷ The humane literature that Harrison and Ritvo draw on to support their analysis of racialization was circulated in the Montreal English daily press. For instance, on the “Spectacle of a Bull Fight in Spain,” readers were told that “the boxes were filled with ladies, many of whom brought their children.” The Montreal paper argued that “Until Spain’s favorite amusement ceases to interest her children, she can never take her place among the civilized nations.”¹⁸⁸ When a bull fight was scheduled in Paris, the *Star* argued it was “cruel,” “barbarous” and “unworthy of civilization.”¹⁸⁹ Cruelty to animals was framed by the language of nation and civilization.

As we have seen, SPCAs worked to eliminate cruelties from their city streets. In its petition for incorporation, the CSPCA had argued that a Society for the prevention of

¹⁸⁵ See also, Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition*, Vol. I, 337; John Maclean, *Canadian Savage Folk: The Native Tribes of Canada* (Toronto: William Briggs., 1896), 302.

¹⁸⁶ William F. Butler, *The Great Lone Land: A Narrative of Travel and Adventure in the North-West of America* (1872rpt., London: Sampson Low, Marston & Company, 1891), 244-245.

¹⁸⁷ Harrison, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 102; Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, 129.

¹⁸⁸ “Spectacle at a Bull Fight in Spain,” *Montreal Star*, 24 August 1874, 4.

¹⁸⁹ “At the Bull Fight,” *Montreal Star*, 14 September 1889, 3.

cruelty to animals was “urgently needed” in Montreal.¹⁹⁰ Nonetheless, the same kinds of cruelties SPCAs struggled to eliminate “at home” were projected abroad. The projection of cruelty on the other made it possible to explain cruelty at home as the work of “barbarians in our midst.” These were aberrations within a humane society. Humane leaders’ agitation and local prosecutions demonstrate that cruelty to animals was practiced at home and rhetorically projected abroad. For instance, in Spain, “[o]verloading is the least and most common of the cruelties practiced.”¹⁹¹ The article “Treatment of Animals in Naples” described very much what the humane inspector policed and arrested men for on Montreal city streets: overloading, overworking, working horses with sores etc., but in these reports these cruelties were assigned to Italians. It was the “English visitors to Naples... [who were] shocked by the cruelties they have seen perpetrated here.”¹⁹² According to the article the “Donkey’s Friend,” first published in the RSPCA’s *Animal World* before appearing in the Montreal press, “one of the favorite amusements of the Neapolitan children is to catch a mouse and after dipping it in petroleum set it on fire, the little savages shouting with glee while witnessing the agonies of the poor animal.”¹⁹³ The question was “What humanity can be expected from men who as children delight in such atrocious cruelty?”¹⁹⁴ As in Montreal, Italian children were represented as “little savages”. The SPCA’s central concern with man’s humanity as measured by his treatment of animals framed these narratives of cruelty to animals. As we have seen, local boys were represented as engaging in similar cruel amusements in Montreal and Toronto, yet in this humane literature these practices were rhetorically projected abroad. In these articles, cruelty to animals was found elsewhere, among less civilized people.

¹⁹⁰ *An Act to incorporate the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*, Statutes of Quebec 1869, c. LXXIX.

¹⁹¹ “Spectacle at a Bull Fight in Spain,” *Montreal Star*, 24 August 1874, 4.

¹⁹² “Miscellany – Treatment of Animals in Naples,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 18 November 1873, 4. In 1873 an SPCA was founded in Italy. It was “chiefly supported by the aristocracy and a high percentage of foreign, especially English, members.” See, Patrizia Guarnieri, “Moritz Schiff (1823-96): Experimental Physiology and Noble Sentiment in Florence,” in *Vivisection in Historical Perspective* edited by Nicolaas A. Rupke (London and New York: Routledge, 1987) 117. The alleged cruelty in Naples and “other parts of Italy” was also circulated in Canada in “Brutes and Christians,” *Toronto Daily Mail*, 27 June 27 1874.

¹⁹³ “Miscellany – Treatment of Animals in Naples,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 18 November 1873, 4.

¹⁹⁴ “Miscellany – Treatment of Animals in Naples,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 18 November 1873, 4.

Yet, in the west as in the east, a horse with sores under his saddle was a sign of the horse owners' poverty, not his viciousness.¹⁹⁵ In his work *The Horse in Blackfoot Indian Culture* (1955), ethnographer John C. Ewers plainly explained how wealth and poverty affected the treatment of saddle sores. Ewers wrote that,

Saddle sores were a seasonal problem to the wealthy horse owner. In the spring of the year his saddle and pack horses, that had been rested during the winter months, sometimes got saddle sores from ill-fitting, improperly padded saddles used on them. Rich men could rest their afflicted mounts until they recovered. Poor men could not spare their riding horses and of necessity overloaded their pack animals. Consequently they were plagued with sore-backed horses year round. If a wealthy man saw a likely looking but sore-backed horse belonging to a poor fellow, he might trade one of his sound horses for it.¹⁹⁶

Like some Montreal Recorders and SPCA critics, Ewers explained that these men continued to work horses with sores on their backs because they relied on their horses, not because they were indifferent to suffering. Irrespective of the imagined and projected nature of these ideas of cruelty to animals, they had real consequences for indigenous people.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ Colonel Richard Irving Dodge, stationed in the American West, dedicated an entire chapter on Indian "Cruelty" in his 1876 account of *The Plains of the Great West*. Dodge wrote that "the cruelty of the Indian is inborn and inbred, and it clings to him through life as a distinguishing feature of his humanity. As a boy, his special delight is in the torture of every bird or animal he can get a hold of alive." As we have seen, these cruelties were attributed to boys in Montreal. In this text, these familiar cruelties were ascribed to Indian youth. According to Dodge, "As a man, the torture of a human being gives him more pleasure than any other act of his life, and at no time is his laughter so joyous and heartfelt as when some special ingenuity wrings a groan or cry of anguish from the victim of his cruelty...Cruelty to animals is equally marked, though of a more passive nature. The torture of a human being is an active, exquisite pleasure. The suffering of an animal is simply a matter of indifference." According to Dodge, "An Indian will ride a horse from the back of which every particle of skin and much flesh has been torn by the ill-fitting saddle." Although Dodge positioned himself as someone with insider knowledge about Indians, Jeffrey Ostler argues that Dodge's writing was riddled with "essentialist pronouncements." See, Colonel Richard Irving Dodge, *The Plains of the Great West and their Inhabitants: Being a Description of the Plains, Game, Indians, &c. of the Great North American Desert*, (1876prt., New York: Archer House, 1959), 416-417; Jeffrey Ostler, "They Regard Their Passing As 'Wakan': Interpreting Western Sioux Explanations for the Bison's Decline," *Western Historical Quarterly* 30 (Winter 1999), 487.

¹⁹⁶ See, John C. Ewers, *The Horse in Blackfoot Indian Culture, with Comparative Material from other Western Tribes* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1955), 46-47. Ewers noted that the Blackfoot had a "cult of specialists in the treatment of sick and injured horses."

¹⁹⁷ As Canadian historian Sarah Carter's work has shown, despite "observations of agents and inspectors who often noted that Indians were more concerned for the welfare of their animal than for themselves," in 1889 Hayter Reed as Commissioner of Indian Affairs "emphasize[d] in his public statements that Indians had a 'naturally brutal disposition' toward their domestic animals, that there was a 'disregard of animal life inherent in recently reclaimed savages,' and that they [Indians] had to be taught to be merciful to their beasts." These ideas supported Reed's "peasant farming" Indian policy which ultimately worked to undermine First Nations' success in farming and ranching and tried to eliminate their access to the market and competition with settlers. See, Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal:

In the context of this historical tradition of projecting cruelty to animals onto the less civilized other, in 1938, the Moose Jaw SPCA initiated a campaign against “the terrible abuse and neglect suffered by animals (largely horses and dogs) belonging to the Indians...from the country north of Prince Albert around Waskesiu and Montreal Lake in Saskatchewan and from The Pas and other parts of Manitoba” and British Columbia.¹⁹⁸ This campaign was begun because a number of “complaints” had been made “from time to time from tourist visitors to the North Country, as well as a number of our own people with respect to the outstanding cruelty and neglect suffered by animals belonging to the Indians.”¹⁹⁹ The Moose Jaw Society was successful: it was able to rally letters of support from SPCAs in Vancouver, Victoria, Calgary, Saskatchewan and Montreal as well as the Blue Cross in Saskatoon, the Royal Humane Society in Regina, the Alberta Humane Society in Edmonton and the American Humane Association in New York.²⁰⁰ Shortly after receiving the Moose Jaw Society letter, the CSPCA wrote to the Superintendent of Welfare and Training in the Department of Mines and Resources asking him to “take the necessary steps to prevent further abuse to animals by Indians in those districts.” The letter suggested that “educational work could be begun among them through the distribution of literature and booklets, resulting in the better condition of their livestock and ultimately of themselves.”²⁰¹ In this letter we see the continuity in SPCA rhetoric that linked the kind treatment of animals with the elevation of the human

McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990), 213. For a brief biographical sketch of Hayter Reed’s career, see, Robert James Nestor, “Hayter Reed, Severalty, and the Subdivision of Indian Reserves on the Canadian Prairies” (M.A. thesis, Canadian Plains Studies, University of Regina, 1999), 29-73.

¹⁹⁸ Department of Indian Affairs, RG10, Volume 6823, File 494-15-2, Pt.1, Letter from Ethel Carr, Secretary-Treasurer of the Moose Jaw Humane Society to the Saskatchewan SPCA in Regina, 21 November 1938.

¹⁹⁹ Department of Indian Affairs, RG10, Volume 6823, File 494-15-2, Pt.1. Letter from the General Manager of the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Toronto, to the Minister of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, 25 February 1939. The Moose Jaw Humane Society letter to the Minister of Indian Affairs also specified that complaints were made by “tourist visitors” as well as residents. See, Letter from Ethel Carr, secretary-treasurer of the Moose Jaw Humane Society to the Minister of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, 21 February 1939.

²⁰⁰ Department of Indian Affairs, RG10, Volume 6823, File 494-15-2, Pt.1. News clipping, “Want Better Treatment for Horses, Dogs – Humane Society has Complaints Against Indians,” *Regina Leader*, 14 January 1939.

²⁰¹ Department of Indian Affairs, RG10, Volume 6823, File 494-15-2, Pt.1. Letter from J.W.S. Vandeleur, General Manager of the CSPCA to R. A. Hoey, Esq., Superintendent of Welfare and Training, Department of Mines and Resources, Ottawa, 29 November 1938. The secretary of the British Columbia SPCA in Victoria wrote to the Department of Indian Affairs, see, Letter from A.R. Sherwood, secretary-treasurer of the British Columbia SPCA in Victoria to the Department of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, 3 February 1939.

condition. It was even suggested that the Indian Act be amended to make Indians liable under the anti-cruelty to animals statute but it was ascertained that “Indians are subject to the provisions of the Criminal Code just as much as are white people.”²⁰²

The great majority of Indian Agents argued that no such cruelty was practiced by Indians. The Indian Agent for Williams Lake argued that he had “no personal knowledge of any widespread ill-treatment of stock by Indians.”²⁰³ The Agent from Vanderhoof B.C. interviewed two farming instructors who both gave “definite statements that the Indian stock on the whole is much better cared for than the average stock belonging to white settlers.”²⁰⁴ The Indian Agent from Telegraph Creek B.C. wrote that “during over thirty years traveling the North with the Dogs as far north as one can get – very little abuse of dogs by their Indian owners has been encountered. However it is admitted that several cases have been known where Half-breeds have treated their dogs badly, but that is almost to be expected. The worst case ever to come my way was that of a White [sic] Ex College Lad who went wild in the North.”²⁰⁵ The Agent from Lytton B.C. argued that “while the treatment of animals by the Indians is not all that could be desired, it would perhaps be more to the point if the white owners of animals were more humane in their treatment, thereby creating an incentive for the Indians to do likewise.” As an example, he cited the winter of 1936-37 when “the Indian cattle were supplied with an adequate amount of feed while stock belonging to the white ranchers actually starved to death.” While he did not “praise the treatment that Indian dogs receive” (finding them rather cowardly and underfed), he thought the general condition of the animals in the agency was excellent and was interested in taking the SPCA letter writer on a tour to “show her

²⁰² Department of Indian Affairs, RG10, Volume 6823, File 494-15-2, Pt.1. Letter from H. E. Taylor, Indian Agent, Williams Lake B.C. to Major D. M. Mackay, Indian Commissioner for B. C., Vancouver, 23 December 1939.

²⁰³ Department of Indian Affairs, RG10, Volume 6823, File 494-15-2, Pt.1. Letter from H. E. Taylor, Indian Agent, Williams Lake B.C. to Major D. M. Mackay, Indian Commissioner for B. C., Vancouver, 23 December 1939.

²⁰⁴ Department of Indian Affairs, RG10, Volume 6823, File 494-15-2, Pt.1. Letter from R.H. Moore, Indian Agent, Vanderhoof B.C. to D.M. Mackay, Indian Commissioner for B.C., 23 December 1938.

²⁰⁵ Department of Indian Affairs, RG10, Volume 6823, File 494-15-2, Pt.1. Letter from Harper Reed, Indian Agent, Telegraph Creek, B.C., to Major D. M. Mackay, Indian Commissioner for B. C., Vancouver, 16 January 1939.

where she is decidedly mistaken.”²⁰⁶ Only the Indian Agent in Prince Rupert submitted a negative report.²⁰⁷ From the majority of these reports, it is clear that there was no widespread or systematic cruelty to animals by Indians in the “west.” Local agents often argued that it was whites who were cruel and neglectful, or that white treatment of animals could be improved - yet it was not white ranchers who were the focus of these complaints. It is possible that when these visitors looked at Indians’ treatment of animals, their view was filtered through lenses refracted by knowledge contained in generations of colonial texts alluding to Indian and Métis cruelty. These lenses left real cruelty unnamed and unpoliced.

Conclusions

The anti-cruelty to animals movement was spearheaded by the male business and political elite and middle class of Montreal. Its two most public figures, the secretary and the humane inspector, were also men. The people charged with cruelty to animals were men, but they were men of a different social class, with fewer material means as well as less social and cultural capital (whether because of the nature of their work, their accent, their age, their faith, or their mode of living). Boys and male youth were eyed suspiciously as particularly vulnerable to committing acts of cruelty to animals. I have also suggested that prevalent cruelties such as overloading and working horses with sores were present at home and rhetorically projected abroad and onto “the other.” Cruelty to animals was framed by the language of nation and civilization, and worked to hierarchically rank men and animals. In the name of anti-cruelty to animals, the SPCA movement solidified unequal and unethical power relations between men of different social and cultural ranks.

In later chapters we return to the history of animals in the third quarter of the nineteenth-century and explore white narratives about the destruction of the buffalo. It is

²⁰⁶ Department of Indian Affairs, RG10, Volume 6823, File 494-15-2, Pt.1. Letter from A. Strang, Indian Agent, Lytton, B.C., to Major D. M. Mackay, Indian Commissioner for B. C., Vancouver, 30 December 1938.

²⁰⁷ He wrote that “dogs were left to starve in the villages whilst the owners are absent in the canneries, as far as cattle are concerned, Indians have been known to leave them unfed most of the winter with the result that in the spring they are so weak, they die.” See, Department of Indian Affairs, RG10, Volume 6823, File 494-15-2, Pt.1. Letter from W. E. Collinson, Indian Agent, Prince Rupert, to Major D. M. Mackay, Indian Commissioner for B. C., Vancouver, 3 January 1939.

a curious and sad fact that on the one hand, certain animals came to be protected at the very moment that other animals were destroyed. Clearly the key appears to be the status distinction between domestic and wild animals. Civilized man's inclination to protect the dwindling herds of buffalo arose only once "he [had] destroyed them."²⁰⁸ Nonetheless, dominant discourses ascribed both stewardship (the husbanding of resources and thrift), and humanity to animals, to the civilized. Cruelty and waste characterized savages. These contradictory historical threads have been interwoven in many different ways by white writers negotiating the fact that despite all his apparent civility, civilized man was the savage hunter.

Before continuing with the history of the treatment of animals, in the next chapter we turn our gaze to civilized man's humanity to man in Montreal in these years. Although protective legislation for both animals and children was passed in 1869, the local anti-cruelty to animals organization preceded a similar organization for the protection of children by thirteen years. Nonetheless, once established the two movements had much in common, including that they were both male-led and male-only organizations. Poverty was just as central to the movement for the protection of children as it was to the anti-cruelty to animals movement. Instead of charities providing adequate resources for families in need, poor parents continued to place their children in institutions in order to make provision for them. I suggest that at the heart of this humanitarian age was a hardening of attitudes toward the poor. It did not bode well for man or beast.

²⁰⁸ In his 1899 book on the white buffalo hunter Buffalo Jones, Henry Inman wrote that Buffalo Jones "did his full share toward the extermination of the buffalo, partly because his necessity was greater than theirs; but even as he destroyed them, he grew to know and regret their fate; and as they faded away from the range, and it became certain that soon they would be gone forever, no heart was fuller of regret than his, and no mind so full of expedients to rescue them." In 1892 Buffalo Jones bought the buffalo herd owned by the warden of the Stony Mountain Penitentiary in Manitoba for \$25 000. See, Henry Inman, *Buffalo Jones' Forty Years of Adventure* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1899), 91 and 236.

Chapter Two

The Centrality of Poverty to the Rise of the Movement for the Protection of Children in 1870s and 1880s Montreal

This chapter takes up the question of “man’s humanity to man” in industrializing Montreal during the 1870s and 1880s, in the years following the establishment of the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA). Instead of expanding the circle of compassion embracing both man and beast, there was, I suggest, a hardening of attitudes toward the poor. Narratives in the English Montreal daily press “scorned the poor man as a thief.”¹ Vagrancy legislation was amended, tripling the penalty for begging and homelessness. Local philanthropic organizations implemented work for food polices to ensure that no one evaded work. Philanthropists defined kindness as giving a man work rather than giving him bread.² In this ideological, economic and political context, Protestant philanthropists presented arguments for the protection of children from their impoverished parents. The rise of the protection of children was part of contemporary philanthropic responses to poverty and to poor families in particular.³

Beginning in the 1970s, historians argued that nineteenth-century child-savers believed that child neglect would lead to the children’s potential future criminality and danger to society.⁴ More recently, some historians of child-saving suggest that the

¹ Chumbawamba, “Song of the Times,” *English Rebel Songs 1391-1914* (1989).

<http://www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Basement/8448/cwlers2.html>

² Editorial, *Montreal Daily Witness*, 15 March 1879, 4.

³ Jacques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979).

⁴ Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978; Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), 96-97. Citations are from the Wilfrid Laurier University Press edition. Sutherland explains “Whether most or even many neglected children of the time actually did go on to lead lives on the edge of or beyond the law would be very difficult to prove. One can, however, say with assurance that police, prison officers, and charitable workers were environmentalists; they believed that most of those who became paupers, drunkards, or criminals came from the ranks of children who were neglected, delinquent, or dependent on the state. As the Hon. T. W. Anglin, a member of the 1890 Ontario Royal Commission, accurately summarized their evidence, ‘a large number of witnesses’ who appeared before the commissioners stated that those who ultimately became the worst kind of criminals, many first fell into bad habits because their education was neglected, because they were ‘allowed to run at large in the streets,’ and had ‘not been subject to proper parental control and training. These citizens saw, in turn, a close relationship between poverty and neglect.’” Susan E. Houston argues “The distinction in states between *neglected* and *criminal* in effect translated as *potentially* vs. *actually* criminal. From the reformers’ point of view, the neglect and destitution from which these children suffered stemmed not so much from a want of material resources as of the exercise of proper parental authority and the virtues of order, diligence, and obedience on which the

movement for the protection of children was also based on “the stigmatization and hectoring of the children’s parents”⁵ or “on the criminal character of parents.”⁶ The findings in this chapter find resonance with both new and older historiographical traditions and interpretations. Evidence demonstrates that philanthropists were concerned that these children were in danger/ endangered as well as potentially dangerous. I also show that the stigmatization and criminalization of the unemployed and needy adult poor had consequences for their children. Representations and discourses about “unnatural” or “drunken parents” who sent their children out to beg functioned to legitimize the violation of the “natural rights” of parents. Children who were not considered to be under “proper guardianship,” were sent to industrial schools under the Quebec Industrial Schools Acts of 1869 and its 1884 amendment.⁷

social fabric depended.” More recently, Xiaobei Chen has argued that “the protection of children became recognized as the best way to prevent crime, by ‘reaching children before they were altogether corrupt.’” See, Susan E. Houston, “Victorian Origins of Juvenile Delinquency: A Canadian Experience,” *History of Education Quarterly* 12 (Fall 1972), 263. See also, Susan E. Houston, “The ‘Waifs and Strays’ of a Late Victorian City: Juvenile Delinquents in Toronto,” in *Childhood and Family in Canadian History*, Joy Parr ed. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1983): 129-142; Xiaobei Chen, *Tending the Gardens of Citizenship: Child-Saving in Toronto, 1880s-1920s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 37.

⁵ Bruce Bellingham, “The ‘Unspeakable Blessing’: Street Children, Reform Rhetoric, and Misery in Early Industrial Capitalism,” *Politics and Politics* 12 no. 3 (1983), 303. In the Quebec context, the problem was attributed “aux déficiences des parents.” See, Jean-Marie Fecteau, Sylvie Ménard, Jean Trépanier, Véronique Strimelle, “Une politique de l’enfance délinquante et en danger: La mise en place des écoles de réforme et d’industrie au Québec (1840-1873),” *Crime, Histoire et Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies* 1, no.2 (hiver, 1998), 85.

⁶ Robert Adamoski, “‘Charity is One Thing and the Administration of Justice is Another’: Law and Politics of Familial Regulation in Early Twentieth-Century British Columbia,” in *Regulating Lives: Historical Essays on the State, Society, the Individual and the Law*, John McLaren, Robert Menzies and Dorothy Chunn eds., (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002), 155. See also, Tamara Myers, “The Voluntary Delinquent: Parents, Daughters, and the Montreal Juvenile Delinquents’ Court in 1918,” *Canadian Historical Review* 88, 2 (June 1999), 266; Paul-A. Crepeau and John E. C. Brierley, eds., *Code Civil – Civil Code: 1866-1980: Édition historique et critique – An Historical and Critical Edition* (Montréal: Société Québécoise D’Information Juridique, 1981), Article 243, 113. Earlier historians have shown that reformers collapsed child neglect with children’s potential future criminality. See, Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978; Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), 96-97; Susan E. Houston, “Victorian Origins of Juvenile Delinquency: A Canadian Experience,” *History of Education Quarterly* 12 (Fall 1972), 263; Susan E. Houston, “The ‘Waifs and Strays’ of a Late Victorian City: Juvenile Delinquents in Toronto,” in *Childhood and Family in Canadian History*, Joy Parr ed. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1983): 129-142.

⁷ *An Act Respecting Industrial Schools, Statutes of Quebec* 1869, c. 17 & *An Act to amend the act 32 Victoria, chapter 17, concerning Industrial Schools, Statutes of Quebec* 1884, c. 23. *Industrial Schools, Revised Quebec Statutes* 1888, c. 3, s. 3140. See, Renée Joyal, *Les enfants, la société et L’État au Québec, 1608-1989* (Montréal: Éditions Hurtubise, 1999); Renée Joyal, “L’Acte concernant les écoles d’industrie (1869): Une mesure de prophylaxie sociale dans un Québec en voie d’urbanisation,” dans *Entre surveillance et compassion: L’évolution de la protection de l’enfance au Québec, Des origines à nos jours*, Renée Joyal dir., (Sainte-Foy, Québec: Presses de l’Université du Québec, 2000):35-48; Renée Joyal,

This work contributes to the literature on child-saving by situating the rise of the movement for the protection of children in Montreal within the rubric of responses to poverty. For Protestant Anglophone middle class Montrealers, like child-savers elsewhere in the Anglo-American world, concepts of cruelty to children and neglect were constituted predominantly by ideas about poverty rather than about physical violence or abuse.⁸ Although these Societies were framed in terms of the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and memorialized in histories of “family violence” – parents’ physical cruelty is marginal to this history. Linda Gordon in her book on the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children argues, based on a sample taken from one month’s work in 1891, that “there was no assault, nor any images of the kind of cruelty that awakened the passions of child-saving and dominated MSPCC publicity. [Instead the case files] might be vignettes of ordinary daily life among the very poor.”⁹

The question of physical violence is less self-evident. While some contemporaries came to espouse an anti-corporal punishment position, it remained in persistent use– even among some child-savers.¹⁰ In her work on the Toronto Children’s

“L’*évolution des modes de contrôle de l’autorité parentale et son impact sur les relations entre parents et enfants dans la société québécoise,*” dans *Entre tradition et universalisme*, Françoise-Romaine Ouellette et Claude Bariteau dirs., (Québec: Institute Québécoise de Recherche sur la Culture, 1994):245-258.

Donzelot, in his analysis of the “transfer of sovereignty from the ‘morally deficient’ family to the body of philanthropic notables, magistrates, and children’s doctors” cites an 1889 French Law which “determined that ‘fathers and mothers through their habitual drunkenness, their notorious and scandalous misconduct, or through ill treatment, compromise the safety, health, or morality of their children’ would face loss of parental authority.” Note that drunkenness is the first on the list. Donzelot, *The Policing of Families*, 83-84.

⁸ According to Reginald Bray, who lived and studied among the poor of London observed, deliberate cruelty was rare.” See, Parr, *Labouring Children*, 63.

⁹ Linda Gordon, *Heroes of their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence- Boston 1880-1960* (New York: Penguin, 1988), 71. Janice Harvey makes a similar argument for Montreal. She writes, “The cases...told the common tale of extreme poverty and of families unable to overcome the crises of unemployment, illness, family breakdown or the death of a spouse. The chronic poverty presented in these cases testified to the terrible circumstances under which so many Montreal families were forced to live.” Harvey, “Poverty and the Law,” 7.

¹⁰ Marie-Aimée Cliche, “‘Qui bene amat bene castigat’: Le débat sur les punitions corporelles dans les revues pédagogique du Québec, 1857-1964 ,” *Historical Studies in Education / Revue d’histoire de l’éducation* 11 no. 2 (1999): 147-69. In Cliche’s analysis of English and French articles, 46% of French articles were anti-corporal punishment in comparison to 24% of the English articles. She suggests that this may reflect influence of the 1803 legislation in France that prohibited corporal punishment in schools. In her work on L’ Institut Saint-Antoine, the Catholic reform school established in 1873 Montreal, Sylvie Ménard argues that the frères de la Charité “ont régulièrement recours aux punitions corporelles, malgré les recommandations de l’archevêque de Montréal.” In her work on the Toronto Boys’ Home, Sara Posen cites several examples where parents removed their children from their home because they were beaten or “otherwise unkindly treated.” See, Sylvie Ménard, *Des enfants sous surveillance: La reéducation des jeunes délinquants au Québec (1840-1950)*, Montréal: VLB Éditeur, 2003), 204; Sara Posen, “Examining Policy from the ‘Bottom Up’: The Relationship between Parents, Children, and the Managers at the

Aid Society, Xiaobei Chen argues that these child-savers believed that for “wayward children, the use of physical force was justified and categorized [it] as corporal punishment, not cruelty.”¹¹ In Quebec, corporal punishment in schools was suppressed only in 1971.¹² Parental authority was invested with the right “to correct the child with moderation and within reason,” which was reaffirmed in the 1977 Quebec civil code, almost a hundred years after the Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children (SPWC) was established.¹³ Rather than physical violence, more centrally, then as now, “the connection between child neglect and poverty is irrefutable.”¹⁴

In Montreal, between 1883 and 1921, poverty was “the most prominent reason” for the admission of protestant children into the Ladies Benevolent Industrial School.¹⁵ According to Janice Harvey, the city of Montreal used the 1869 Industrial Schools Act¹⁶ “to enable it to deal with the rising need for social services among the city poor. It did this by placing children in these institutions thereby reducing cost for their families.”¹⁷

Toronto Boys' Home, 1859-1920,” in *Family Matters: Papers in Post-Confederation Family History*, Lori Chambers and Edgar-Andre Montigny eds. (Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press, 1998), 10. See also, Marie-Aimée Cliche, “Est-ce une bonne méthode pour élever les enfants?: Le débat sur les punitions corporelles dans les couriers du coeur au Québec de 1925 a 1969,” *Canadian Historical Review* 82, 4 (December 2001): 662-689. Sylvie Ménard, *Des enfants sous surveillance: La reeducation des jeunes delinquants au Québec (1840-1950)*, Montréal: VLB Éditeur, 2003), 204.

¹¹ Xiaobei Chen, “‘Cultivating Children as You Would Valuable Plants:’ The Gardening Governmentality of Child-Saving, Toronto, Canada, 1880s-1920s,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 16 no. 4 (December 2003), 481. Chen explains that “with some children, it was believed that only bodily pain was effective and should be condoned, even if it was contrary to the [child saving] ideal of proper technologies of child-rearing.” Chen, *Tending the Gardens of Citizenship*, 33-34.

¹² Marie-Aimée Cliche, “‘Qui bene amat bene castigat’, 148.

¹³ Paul-A. Crepeau and John E. C. Brierley, eds., *Code Civil – Civil Code: 1866-1980*, Article 245b, 114.

¹⁴ Richard Sullivan, “Commentary,” in response to Andrew Armitage, “Lost Vision: Children and the Ministry for Children and Families,” *BC Studies*, 118 (Summer 1998), 113.

¹⁵ Harvey's analysis of files of “828 children for whom applications for admission to the LBS [Ladies Benevolent Society] industrial school were processed by the court, reveals that most of these cases were before the Recorder Court as a direct result of the parents' inability to provide support. The majority of the parents in question were widows and women deserted by their husbands, left alone with several young children to support and only limited means. The files include almost no comments on abusive family situations and even comments in relation to parental immorality or problem children are rare.” Harvey argues “that the city itself recognized poverty as the predominant cause behind industrial school admission requests.” Janice Harvey, “Poverty and the Law: The Recorder Court of the City of Montreal and Industrial School Admissions,” paper presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, York University May 2006, 5.

¹⁶ *An Act Respecting Industrial Schools, Statutes of Quebec 1869*, c. 17 & *An Act to amend the act 32 Victoria, chapter 17, concerning Industrial Schools, Statutes of Quebec 1884*, c. 23.

¹⁷ Janice Harvey, “Poverty and the Law: The Recorder Court of the City of Montreal and Industrial School Admissions,” Abstract. Canadian Historical Association, York University, May 2006.

This social assistance involved the institutionalization¹⁸ of children rather than providing aid to families in need in their homes. Harvey's work supports my arguments about the centrality of poverty rather than cruelty to this early child-saving work as well as the predominance of single mothers among more vulnerable parents in need of assistance.¹⁹ Years earlier, in her study of British immigrant children to Canada, Joy Parr concluded that "a family income supplement" would have allowed many of those children admitted to various charitable homes "on economic grounds" to live in their own homes and would have "saved mothers from resorting to prostitution."²⁰ After its third year in operation, at its annual meeting in 1885, the Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children noted the continued "misapprehension of their object as they received frequent applications for charity."²¹ This misapprehension indicates that people in need conceived of access to resources as the best way to protect women and children, enabling families to make ends meet and stay together. Philanthropists, as we will see, had other ideas about how best to help suffering humanity.

Poor parents continued to board their children in local charitable institutions in times of need and crisis, and some parents turned to the SPWC to help them deal with their "incurable" children, but there was also considerable unsolicited intervention, especially during the SPWC's enthusiastic interventionist beginning. The SPWC detective walked the streets of the "slums" and entered the rooms and "hovels" of the poor in search of children. He charged them with vagrancy, or for not being under proper

¹⁸ See, Jean-Marie Fecteau, Sylvie Ménard, Marie-Josée Tremblay, Jean Trépanier, Véronique Strimelle, "Émergence et évolution historique de l'enfermement à Montréal, 1836-1913," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 46, no. 2 (automne 1992): 263-271. Andrew Jones argues that alongside foster care, institutions continued to have a place in the work of child-saving and reform. See, Andrew Jones, "'Closing Penetanguishene Reformatory': An Attempt to Deinstitutionalize Treatment of Juvenile Offenders in Early Twentieth Century Ontario," *The Ontario Historical Society* 70, no. 4 (1978): 227-244; On the importance of industrial schools, see, Bryan Holgeveen, "'The Evils with which we are Called to Grapple': Elite Reformers, Eugenicists, Environmental Psychologists, and the Construction of Toronto's Working-Class Boy Problem, 1860-1930" *Labour / Le Travail* 55 (Spring 2005), 47 and 56; Derek G. Smith, "The 'Policy of Aggressive Civilization' and Projects of Governance in Roman Catholic Industrial Schools for Native Peoples in Canada, 1870-95," *Anthropologica* XLIII (2001): 253-271.

¹⁹ Harvey, "Poverty and the Law," 7. For the predominance of single mothers among parents of girls admitted to the Bon Pasteur industrial school, See Véronique Strimelle, "La gestion de la déviance des filles et les institutions du Bon Pasteur à Montréal (1869-1912)" (Thèse de doctorat, École de criminology, Université de Montréal, 1998), 207.

²⁰ Joy Parr, *Labouring Children: British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada 1869-1924* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1980), 77.

²¹ "Protecting Women and Children: Annual Meeting of the Society in the Natural History Rooms," *Montreal Star*, 24 January 1885, 4.

guardianship, and brought them before the Recorder who sentenced them, most often, to years in one of several institutions.²² Although recent historiography focuses on the agency of historical subjects,²³ this work is concerned with the larger ideological, legislative and institutional context which people in need had to negotiate as they struggled to take care of themselves and their children. In the context of the protection of children, evidence suggests that poor parents, often single mothers, lost their children to institutions²⁴ principally because of a lack of resources,²⁵ and children's power to negotiate and participate in the world in autonomous ways was considerably undercut in the name of their protection.

Situating the history of the movement for the protection of children within a history of poverty is also to situate it within a history of work. The demise of the family economy, the emerging centrality of wage labour, the advent of the ideal of the male

²² National Archives, Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children, MG 28, series I129, Minute Book 1882-1891: 28, 56, 41, 89.

²³ Linda Gordon focuses on the agency of the clients of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and argues that "the objects of social control themselves asked for intervention from child protection agencies." See, Gordon, *Heroes of their Own Lives*, 6. Recent Canadian studies demonstrate that although some parents did approach agencies for help with their children, state or society initiated intervention did constitute a significant percentage of unsolicited intervention. For instance consider Tamara Myers work on girls' parents use of the Montreal Juvenile Delinquents' Courts in 1918. Girls made up only one fifth of the cases: the total number of new cases for the year being 1105 and of the 181 cases involving girls, family members initiated 101 or 56%. This still leaves 44% which were not family initiated. Was the ratio for family initiated cases higher for girls than boys? Dorothy Chunn in her essay "Boys will be Men, Girls will be Mothers: The Legal Regulation of Childhood in Toronto and Vancouver," suggests that girls were brought before these courts predominantly for violating norms of sexuality rather than boys' infractions in relation to crimes of property. Chunn's statistics suggest an even wider gap between state and family initiated proceedings against youth. "Thus, between 1929 and 1933, more than a quarter of admissions – 438 of 1, 623 – to Ontario training and industrial schools were the result of voluntary application by mothers and fathers." In this case about 70% were not parent initiated cases. See, Tamara Myers, "The Voluntary Delinquent: Parents, Daughters and the Montreal Juvenile Delinquents' Court in 1918," *Canadian Historical Review* 80, 2 (June 1999), 242-268; Dorothy Chunn, "Boys Will Be Men, Girls Will Be Mothers: The Legal Protection of Childhood in Toronto and Vancouver," in *Histories of Canadian Children and Youth*, Nancy Janovicek and Joy Parr, eds., (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2003): 202. The inclusion of parents as factors in cases of "delinquent girls" was pioneered by Mary E. Odem, *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995). In her work on the Montreal Juvenile Delinquents' Courts, Myers concedes that "children's rights fell victim" to state intervention, reform school administrators and parents' prerogatives. Myers, "The Voluntary Delinquent," 268.

²⁴ Janice Harvey, "Poverty and the Law," Gordon, *Heroes of their own Lives*, 92. For the predominance of single mothers among parents of girls admitted to the Bon Pasteur industrial school., see Véronique Strimelle, "La gestion de la déviance des filles et les institutions du Bon Pasteur à Montréal (1869-1912)" (Thèse de doctorat, École de criminology, Université de Montréal, 1998), 207.

²⁵ In her study of the Montreal Catholic girls reformatory and industrial schools, Veronique Strimelle writes, that girls placed in institutions "sont rarement sans famille et elles sont souvent placées en institution par manque des ressources des parents." Strimelle, "La gestion de la déviance des filles, 217.

breadwinner coincided with the emergence of ideas about childhood as a stage of innocence and enforced dependence.²⁶ I suggest that these ideas may have made children more vulnerable. Children were key contributors to the family economy as producers as well as providing other informal strategies of support.²⁷ With the rise of new ideas about childhood and the invention of adolescence, children also became more dependent on the adults around them, becoming liabilities rather than assets to their families. Interestingly, the movement for the protection of children did not include an anti-child labour position. Indeed industrial schools were premised on “the pedagogy of work.”²⁸ In the name of protection, only some types of “degrading occupations”²⁹ were stigmatized.³⁰ As we saw in the last chapter, the CSPCA campaigned against the employment of male youth in animal-related industries. The Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children, like others in the child protection movement, agitated against youthful newspaper vendors, or newsboys, for whom it argued that “poverty was no excuse.”³¹ These children’s entrepreneurial spirit and hard work was not saluted but castigated and condemned. In her work on the Philadelphia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (SPCC), Sheri Broder explains that “many of the survival strategies of the chronic poor – begging, scavenging, pawning clothes and household goods, participating

²⁶ P. Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York: Vintage Press, 1962). Rooke and Schnell’s criteria for the emerging concept of childhood entailed protection, segregation, dependence, delayed responsibilities and rescue and restraint. See, Patricia T. Rooke and R. L. Schnell, “Childhood and Charity.” See also, Steven Maynard, “‘Horrible Temptations’: Sex, Men and Working Class Male Youth in Urban Ontario, 1890-1935,” *Canadian Historical Review* 78, no. 2 (June 1997): 191-235.

²⁷ See Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993).

²⁸ Derek G. Smith, “The ‘Policy of Aggressive Civilization’ and Projects of Governance in Roman Catholic Industrial Schools for Native Peoples in Canada, 1870-95,” 257.

²⁹ John Bullen argues that in Ontario children were removed from their homes and placed in foster homes where they were “unpaid or underpaid servants.” Children’s Aid Society officials were well aware that “‘large proportions’ of foster parents did not want a child to love and care for and bring up as one of their own, but a slave from whom they may enforce work without having to pay wages.” See, Bullen, “J.J. Kelso and the New Child-Savers,” 121-22. On industrial schools and “the pedagogy of work,” see Derek G. Smith, “The ‘Policy of Aggressive Civilization’”, 257. See also, Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, Society for the Protection of Women and Children, The Society for the Protection of Women and Children, Montreal. Quebec with which is affiliated the Montreal Legal Aid Bureau Inc.: a history of seventy-five years’ operations in the service of the community,” (Montreal? 1957?), 9.

³⁰ See, “Protection of Women and Children,” *Montreal Star*, 12 June 1889, 2. National Archives, Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children, MG 28, series I129, Minute Book 1882-1891, 17 February 1888, 74; 12 February 1889, 82-83. The SPWC resolved to write to parents, whose children worked in the streets, especially for girls under the age of ten, and warn parents that “unless the practice be discontinued they will be proceeded against.”

³¹ “Protection of Women and Children,” *Montreal Star*, 12 June 1889, 2.

in the street trades, petty theft, and casual prostitution – by definition constituted child abuse to SPCC agents, rendering poor families vulnerable to unsolicited intervention.”³² As children’s ability to contribute to the family economy was undercut, they may have become more vulnerable as a result. It is ironic that new ideas about childhood as a time of innocence and enforced dependence, which transformed children from contributors to dependents within families, placed these children under threat of arrest, removal and years of detention.

Race and Faith

Language illuminating the role of faith, ethnicity and race is muted in the archival record that I have examined.³³ But faith was instrumental in the unfolding of this history. In the 1870s and 1880s in industrializing Montreal, the elite was composed of a small minority of Protestant Anglophones and “the working class as a whole was predominantly Catholic,” (although current historiography also shows that “Montreal’s emerging proletariat included French Canadians and English and Scottish immigrants as well as the Irish.”)³⁴ The Industrial Schools Act made provision for children to be placed in institutions “in accordance with their religious persuasion.”³⁵ Catholic reformatory institutions were the first to be established: in 1870 an industrial and reform school was founded by the Soeurs de Bon-Pasteur d’Angers for Catholics girls,³⁶ in 1873, the Frères de la Charité took on the work of a reform school for Catholic boys at their Institute Saint

³² Sherri Broder, *Tramps, Unfit Mothers, and Neglected Children: Negotiating the Family in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 77.

³³ In her 2005 book, *Tending the Gardens of Citizenship: Child-Saving in Toronto, 1880s-1920s*, Xiaobei Chen argues that “‘race’ seldom appeared in texts on child saving or the records of the Toronto’s Children’s Aid Society. This, however, did not mean that race was an irrelevant concept, since it underlay notions such as ‘nation-building’ or ‘national strength’ – codes that denoted the Anglo-Celtic race.” Chen explains that in Toronto, Catholics and Protestants had their own institutions (as in Montreal). According to Chen, “because of the separate systems [the Catholic St. Vincent de Paul Children’s Aid Society and the protestant Toronto CAS], in Toronto religious division and discrimination were not reflected in the case numbers, unlike the situation in Boston, for example, where Roman Catholics, were mostly Irish and Italian immigrants, were disproportionately over-represented in caseloads, as Linda Gordon has documented.... The vast majority of cases dealt with by the Toronto’s Children’s Aid Society involved children and families of working-class Anglo-Celtic background.” Chen, *Tending the Gardens of Citizenship*, 15.

³⁴ Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1993), 40 and 43.

³⁵ *An Act Respecting Industrial Schools, Statutes of Quebec 1869*, c. 17, s. 17.

³⁶ Veronique Strimelle, “Les origines des premières institutions d’enfermement pour les filles au Québec (1857-1869): Émergence de nouveaux enjeux politiques?” *Bulletin d’histoire politique* 6, no. 2 (hiver 1998): 30-39.

Antoine,³⁷ sometimes called Belgian Brothers or the Mignonne Street reformatory by the English press.³⁸ As we will see, English Protestants called for the establishment of their own industrial schools throughout the 1870s. The Ladies Benevolent Society became a certified Industrial School for Protestant youth in 1883, overcoming its hesitation over “the potential problems associated with forced admissions.”³⁹ 1883 also marked the establishment of the Catholic industrial school at Lévis, Québec. Clearly the industrial school movement had both Catholic and Protestant proponents.

According to the records of the Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children (SPWC), between 1882 and 1885 alone 240 children were sent to “various institutions in the city.”⁴⁰ The Recorder’s Court annual reports provide evidence of the institutionalization of 183 children in those years. (See Appendix B). According to Janice Harvey, 116 children were sent by the Recorder to the Ladies Benevolent Society (LBS) as the Protestant industrial school from 1883 to 1900.⁴¹ The discrepancy in the number of children sent to industrial schools from the various sources and the fact Catholics made up 70% of Montreal’s population make it difficult to reach any conclusions with certainty. Nonetheless, the number of arrests and convictions from these early activist years suggest that Catholic children may have been over-represented

³⁷ Sylvie Ménard, *Des enfants sous surveillance: La reeducation des jeunes delinquents au Québec* (Montreal: VLB Éditeur, 2003); Peter Howard Martin, “To Correct their Faults and Reform their Corrupt Souls: A Portrait of Two Quebec Reformatory Schools, 1873-1924,” (Masters Thesis, Concordia University, 1986).

³⁸ When the Catholic boys were to be removed by the “Belgian Brothers” from St. Vincent de Paul to the Berthelot Building, Mignonne street, The *Montreal Daily Witness* lamented that no provision had yet been made for Protestant boys. The newspaper hoped “the Protestant community would not be guilty of a neglect of duty little in keeping with its generally enlightened and benevolent character.” See, “The Reformation of Prisoners and the Protestant School of Industry,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 7 January 1873, 2.

³⁹ Janice Harvey, “The Protestant Orphan Asylum and the Montreal Ladies Benevolent Society, 52 & 167. According to Janice Harvey, “Protestant reformatory institutions were not opened until the twentieth century. In the meantime, Protestant boys were sent to a makeshift reform school in a wing of the Sherbrooke prison in 1873 while girls went to a Catholic institution.” See, Janice Harvey, “The Protestant Orphan Asylum and the Montreal Ladies Benevolent Society: A Case Study in Protestant Child Charity in Montreal, 1822-1900,” PhD Thesis, McGill University, 2001, 54.

⁴⁰ “Protection of Women and Children: Fourth Annual Meeting of the Society Last Evening – Satisfactory Results – Election of Officers,” *Montreal Star*, 30 January 1886, 5; “Protecting Women and Children: Annual Meeting of the Society in the Natural History Rooms,” *Montreal Star*, 24 January 1885, 4; “S.P.W.C.: Mr. Stroud’s Address – Election of Officers,” *Montreal Star*, 29 January 1887, 7.

⁴¹ Harvey, “The Protestant Orphan Asylum and the Montreal Ladies Benevolent Society,” 168-169. Harvey is continuing work on her data base. More recently, Harvey suggests that 70 children were sent to the LBS as the protestant industrial school in this period. Janice Harvey, email message to me, 15 August 2006.

among those gathered in by this Protestant Society, and under the Industrial Schools Act in general. In the small sample explored in this narrative, certainly francophone names predominate among the children who were brought before the Recorder. Harvey writes that the LBS “on occasion even checked to make sure the Recorder was sending them all Protestant children.”⁴² In 1890, the SPWC inquired whether Protestant youth were being placed in Catholic institutions,⁴³ and its records suggest that Catholic poor children were disproportionately caught in the net of protection.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, these are the evidentiary limits to this aspect of the story.

Fascinatingly, when we turn to Canadian responses to suffering in the west in the last chapter of this dissertation, we will see that philanthropic strategies implemented by Canadian officials in the west were modeled on practices in vogue in the east, including work for rations and the removal of children. Catholic and Protestant missions were engaged in the residential school project in the west just as Catholic religious orders and Protestant voluntary organizations undertook the industrial school project in the Montreal. As historians have shown, reformers talked about “the slum” in the same terms as “the colony.”⁴⁵ As we will see, in Canada, practices grounded in Christianity and middle class responses to poverty in the east, were transplanted and supported as humane solutions to deal with famine conditions and suffering in the west.

Animals and Children

Innocence and vulnerability were newly acquired characteristics for both children and animals in the nineteenth-century. In her book *The Animal Estate*, Harriet Ritvo argues that animals came to be protected only once they had lost their power to transgress the law. Before the nineteenth century, animals in Europe were held responsible for

⁴² Harvey, “The Protestant Orphan Asylum and the Montreal Ladies Benevolent Society,” 168-169.

⁴³ National Archives, Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children, MG 28, series I129, Minute Book 1882-1891, 21 March 1890, 120.

⁴⁴ National Archives, Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children, MG 28, series I129, Minute Book 1882-1891, 13 January 1891, 138. At this meeting, the Society resolved to meet with “the Roman Catholic Bishop and ask his advice and counsel as to the best course to follow” in dealing with many cases in which Roman Catholic youth were involved.

⁴⁵ Douglas A. Lorimer, *Colour, Class and the Victorians: English Attitudes to the Negro in the mid-nineteenth century* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1978), 15-16; John and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1992), 42; Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 52.

crimes. They were put on trial and prosecuted.⁴⁶ In the nineteenth century, animals were no longer conceived of in these terms.⁴⁷ Just like children, animals were relegated to a realm of innocence. Ironically, this status of innocence and need of protection made both animals and children vulnerable in new ways.⁴⁸ In the emerging capitalist and industrial order, no one was answerable for their treatment of animals. Beyond the question of the protection of property rights, before the advent of the SPCA, man could treat animals with impunity.

Historically, anti-cruelty to animals societies were established before similar organizations existed for the protection of children. Montreal was no exception. The first Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) was established in 1869.⁴⁹ Thirteen years later, in 1882, the Montreal Society for the Protection of

⁴⁶ Edward Paysons Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals* (London: William Heinemann, 1906; London: Faber & Faber, 1987). *Montreal Star*, October 10, 1874, 4; "Trying Animals for Murder: Some of the Oddities of Medieval Justice," *Montreal Star*, 6 August 1884, 3.

⁴⁷ Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, 1-2.

⁴⁸ Steven Maynard argues that child savers removed boys from the streets in order to remove them from danger yet boys were more vulnerable to danger in Children's Aid Society shelters and the boy scouts "where sexual danger was best concealed." Maynard, "'Horrible Temptations': Sex, Men and Working Class Male Youth in Urban Ontario, 1890-1935," *Canadian Historical Review* 78, no.2 (June 1997): 233-234. See also, Nancy Scheper-Hughes, "Institutionalized Sex Abuse and the Catholic Church," *Small Wars: The Cultural Politics of Childhood*, Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Carolyn Sargent eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998): 295-317. For animals, modernity and industrial capitalism brought factory farming, intensified domestication, vivisection and scientific experimentation all on an unprecedented scale. These conditions were largely outside the scope of the anti-cruelty to animals movement. See, Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* 2nd ed. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1990); Marjorie Spiegel, *The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery* 2nd ed. (New York: Mirror Books, 1988); Richard Ryder, *Victims of Science* (Sussex: Centaur Press / State Mutual Book, 1983); Ruth Harrison, *Animal Machines* (London: Vincent Stuart, 1964). See also, Nicolaas Rupke, ed., *Vivisection in Historical Perspective* (London & New York: Routledge, 1990); Richard D. French, *Antivivisection and Medical Science in Victorian Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

⁴⁹ In 1876, the Nova Scotia SPCA was established in Halifax and, two years later, in 1878 it dropped "the word 'animal'" from its title and became "simply S.P.C. to all animal creation." The Canadian society for the protection of children which has received the most attention by historians is Toronto's Children's Aid Society with its famous secretary, J. J. Kelso. The Toronto Humane Society was established in 1887 for the prevention of cruelty to animals, women and children. The work was quickly divided between animals and children, with the latter work performed by the Children's Aid Society in 1891. See, McGill University Library. The Nova Scotia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty, *Ninth Annual Report*, 1885, 16. See also Judith Fingard, *The Darker Side of Life of Victorian Halifax* (Porters Lake: Pottersfield Press, 1989), 171-188; Georgia Sitara, "'Kindness, Mercy and Justice': A History of the Toronto Humane Society, 1887-1917," (Master of Arts, University of Toronto, 1994). For texts on Kelso's efforts on behalf of children, see, Xiaobei Chen, "'Cultivating Children as You Would Valuable Plants': The Gardening Governmentality of Child-Saving, Toronto, Canada, 1880s-1920s," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 16, no. 4 (December, 2003): 460-486 & Xiaobei Chen; *Tending the Gardens of Citizenship: Child-Saving in Toronto 1880s- 1920s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); Andrew Jones and Leonard Rutman, *In the Children's Aid: J. J. Kelso and Child Welfare in Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981).

Women and Children (SPWC) was established. Why were animals “protected” before children? How did the precedence of the anti-cruelty to animals movement shape the nature of child protection? As we have seen in Chapter One, the CSPCA certainly targeted the practices of the poor⁵⁰ and it would be the children of the poor, just like their animals, who would come to be seen as being in need of protection.

The SPCA preceded the protection of children for many reasons, but not because reformers cared more for animals than they did for children. As historians have shown, people impose their own meaning onto animals, such that animals embody the concerns of the day – whether it be the struggle between the middle and lower classes, the ascendancy of the middle-class, the struggle for the organization of industrial time, the impact of cruelty to animals on human onlookers in the streets, or human mastery over nature and the baser human instincts (“civilization”).⁵¹ Anti-cruelty efforts on behalf of animals were also substantially different from child-saving. When the humane inspector found horses who were worked with sores, a prevalent “cruelty,” he did one of two things to relieve the horse: the horse was prohibited from working until his sores were healed, which often resulted in the master, his family and the horse going hungry until the horse was well enough to work; or the horse was shot.⁵² No shelter, akin to that for children, was established for animals until the early years of the twentieth century. Homeless dogs were hung and shot en masse by police: they were not rescued and placed unless they were pure bred.⁵³ Another major distinction between cruelty to animals and children was that parents were expected to act “reasonably” toward their children, while no such expectation framed relations between human and non-human animals.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ James Turner, *Reckoning with the Beast: Animals, Pain and Humanity in the Victorian Mind* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1980); Brian Harrison, *Peaceable Kingdom: Stability and Change in Modern Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); Coral Lansbury, *The Old Brown Dog: Women, Workers and Vivisection in Edwardian England* (Wisconsin: Wisconsin University Press, 1985); Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures of the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

⁵¹ Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*; James Turner, *Reckoning with the Beast*, Coral Lansbury, *The Old Brown Dog*; E. S. Turner, *All Heaven in a Rage*.

⁵² “Cruelty to Animals,” *Montreal Star*, 3 November 1869, 3; “How to Shoot a Horse,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 7 January 1873, 1.

⁵³ “Dog Slaughter,” *Montreal Star*, 22 July 1869, 2; “The Man Who Killed the Cat,” *Montreal Star*, 4 August 1869, 2; “Anti-Cruelty Society,” *Montreal Star*, 10 January 1872, 1; “The Dog Days: Homeless Canines and the Police: How Unlicensed Dogs are Disposed of,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 30 June 1888, 5.

⁵⁴ Costin, “Unraveling the Mary Ellen Legend,” 203.

Despite the differences between the two movements, in Canada as in the US and Britain, men were central in both anti-cruelty efforts. As Robert Adamoski argues, efforts on behalf of anti-cruelty to animals were part of “an evolution common to many North American child-rescue figures.”⁵⁵ In Montreal, animals, children and the poor shared a number of the same “friends,” although each group also had its own respective supporters.⁵⁶ William Workman was the President of the CSPCA from its inception in 1869 until 1878. For some of those years Workman was also president of the Protestant House of Industry and Refuge. Charles Alexander was prominent in the work of the Protestant House of Industry and Refuge, the Boys’ Home, the SPWC, and he also held the position of CSPCA president from 1882 to 1905. In 1885 and 1886, for instance, G. W. Stephens MPP, Henry Lyman, George Childs, and E. Murphy were committee members for both the CSPCA and the SPWC. Although the Montreal Protestant House of Industry and Refuge did not admit children among the poor it housed after 1869, the Refuge served as the SPWC office and in 1889 served as a temporary home for children while their cases were under investigation.⁵⁷

The links between these organizations were not only a matter of overlap in some of the personnel but also in fundamental ideologies. At a basic level, these organizations shared a language of help. Ideas, language and rhetoric, impulses and practices blended from one institution to the other. These humanitarian efforts on behalf of the poor, children and animals were premised on the perceived need to inculcate habits of self-control and self-regulation among the dangerous classes of all ages. In general the philanthropists approached human need by helping a man to help himself. The motto of

⁵⁵ Adamoski, “‘Charity is One Thing and the Administration of Justice is Another,’ 147. Xiaobei Chen makes a similar point in “‘Cultivating Children as You Would Valuable Plants,’” 461. In Toronto, Industrial School promoters were early advocates of the anti-cruelty to animals movement - supporters of the 1874-78 Ontario SPCA, predecessor of its more famous and enduring descendant the Toronto Humane Society and its offspring Canada’s first Children’s Aid Society. W. H. Howland and Goldwin Smith were active in the OSPCA as well as key advocates for industrial schools. On their involvement regarding industrial schools see, Hogeveen, “‘The Evils with Which We are Called to Grapple,’” 47. For their involvement in the OSPCA see, Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, *First Annual Report* 1874, 20.

⁵⁶ According to the biographers of J.J. Kelso, the secretary for the Toronto Humane Society which at its inception was meant to protect animals, women and children, there was ongoing conflict between those who wanted to focus on anti-cruelty to children and those who wanted to focus on animals. See, Jones and Rutman, *In the Children’s Aid*, 48-53; Chen, *Tending the Gardens of Citizenship*, 155n45.

⁵⁷ National Archives, Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children, MG 28, series I129, Minute Book 1882-1891, 34, 40, & 92.

the Boys' Home was "we help those who help themselves." The CSPCA motto was "we speak for those who cannot speak for themselves."⁵⁸ The SPWC's work of "protecting the weak and the helpless" was similar to the SPCA's work on behalf of animals. Because its beneficiaries were considered weak and helpless, the SPWC was cast as a "deserving Society."⁵⁹ This language of "deserving" reflects the larger philanthropic context in which supplicants were divided between the "deserving" and "undeserving" and shaped contemporary responses to suffering and need.

The anti-cruelty to animals movement, and the ideas on which it was based, established the ideological and structural supports to enable intervention in the name of the protection of children. Anti-cruelty to animals legislation shaped efforts on behalf of children by establishing a precedent for "intervention into private life".⁶⁰ It was a lateral move from policing the use of animals on the streets to policing children on the streets, and from entering a man's barn to check on his horse, to entering a wo/man's home to check on her/his children, since both were considered "property." Both the CSPCA and the SPWC, at its inception at least, used the same strategies. In the context of the "age of the inspector", where men were hired to ensure the enforcement of diverse specific regulations concerning everything from schools⁶¹ to slaughter houses,⁶² the SPCA inspector or humane officer, as he was sometimes called, set the stage for the detective hired by the SPWC to walk the streets in pursuit of "uncared for children."⁶³ The small number of constables in the local force required philanthropic societies like the SPCA

⁵⁸ Beatrice Johnston, *For Those Who Cannot Speak: A History of the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals* (Laval: Dev-Sco Publications, 1970).

⁵⁹ "A Deserving Society: Hold its Annual Meeting and Election of Officers," *Montreal Star*, 26 January 1889, 6.

⁶⁰ Timothy Gilfoyle argues that anti-cruelty to animals legislation may have also opened the door for other "moral" and political intervention into private life. See, Timothy J. Gilfoyle, "The Moral Origins of Political Surveillance: The Preventive Society in New York City, 1867-1918," *American Quarterly* 38, 4 (1986): 634-649.

⁶¹ See Bruce Curtis, *Building the Educational State* (London, Ont.: Althouse Press, 1988).

⁶² "The Meat Inspector Troubles," *Montreal Daily Witness* 30 August 1873, 2; "The Tainted Meat Nuisance," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 31 October 1873, 2; Editorial, *Montreal Star*, 23 March 1874, 3.

⁶³ National Archives, Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children, MG 28, series I129, Minute Book 1882-1891, 24 February 1882, 7. The 75 year anniversary history of the SPWC cited the argument regarding the importance of "a Society or body whose duty it is to see to the enforcement of the law." Bibliothèque et archives nationales du Québec, Society for the Protection of Women and Children, The Society for the Protection of Women and Children, Montreal. Quebec with which is affiliated the Montreal Legal Aid Bureau Inc.: a history of seventy-five years' operations in the service of the community," (Montreal? 1957?).

and SPWC to maintain their own men to police the streets with a view to enforce the standards of their respective societies. The work of the SPWC followed the SPCA method of “protection, convictions, persuasions and warnings.”⁶⁴

In its advocacy and support of a movement to “save” children from “neglectful nurses,” the *Montreal Daily Witness* reprinted a report from the New York *World* in which a correspondent recommended that

A few women should be appointed and clothed with insignia of authority, for the purpose of patrolling the squares and parks in which children, nurses and perambulators most prevail and congregate, there to detect, admonish, and if necessary cause the arrest of nurses who are caught neglecting or mistreating their tender charges. Park policemen are detailed to watch men who unduly speed their horses, and Mr. Bergh’s [the ASPCA president] assistants are certainly not slothful in investigating all charges of cruelty towards animals. Surely these make precedents enough.⁶⁵

The writer argued that this idea would “appeal to any humane person’s mind.” This article demonstrates that the SPCA served as a precedent for the protection of children and how such protection would function. Contemporaries argued that animals were protected and so should children be. Secondly, the protection should take the form of surveillance and investigation. It is important to note that it was women who worked as “nurses” and care-givers who were to be policed. Even in this instance where cruelty and neglect were imagined in middle-class families,⁶⁶ its perpetrators were imagined to be working women, much like the men who were convicted for cruelty to animals.⁶⁷

As the above report suggests, the anti-cruelty to animals movement was the springboard from which some contemporaries urged that compassion should be extended to people. As Linda Gordon argued, “the legal basis for prosecuting animal abusers existed where there were no such means against child abusers, an irony appreciated by 1870s reformers, who used it as an argument for child protection.”⁶⁸ A letter writer to the

⁶⁴ “Cruelty to Women and Children,” *Montreal Herald*, 29 January 1887, 1.

⁶⁵ “Neglectful Nurses,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 28 August 1879, 2.

⁶⁶ Similarly, in her study of marital violence in Victorian fiction, Lisa SurrIDGE argues that even when attention was drawn to middle-class family violence, symbols and language pointed to the identification of such violence with the working class.” See, SurrIDGE, *Bleak Houses*, 45.

⁶⁷ On workers arrested for cruelty to animals for instance see, “Cruelty to Animals,” *Montreal Star*, 31 July 1869, 2; “Cruelty to Animals,” *Montreal Star*, 22 October 1869, 3; “Cruelty to Animals,” *Montreal Star*, 3 November 1869, 3; “Natural History Column – Canary Story,” *Montreal Star*, 1 August 1874, 3. See, Chapter One.

⁶⁸ Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives*, 34.

Montreal Daily Witness called for “a night shelter for the homeless” on the grounds that “we extend our care to all the animal creation except man.”⁶⁹ When the Protestant *Daily Witness* rallied against the deaths of babies farmed out by the Catholic Grey Nuns,⁷⁰ the editor argued “we have a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, and young robins, calves and kittens are looked after. If a butcher wrongs a calf it is at the risk of appearing before the magistrate: but babies may be smothered, poisoned with narcotics, or rocked to death in cradles, at three dollars a month, and it is nobody’s business.”⁷¹ The *Herald* called this practice “heathenish and cruel.”⁷² While this sentiment is fueled by anti-Catholicism, it is also clear that the protection of animals paved the way for the protection of children.

The “Mary Ellen case” is perhaps the most popular example used to demonstrate that the anti-cruelty to animals movement gave birth to the movement for the protection of children.⁷³ According to popular legend,⁷⁴ in 1874, at the behest of “a charitable lady” named Ella Wheeler, Henry Bergh of New York’s American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) petitioned the court on behalf of a child, Mary Ellen. Police detectives accompanied by ASPCA Inspector Evans “went to the house and forcibly took the little girl and conveyed her to the court room of Judge Lawrence.”⁷⁵ The judge used the anti-cruelty to animals statute on behalf of the child. Lela Costin’s scholarly analysis of the Mary Ellen case has shown that Mary Ellen’s was not the worst case of cruelty to a child to be reported but that there were a number of factors which led to intervention in Mary Ellen’s case including class (read poverty), ethnicity (read

⁶⁹ W. Watson, “Night Shelter for the Homeless,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 2 February 1876.

⁷⁰ In 1875, out of 719 babies, 631 died. “The causes of this were the lack of milk and improper nursing, part of which was the failure to clean feeding bottles.” See, “Child Desertion and Baby Farming,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 17 April 1876; “Baby Farming,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 18 April, 1876; “Baby Farming in Toronto,” *Montreal Herald*, 14 May 1875, 2; “Children of the State,” *Montreal Star*, 3 May 1884, 4; See also, Peter Gossage, “Les Enfants abandonnés a Montréal au 19e siècle: la crèche D’Youville des Soeurs Grises, 1820-1871,” *Revue d’histoire de l’Amérique française*, 40, no. 4 (printemps 1987): 537-559.

⁷¹ “Protection of Infants,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 13 April 1876.

⁷² “The Death of Foundlings,” *Montreal Herald*, 4 July 1887, 4.

⁷³ Like the ASPCA in New York, in 1876 the Montreal CSPCA investigated a case of cruelty to children. See, “Atrocious Cruelty to Children,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 4 July 1876.

⁷⁴ This is the broad outline of the narrative circulated by PETA, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals in their promotional literature *The PETA Guide to Animal Liberation*. n.p., n.d..

⁷⁵ “Cruelty to Men and Animals,” *Toronto Daily Mail*, 10 April 1874.

minority), and the fact that she was being raised by guardians rather than her parents.⁷⁶ Hence when “Detectives McDougal and Dusenbury of the [police] Central Office, accompanied by Officer Evans of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, went to the house and forcibly took the little girl,”⁷⁷ they were not transgressing the power of a parent over their child. Mary Ellen’s “pseudo parents” also failed to meet middle-class material standards.⁷⁸ She told the court:

My name is Mary Ellen McCormack; I don’t know how old I am; my mother and father are both dead; I have no recollection of a time when I did not live with the Connollys; I call Mrs. Connolly mamma; I have never had but one pair of shoes, but cannot recollect when that was; I have had no shoes or stockings on this winter; I have never been allowed to go out of the room where the Connollys live except in the night time, and then only in the yard; I have never had a particle of flannel; my bed at night is only a piece of carpet, stretched on the floor, underneath a window, and I sleep in my undergarment with a quilt over me; I am never allowed to play with other children or have any company whatever; mamma (Mrs. Connolly) has been in the habit of whipping and beating me almost every

⁷⁶ Lela B. Costin, “Unraveling the Mary Ellen Legend: Origins of the ‘Cruelty’ Movement,” *Social Service Review* (June 1991): 203-223.

⁷⁷ “Cruelty to Men and Animals,” *Toronto Daily Mail*, 10 April 1874.

⁷⁸ See, “Child Rights,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 21 July 1879, 6. The centrality of poverty to the formation of ideas around children’s rights is exemplified in an 1879 manifesto reprinted in the local press. This evidence also demonstrates by omission that it was not violence or physical harm which ignited reformers’ imagination. The author, a Mrs. Kate Hornby, “says that for years she has heard much of woman’s rights, negroes’ rights, the rights of Indians and Chinese, of dumb beasts and creeping things, and little children’s rights.” Number one on her list was that “every child has a right to the best food, the most comfortable clothing, and the best home that his parents can afford him. When he is old enough he has a right to such employments and amusements as will keep him from idleness and vice.” The emphasis is on the *best* material comforts which parents could afford, and the centrality of work and virtue. Number two on the list was that “the child has a right to the companionship of the pure and the innocent of his own age but above all to that of his mother and father.” Although this early manifesto seemed to entrench the importance of the parents to the child’s well-being, some families would fail to meet the test of purity and innocence. The third item on the list argued that “the child’s right of property shall be respected. Let him feel that whatever he has is his own...by respecting his rights in this matter, he will learn to respect the rights of others.” Here the central value was the importance of private property: the child’s things should be honored as her own in order that she may grow up and respect the property of others. The fourth criterion on this list of children’s rights was that “when the child is old enough to enter school, he has a right to a pleasant classroom, to a comfortable seat, to good ventilation, and to such attention from his teacher as shall prevent his stay in school from being a physical calamity.” Children’s rights emerged in the context of an ideal of childhood innocence, fostering an ethic of private property and material consumption. The material capital needed to meet these standards meant that some parents were not able to do so and the state was called upon to intervene on the child’s behalf. It is also important to note that the state would also fail to fulfill these obligations to indigenous children. We know from the experience of Canada’s indigenous people, for instance, that this contemporary inscription of children’s rights was contravened. Separated from their parents, fed bad food in schools that were hazardous to their health, in Canada’s residential schools many children perished. See, John S. Milloy, “‘The Charge of Manslaughter’: Disease and Death, 1879 to 1946,” *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986* (Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1999): 77-107. See also, Elizabeth Furniss, *Victims of Benevolence: The Dark Legacy of the Williams Lake Residential School* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1995).

day; she used to whip me with a twisted whip, a raw hide; the whip always left black and blue marks on my body; I have now on my head two black and blue marks which were made by mamma with the whip, and a cut on the left side of my forehead, which was made by a pair of scissors in mamma's hand; she struck me with the scissors and cut me; I have no recollection of ever having been kissed, and have never been kissed by mamma; I have never been taken on mamma's lap, or caressed or petted; I never dared speak to anybody, because if I did I would get whipped; I never have had, to my recollection, a calico dress and skirt; I have seen stockings and other clothes in our room, but I am not allowed to put them on; whenever mamma went out I was locked up in the bedroom; - the pair of scissors with which mamma struck me are those now shown me by Mr. Evans; I don't know for what I was whipped; mamma never said anything to me when she whipped me; I do not want to go back to live with mamma because she beats me so; I have no recollection of ever being in the street in my life.⁷⁹

In her published courtroom testimony, the violence and whippings Mary Ellen experienced were sandwiched between the details of the poverty that framed her everyday life. Bruised and scarred, uncoddled, even her lack of play with other children contravened prevailing middle-class ideas. It is also important to note, as Mary Ellen herself attested, that she had never been on "the street" in her life – it was her home that was a source of danger.

Historian Karen Dubinsky has argued that reformers marked the streets and public amusements as a source of danger for women while in fact it was in the home that women were most likely to experience danger. The sanctity of the home on the other hand made it hard to imagine the home as a source of danger.⁸⁰ Certainly, reformers considered the streets as dangerous and inappropriate places for children, and as this chapter will show, at its inception the SPWC worked to remove children from the streets. Yet the evidence also demonstrates, as in Mary Ellen's case, that not all homes were considered places of safety. Working-class and poor homes were seen as sites of danger. The SPWC detective entered these homes and removed children from them. Class, ethnicity and religion were important factors in how reformers thought about the home

⁷⁹ "Cruelty to Men and Animals," *Toronto Daily Mail*, 10 April 1874. See also, Peter Stevens and Marian Eide, "The First Chapter of Children's Rights," *American Heritage* 46, no. 5 (July/August 1990): 84-91. Their analysis focuses on physical abuse.

⁸⁰ Karen Dubinsky, *Improper Advances: Rape and Heterosexual Conflict in Ontario, 1880-1929* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

and whose home was inviolate.⁸¹ The cruelty and whippings experienced by Mary Ellen may have framed the contemporary middle-class imagination about the protection of children of the poor but the fact of the matter is that poverty was more central to child “rescue” than cruelty. This is not to say that there was no “cruelty,” only that cases of physical violence were rare.⁸²

The Centrality of Poverty

Although the anti-cruelty to animals movement helped to shape the initial form of child protection, contemporary ideas and practices regarding poverty were instrumental in the rise of the movement for the protection of children in Montreal. In this period, animals and children came to be helpless “little creatures” requiring protection while able-bodied adults in need were scorned as thieves or viewed with suspicion. As Amy Dru Stanley’s work shows, “like the beggar, involuntary pauper labor had a long lineage...In the late nineteenth century, however, philanthropic reformers, pointing to a dramatic increase in begging, campaigned for harsher sanctions.”⁸³ Those in need were faced with a “punitive code of charity.”⁸⁴ For instance, contemporaries were highly critical of the tramp,⁸⁵ conceiving him as a man⁸⁶ who defied the work ethic.⁸⁷ Historians

⁸¹ Lela B. Costin, “Unraveling the Mary Ellen Legend: Origins of the ‘Cruelty’ Movement,” *Social Service Review* (June 1991): 203-223.

⁸² In 1869, when an “unnatural mother” came before the Recorder for “assaulting” her five year old daughter, the judge dismissed the case with a warning. According to the report, “She was washing the little girl and put some soap in its eyes during the process, so that it began to cry, and refused to let its mother touch its head. Whereupon she seized it and soused it violently in the water, struck it several times, cramped it into the tub, by pressing one knee into the pit of its stomach, and finally kicked and cuffed it head over heels into the house. So cruel was the beating that the neighbors complained of the matter to the authorities.” See, “An Unnatural Mother,” *Montreal Star*, 27 May 1869, 3. Ten years later, in a case of “ill-treating a child,” a woman “gave bail before the Police Magistrate to answer to a charge of having ill-treated a little child.” According to the report, “Eleanor Bouchard testified that she had boarded with the accused for two months, and that a little girl six years of age who had been given to the accused to bring up as her own, but who really served as a servant, was very badly treated by her. The accused beat the child often two or three times a day without reason. On one occasion she had made her nose bleed with the blow of her hand....[the child] bore the marks of ill-treatment.” See, “Ill-treating a Child,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 2 April 1879, 8.

⁸³ Amy Dru Stanley, “Beggars Can’t be Choosers: Compulsion and Contract in Postbellum America,” *Journal of American History* 78, no. 4 (March 1992): 1266-1267.

⁸⁴ Stanley argues that “new punitive code of charity” which made compulsory labor mandatory gave almsgiving the form of wage contract, and thereby converted “a dependency relation into a relation of contract” and forcibly inculcated “the habits of free labor.” See, 1265-1293 and *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁸⁵ Chris Burr, “‘Roping in the Wretched, the Reckless, and the Wronged’: Narratives of the Late Nineteenth-Century Toronto Police Court,” *Left History* 3, no. 1 (1995): 83-108; David Bright, “Loafers are not going to Subsist Upon Public Credulence: Vagrancy and the Law in Calgary, 1900-1914,” *Labour /*

now argue that “tramps” were people in search of work: unemployment was a new development resulting from the rise of industrial capitalism rather than an indication of people’s unwillingness to work.⁸⁸ Nonetheless, in the third quarter of the nineteenth-century, in order to ensure that no one evaded work, humanitarians approached hunger and need with the philosophy “if a man shall not work, neither shall he eat.” Local philanthropists argued that men should be compelled to work for alms. Compulsory labor became necessary to receive aid. In this section I argue that self-maintenance became essential for the enjoyment of rights and liberty – including the right to live with one’s children.

In Montreal, a shadow of suspicion framed the needy supplicant. The *Montreal Daily Witness* circulated Mark Twain’s idea that people die “of want and starvation...merely because nine people out of ten who beg are imposters – the worthy and the sensitive shrink from making their condition known, and perish without making an appeal.”⁸⁹ This was an important and recurring image and theme. The act of making an appeal for assistance marked someone as unworthy and undeserving because those who are “worthy shrink from making...an appeal.” Because the truly deserving did not ask for help, beggars were represented as “imposters” and as unworthy. In his study of

Le Travail 36 (Fall 1995): 37-58; Jim Phillips, “Poverty, Unemployment, and the Administration of Criminal Law: Vagrancy Laws in Halifax, 1864-1890,” *Essays in the History of Canadian Law Vol. III*, Phillip Girard and Jim Phillips, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990): 128-162.

⁸⁶ Not all tramps were men. See, Mary Anne Poutanen, “Regulating Public Space in Early Nineteenth-Century Montreal: Vagrancy Laws and Gender in Colonial Context,” *Histoire sociale / Social History* XXXV, 69 (May 2002): 35-58 and “The Homeless, the Whore, the Drunkard, and the Disorderly: Contours of Female Vagrancy in the Montreal Courts, 1810-1842,” in *Gendered Past: Historical Essays in Femininity and Masculinity in Canada* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 1999): 29-47. In the statistics on crime in 1871, there were more women than men arrested on vagrancy charges: there were 100 women and 81 men. City of Montreal Archives, *Annual Report of the Chief of the Police for the Year 1871*, 8.

⁸⁷ James M. Pitsula, “The Treatment of Tramps in Late Nineteenth-Century Toronto,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 15 (1980): 116-132; Joey Noble, “‘Class-ifying’ the Poor: Toronto Charities, 1850-1880,” *Studies in Political Economy: A Socialist Review* no. 2 (Autumn, 1979): 109-128. For an important examination of evolution of contemporary ideas on the poor in the 18th and early 19th century culminating in the 1834 British poor law which abolished relief for able-bodied men and their families, see Mitchell Dean, *The Constitution of Poverty: Toward a Genealogy of Liberal Governance* (London & New York: Routledge, 1991).

⁸⁸ See Peter Baskerville and Eric Sager, *Unwilling Idlers: The Urban Unemployed and their Families in Late Victorian Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998). See also Marcella Aranguiz, *Vagabonds et sans abris à Montréal: perception et prise en charge de l’errance, 1840-1925*, (Montréal: RCHTQ, coll. Études et documents du RCHTQ, no. 12, 2000) and Richard Andersen, “‘The Irrepressible Stampede’: Tramps in Ontario, 1870-1880,” *Ontario History* 84, no. 1 (March 1992): 33-56.

⁸⁹ Mark Twain, “English Good-Heartedness,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 12 February 1873, 3. Emphasis added.

tramps in Toronto, James Pitsula has written that the common view held that tramps “terrorized neighborhoods, intimidated defenseless women, and committed ‘murders, burglaries, incendiaries, and highway robberies.’”⁹⁰ In Montreal, newspaper reports also represented tramps as criminals. Newspapers reported that tramps were thieves, a “first class fraud.”⁹¹ For instance, a servant fed a tramp who stole from those who fed him in their home.⁹² Another prominent fraudulent figure was the “rich beggar.”⁹³ Increasingly tramps were portrayed as “outlaws and criminals” or as criminals “disguised as tramps.”⁹⁴

In the winter of 1875, amidst distress in Montreal among “the Irish and French laboring classes,” those who asked for alms were marked as unworthy. There was a soup kitchen in Griffintown but the deserving were “too proud to beg.”⁹⁵ At the local level and in the midst of suffering, those who asked for assistance were marked as imposters because those who were imagined as deserving would not. The reasons for poverty were generally understood to be the lack of “the will to work,” and a tendency to “self-indulgence rather than self-denial.”⁹⁶ When faced with what contemporaries believed were “increasing numbers of mendicants soliciting alms on the streets,” the *Montreal Star* editor complained that it was “indiscriminate aid” which encouraged “successful beggars.” Rather than celebrating the spirit of giving and succor, the editorial proposed that those who were “really homeless” should be “taken from the streets and supported by the public.”⁹⁷ As with children so with adults: dependency required confinement.⁹⁸

⁹⁰ James M. Pitsula, “The Treatment of Tramps in Late Nineteenth Century Toronto,” 120.

⁹¹ “The Tramp Nuisance,” *Montreal Star*, 19 July 1877, 3.

⁹² “Little Ways of the Tramp,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 31 May 1879, 3.

⁹³ “Rich Beggar,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 25 April 1879.

⁹⁴ “Tramps Getting Troublesome,” *Montreal Star*, 10 September 1877, 2; “Stabbed by a Tramp,” *Montreal Star*, 16 May 1883, 4.

⁹⁵ “Distress in the City,” *Montreal Herald*, 20 December 1875, 2; “The Destitute Poor,” *Montreal Herald*, 21 December 1875, 3.

⁹⁶ Gail Hamilton, “Poor People,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 17 February 1873, 4.

⁹⁷ “Mendicants,” *Montreal Star*, 29 June 1869, 2; Montreal English dailies reported that American tramps were asked to work in exchange for “bounty” and when they declined, they faced “gaol or fine.” Under this reasoning, refusal to work in the context of asking for alms was a crime. Editors argued that these men and women should be compelled to labor, made to “suffer stern regulation and privation” in order “to reduce willful poverty.” The press suggested “forming vigilance committees” “to shoot and hang” tramps, because tramps were “getting troublesome.”

⁹⁸ Janice Harvey argues that “institutionalisation [sic] was a form of social aid that was typical of Quebec social assistance and would remain so well into the twentieth century.” Harvey, *Poverty and the Law*, 8.

In the American context, Amy Dru Stanley argues that in the 1870s and 1880s, with the supremacy of wage labor, dependency became a punishable crime. In industrializing Montreal, as in other eastern cities, “although no law forbade giving, the beggar committed a crime simply by asking.”⁹⁹ The 1869 Act Respecting Vagrants legally enshrined a distinction between the “deserving object of charity” and those who “wander about and beg.” The Act applied to “all idle persons who, not having visible means of maintaining themselves, live without employment” as well as “all persons who, being able to work and thereby or by any other means to maintain themselves and their families, willfully refuse and neglect to do so.”¹⁰⁰ The Act criminalized

all persons who, without a certificate being signed, within six months, by a Priest, Clergyman or Minister of the Gospel, or two Justices of the Peace, residing in the municipality where the alms are being asked, that he or she is a deserving object of charity, wander about and beg, or who go about from door to door, or place themselves in the streets, highways, passages or public places to beg or receive alms.¹⁰¹

The 1874 amendment to the 1869 statute on vagrancy tripled the prison sentence for the offence from two to six months.¹⁰² It was presented by the Minister of Justice, and the *Star* heartily endorsed it, arguing that “all sturdy beggars should be arrested, made to work,” and their children should be sent to industrial schools.¹⁰³ The *Star* editor did not think that the bill would harm the deserving poor, “who kept their troubles to themselves.”¹⁰⁴ In this editor’s estimation, poverty should require that the poor parents be separated from their children. In this formulation, beggars were criminals because

⁹⁹ Stanley, “Beggars Can’t be Choosers,” 1277; Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract*, 114.

¹⁰⁰ An Act respecting Vagrants, *Statutes of Quebec* 1869, c. 28, s.1.

¹⁰¹ An Act respecting Vagrants, *Statutes of Quebec* 1869, c. 28, s.1.

¹⁰² An Act to amend “An Act respecting Vagrants,” *Statutes of Quebec* 1874, c. 43, s.1. In the 1970s, civil libertarians challenged existing vagrancy laws and US federal courts found that various vagrancy laws, many of which were placed on the books in the 1870s and 1880s, unconstitutionally criminalized status rather than actions as well as violated citizens’ right to free speech. See, Patricia K. Smith, “The Economics of Anti-Begging Regulations,” *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 64, no. 2 (April 2005), 551. Recent anti-begging legislation has been challenged by the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association for unfairly targeting “the vulnerable” and attempting “to sweep the streets clean of the poor and mentally ill.” See, Lindsay Kines, “Beggars facing fines, jail time: Persistent panhandlers, squeegee kinds in the crosshairs of new Safe Streets Act,” *Times Colonist* 28 January 2005, A1-A2. On the current struggle facing Victoria’s homeless for the right to sleep on public land, see, “Squatters Confront Police: Right-to-sleep advocates camp on the grounds of St. Ann’s Academy to protest lack of services,” *Victoria News*, 28 September 2005, A1 & A10. For a contemporary discussion which continues to link homelessness with crime, see “Attack on homeless men probed,” *Victoria News*, 28 September 2005, A10.

¹⁰³ Editorial, “Our Professional Beggar,” *Montreal Star*, 16 May 1874, 2.

¹⁰⁴ Editorial, “Our Professional Beggar,” *Montreal Star*, 16 May 1874, 2.

begging for alms was illegal, and asking for alms cast suspicion on the supplicant because those who deserved help did not ask for it. Those who asked for help should be arrested and compelled to labour, and their children should be removed and institutionalized. It was a man's duty to be self-maintaining. The failure of self-maintenance would result in the deprivation of one's personal liberty as well as the removal of one's children. Poverty, then, could result in the forfeiture of the basic rights of free citizens.¹⁰⁵ These stories and images were key representations which accompanied calls for "compulsory work."

As early as 1870, the Protestant House of Industry and Refuge proclaimed that "all inmates who are not physically incapacitated" were "kept constantly at work."¹⁰⁶ Ten years later, the House philosophy was "if a man will not work, neither shall he eat."¹⁰⁷ The *Herald* reminded readers that this policy was based on a "divine precept."¹⁰⁸ At the 1882 annual meeting of the Montreal House of Industry and Refuge, Mr. W. Clendinnery argued that "no man, woman, or child who was able or willing to work should be idle. He opposed the relief of any save the sick, the imbecile and the stranger in the land. The community was always ready to help the poor, but was averse to helping the lazy. How to get rid of these drones in the world was a difficult question for them to solve."¹⁰⁹ The article was intended to let "employers know that there were people in the House able and willing to work."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Editorial, "Pauperism," *Montreal Star*, 30 November 1883. Montreal English dailies reported that American tramps were asked to work in exchange for "bounty" and when they declined, they faced "gaol or fine." Under this reasoning, refusal to work in the context of asking for alms was a crime. Editors argued that these men and women should be compelled to labor, made to "suffer stern regulation and privation" in order "to reduce willful poverty." The press suggested "forming vigilance committees" "to shoot and hang" tramps, because tramps were "getting troublesome." See, "Tramps," *Montreal Herald*, 17 July 1875, 2; "Vagabondage," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 15 February 1876; "Tramps on a Rampage: A Whole Section Infested with the Ruffians," *Montreal Star*, 9 July 1877, 4. In Chicago, the "tramp center," "citizen patrols" were established and it was argued that "to shoot a few of them would deserve public gratitude." See, "Chicago: A Tramp Centre," *Montreal Star*, 1 August 1877, 4; "Tramps Getting Troublesome," *Montreal Star*, 10 September 1877, 2. The United States was heralded as the example to follow. "The eastern United States were taking strong measures to deal with tramps" where work was available at 50 cents a day in public wood yard. The choice would be between work or prison. "Depredations of a Coloured Tramp," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 22 February 1879, 3; "The Tramp," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 5 March 1879.

¹⁰⁶ Editorial, "A Fact of Great Importance," *Montreal Gazette*, 22 April 1870, 2.

¹⁰⁷ "Protestant House of Industry and Refuge," *Montreal Gazette*, 30 October 1880, 7.

¹⁰⁸ Editorial, "The Poor House in Canada," *Montreal Herald*, 22 June 1875, 2.

¹⁰⁹ "Protestant House of Industry," *Montreal Herald*, 9 December 1882, 5.

¹¹⁰ "Protestant House of Industry," *Montreal Herald*, 9 December 1882, 5.

Unnatural Parents

Ideas, legislation and practices aimed at the adult poor invariably had consequences for their children. Begging is a case in point. It was not only prohibited for adults and youth alike; more importantly, it was assumed that children begged at their parents' behest. When the *Montreal Star* editorial heartily endorsed the 1874 Vagrancy Bill, the paper condemned "drunken parents" who send their children out to beg.¹¹¹ Poor parents who consumed alcohol were vilified.¹¹² Candidates for relief were ineligible if they consumed liquor.¹¹³ The temperance movement highlighted cruelty and abuse,¹¹⁴ and its depiction of drunks as brutal may have served to dehumanize poor drinkers.¹¹⁵ Many of these adults were parents.¹¹⁶ Vilifying the poor who drank may have made it easier to remove children from their parents' custody.¹¹⁷ As Robert Adamoski argues in his study of the BC Children's Aid Society, "the call to rescue children from 'criminal'

¹¹¹ Editorial, "Our Professional Beggar," *Montreal Star*, 16 May 1874, 2.

¹¹² According to Judith Fingard, the Nova Scotia SPC secretary John Naylor argued that "excessive drinking" was the main reason for cruelty and neglect. "Naylor claimed that 80% of the people he had to caution or prosecute were addicted to drink." See, Fingard, *The Darker Side of Life of Victorian Halifax*, 184.

¹¹³ "The Poor," *Montreal Star*, 9 December 1869 2.

¹¹⁴ Lisa Surridge argues that "the habitual Victorian assumption was that the abusive *husband* would be the alcoholic." According to Linda Gordon, "In the later half of the [nineteenth] century, particularly in the work of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, drinking was a veritable code word for male violence." Craig Heron suggests that "the temperance forces' claims that drinking inevitably led to this kind of domestic violence [the patriarchal script of wife-beating] undoubtedly exaggerated a complex but most likely more limited experience." See, Lisa Surridge, *Bleak Houses: Marital Violence in Victorian Fiction* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2005), 110; Linda Gordon, *Heroes of their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence* (London: Penguin Books, 1988), 254; Craig Heron, *Booze: A Distilled History* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2003), 125. See also, Lorna McLean, "'Deserving' Wives and 'Drunken' Husbands: Wife Beating, Marital Conduct, and the Law in Ontario, 1850-1910," *Histoire sociale - Social History* XXXV, no. 69 (Mai -May 2002): 59-81.

¹¹⁵ On alcohol as "problem," see Heron, "The Long Arm of the Law," *Booze*, 131-185; Mariana Valverde, *Diseases of the Will: Alcohol and the Dilemmas of Freedom* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹¹⁶ As the SPWC annual report for 1897 argued "drunkenness" was the "principal cause of...brutality inflicted upon wives and helpless children." McGill University, McLennan Library, Rare Book Room, Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children, Fifteen Annual Report, 1897.

¹¹⁷ Donzelot, in his analysis of the "transfer of sovereignty from the 'morally deficient' family to the body of philanthropic notables, magistrates, and children's doctors" cites an 1889 French Law which "determined that 'fathers and mothers through their habitual drunkenness, their notorious and scandalous misconduct, or through ill treatment, compromise the safety, health, or morality of their children' would face loss of parental authority." Note that drunkenness is the first on the list. Donzelot, *The Policing of Families*, 83-84.

parents offered a power [sic] ideological formula that skirted the moral concerns surrounding familial break-up.”¹¹⁸

The rights of parents and the “liberty of the subject” were both dismissed in the name of the protection of children. In its 1871 discussion on “youthful vagrancy” and “the gangrene of English pauperism,” the *Montreal Herald* reported on British legislation in which “the liberty of the subject will not be considered sufficiently to save an outcast boy from being trained into a useful and happy citizen; nor will the rights of parents be held to extend so far as to justify them keeping their children to suffer their cruelty and steal for their pleasures.”¹¹⁹ Parents’ cruelty to their children was coupled with the specter of children stealing for their parents’ pleasures, most often specified as drink. The link between stealing and begging is that both activities resulted in the acquisition of goods without “honest labor.” “Very active measures” were being pursued in England for “clearing the streets of lads.” The boys were sent to “places of detention” for seven or eight years or until they were sixteen to be “tamed” like wild animals rather than punished. The *Herald* argued that it was not “a violent assumption that caught and tamed at these early ages, they [lads on the streets] may show as much docility - say as tiger cubs, or young hyenas. We may, perhaps, go somewhat further than that, and hold that they are *human enough* to turn out under favorable circumstances, equal to an average, perhaps a low average – of the human beings around them.”¹²⁰ The humanity of these youth was measured against and compared to wild animals, and found “human enough.” Their “low average” potential warranted and justified their detention.¹²¹ This discussion supported the idea that civil liberties of children and the rights of parents could and should be eroded.

In 1872, at the first Boys’ Home annual meeting, “the practice of giving money to boys on the streets was strongly denounced; it being the greatest hindrance to the work

¹¹⁸ Adamoski, “‘Charity is One Thing and the Administration of Justice is Another,’ 160.

¹¹⁹ “Youthful Vagrancy,” *Montreal Herald*, 23 August 1871, 2. Emphasis added. The editorial may be referring to the British amendment to their Industrial Schools Act which included “the extension of the power of the prison authority.” See, E. Industrial Schools, Vic. 29 & 30, c. 118 & Vic. 35 & 36, c. 21, s. 7 & 8. From the statute it is difficult to see how it empowered the state as the *Herald* editorial suggested.

¹²⁰ “Youthful Vagrancy,” *Montreal Herald*, 23 August 1871, 2.

¹²¹ In 1888, less than two decades later, similar legislation was passed in Ontario where youth could be held in “indeterminate” detention or until they were eighteen. See, Sutherland, *Children in English Canadian Society*, 117.

that rescue philanthropists encounter.”¹²² The Boys’ Home aimed to make newsboys and others into “useful citizens.”¹²³ In a *Star* column on reforming “Our Unmanageable Boys and Girls,” Charles Alexander,¹²⁴ who was active with the CSPCA, the Protestant Home of Industry and Refuge, the Boys’ Home and ten years later the SPWC, told readers that “these poor children were often if not always driven to the streets by unnatural and heartless drunken parents, to procure money in any way so that the ungovernable thirst for liquor shall be satisfied.”¹²⁵ By Alexander’s analysis, children were on the streets because their “unnatural and drunken parents” coerced their offspring to support them in drunkenness. According to Alexander, “What these children of both sexes need is a home with kind and humane management” rather than a penal reformatory or the cage of a prison. It is important to note that the industrial home was seen as a kind and humane solution. The *Star* editorial echoed Alexander’s call for an industrial home to lead these children “to a life of honesty, sobriety and industry.”¹²⁶ The editorial argued that there was a “need for an institution where may be placed children lacking such parental care as is necessary for their growth into respectable citizens.” “Unnatural” parents forfeited “the natural rights of parents” to live with their children.

The rights of parents were contingent on the proper execution of their duties as parents.¹²⁷ In an editorial entitled “The duties of society towards our young waifs,” the *Montreal Daily Witness* argued that “if there be one right more inviolable than another it

¹²² “The Boys’ Home,” *Montreal Star*, 9 March 1872, 2.

¹²³ “Opening of the Boys’ Home,” *Montreal Herald*, 1 February 1871, 2. Boys were required to submit to an early nightly entry and bath, and reading and writing lessons. They were also required to pay room and board in order “to teach the boys the value of money and encourage a sense of independence.” Its first year was unsuccessful. According to the annual report, 78 boys had been admitted into the Home, of whom 30 had gone back to the streets, sleeping here and there, sometimes with their relatives, and at other times in the police stations, stables, cellars, & c.; 11 were at St. Vincent de Paul; 1 was in jail, 1 in the hospital, 1 with a farmer doing well, 7 were in place, 6 were on the trains, 3 had left for the States, 12 were still living at the Home, 6 learning trades, and 6 selling newspapers; of the rest he [Mr. Ritchie, who read the annual report] knew nothing.” “The Boys’ Home,” *Montreal Star*, 9 March 1872, 2.

¹²⁴ Janice Harvey, “Charles Alexander,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography: Volume XIII, 1901-1910*, G. Ramsay Cook and Jean Hamelin, eds., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 10-12.

¹²⁵ “Public Opinion: Our Unmanageable Boys and Girls: How we shall reform them,” *Montreal Star*, 20 March 1872, 2.

¹²⁶ Editorial, *Montreal Star*, 20 March 1872, 2. Boys’ Home inhabitants came from “only those of well-ordered families,” “respectable and orderly” boys “with “some industry.” “Street boys were dismissed” because “mixing” was bad. The objects of the home were “protection and training.”

¹²⁷ Broder confirms that “over the course of the nineteenth century, parental custody rights evolved from a property right in children to a trust dependent upon the fulfillment of parental responsibilities.” See, Broder, *Tramps, Unfit Mothers and Neglected Children*, 77.

would seem to be that of the parent to the possession of a child. But all rights are accompanied by their relative duties, and when the latter are neglected it is doubtful whether the former should not cease.”¹²⁸ The *Witness* argued that the violation of “the natural rights of parents” was justifiable

on two grounds: first, the right of the child to protection from corrupting influences, and to receive religious and secular education; and second the right which society has to protect itself against the existence of a dangerous class, of which such children become eventually the most redoubtable recruits....It does not follow, either in justice or policy, that the children of such depraved parents should be allowed to mature in ignorance, crime and misery, until they become fitted for the penitentiary or the gallows.¹²⁹

According to this list, “the right of the child to protection from corrupting influences” was primary. As historians have shown, arguments for the protection of children focused primarily on the potential moral, political and social danger to the child and its subsequent “plague”¹³⁰ on the body politic rather than on the protection of children from violence, cruelty, physical abuse, hunger or other basic needs of survival.

Rather than releasing parents from their obligations, the *Witness* editor imagined poor parents would resist the removal of their children because, the paper argued, among “the more vagrant class” the parents “cling to the children, as so much stock in trade, and to make themselves appear greater objects of compassion to the charitable. The man or woman who has fallen so low as to be capable of leading the life of these dissolute characters can, moreover, feel no wounded parental affections, even though society should take from them the control of children which they seem only capable of leading to destruction.”¹³¹ In effect, the *Witness* was arguing that “the more vagrant” did not really care about their children, and perhaps would not even feel the loss of their children because their way of life was “so low” as to eliminate parental affection.

The *Witness* was in support of a new course of action - the “taking hold of those whose parents are either dead or worse than dead, [which] does not seem till lately to

¹²⁸ Editorial, “Duties of Society Toward Our Young Waifs,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 3 January 1873, 2.

¹²⁹ Editorial, “Duties of Society Toward Our Young Waifs,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 3 January 1873, 2.

¹³⁰ “Boys’ Home: Second Annual Meeting,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 4 March 1873, 2; Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society*, 96-97; Houston, “Victorian Origins of Juvenile Delinquency,” 129-142; Chen, *Tending the Gardens of Citizenship*, 37.

¹³¹ Editorial, “Duties of Society Toward Our Young Waifs,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 3 January 1873, 2.

have operated with much force on the public mind.”¹³² It was a new and radical intervention to propose that some living parents were “worse than dead” and that their children should be taken “hold of.” There were certainly efforts on behalf of children before the anti-cruelty to children’s movement, but earlier efforts focused on children who were wards of the state (those in orphanages, for instance) while the new movement focused on seemingly errant children who had parents, or children who had errant parents. Historians generally agree that the “new” child-savers had much in common with established child-centered efforts: the two co-existed, worked the same terrain, competed for public support and government money on behalf of children. Historians also suggest that parents used the “new” agencies, like Children’s Aid Societies, much like others used orphanages, strategically in difficult times. In this context of continuity, the major shift was in the introduction of state intervention and the concomitant weakening of parental authority.¹³³

As we have seen, a problem with “street children” was that “these little creatures are trained to beg, or rather to ‘cadge,’ which means to get whatever they can by any other means than work” and “to keep parents in drunkenness.”¹³⁴ At the same time, it was children’s ingenuity and hard work that was castigated:

Children of this class when old enough to be put to trade, are not as a rule, added to the ranks of productive laborers, for the simple reason that by sweeping dirt upon crossings and off again, by collecting old rags and other things, supplemented by paper-selling and boot-blackening etc., they can make as much in a day as at a trade they would earn in a week, while all the while they are free not only to roam the city but the continent at will.¹³⁵

These children were clearly industrious and entrepreneurial but their labour was not considered socially acceptable nor socially productive. It was the children’s financial

¹³² Editorial, “Duties of Society Toward Our Young Waifs,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 3 January 1873, 2.

¹³³ Linda Gordon in her book on family violence, *Heroes of their Own Lives*, argues that the earlier Children’s Aid Societies “directed their efforts at ‘dependent’ children – meaning those reliant on public or community support... While the earlier child-savers probably did ‘steal’ some children from poor parents, they did not publicly proclaim the right to do so. Following the activist lead of the SPCAs, the SPCCs proclaimed their intention to intervene in existing, not necessarily ‘dependent’ families.” Gordon, *Heroes of their Own Lives*, 55; See also, Adamoski, “‘Charity is One Thing and the Administration of Justice is Another,’” 145-166; Bullen, “J. J. Kelso and the ‘New’ Child-Savers,” 109 & 111; Rooke & Schnell, “Guttersnipes and Charity Children: Nineteenth Century Child Rescue in the Atlantic Provinces,” in *Studies in Childhood History: A Canadian Perspective*, Patricia T. Rooke and R. L. Schnell eds. (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Limited, 1982): 82-104.

¹³⁴ Editorial, “Street Children,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 28 May 1873, 2.

¹³⁵ Editorial, “Street Children,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 28 May 1873, 2.

success, their independence, their freedom of movement that was seen as problematic.¹³⁶ The emerging ideas of childhood, as a stage of innocence and enforced dependence, made this way of life problematic to contemporaries who saw it as a source of moral and social danger. In the spirit of “kindness” readers were told to absolutely refuse to give money to all vagrants, except in return for work done: “let the vagrants be forced by this means as much as possible to asylums and to honest labor.” The hope was for “young criminals to be swept off the streets.”¹³⁷ Philanthropists articulated kindness as enforced labour and institutionalization.

The *Montreal Gazette* supported the *Witness*'s call for industrial schools “for the instruction of the neglected class” as part of “the prevention of crime.”¹³⁸ The *Gazette* argued that “in every city and town of any size there are hundreds of children of both sexes, under no parental restraint or influence except what is bad, who are being absolutely trained by circumstances in the ways of crime and whose manifest destiny, sooner or later, is the gaol or the penitentiary.” The *Gazette* acknowledged the difficulty of the problem because “It is not easy to draw the line between those that should be regarded as practically without natural advisors or protectors and those to whom it may be like tyranny to force them from their own present homes even if for their ultimate advantage.”¹³⁹ These children had families. Their families were judged as inferior and unsuitable. These critics also recognized that these children would not want to be separated from their families. Nonetheless, the *Gazette* concluded that in the largest number of cases it was “more cruel to leave children just at an age when precepts of good and evil may, with like facility, be inculcated on their minds, at the mercy of those who will assuredly lead or allow them to be led to moral ruin.”¹⁴⁰ In this analysis, cruelty was in leaving children with their families, not because these families were cruel but because it would lead to the children's “moral ruin.” The overriding fear was about the potential moral and social danger; it was from this danger that society and children needed to be

¹³⁶ Rooke and Schnell offer a similar analysis. They write, “Indeed, these children's very independence seemed to be perceived as an insolent affront to that part of the citizenry which was determined to embrace them under the rubric of an appropriate ‘childhood’...” Rooke and Schnell, “Guttersnipes and Charity Children,” 89.

¹³⁷ Editorial, “Street Children,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 28 May 1873, 2.

¹³⁸ “Industrial Schools and the Prevention of Crime,” *Montreal Gazette*, 9 October 1880, 4.

¹³⁹ “Industrial Schools and the Prevention of Crime,” *Montreal Gazette*, 9 October 1880, 4.

¹⁴⁰ “Industrial Schools and the Prevention of Crime,” *Montreal Gazette*, 9 October 1880, 4.

protected. Although there were distinctions in the views of the different Montreal English newspapers,¹⁴¹ this issue is one on which there was consensus.¹⁴² These discussions supported the rights of society over poor parents and their children.¹⁴³

In an 1883 editorial on pauperism, the *Star* went so far as to argue that “no pauper family should be allowed to bring up children.”¹⁴⁴ The paper urged that these “children should be taken out of such households and placed in industrial schools,” otherwise they would “grow up depraved, to be a burden and a curse to society.” The editor recognized that “many families, not living in a state of pauperism” may also pose a danger to their children, “but in such cases society has probably no power to interfere... Where, however, there is a declared pauperism, rendering some public intervention actually necessary to save a family from starvation, and where this condition has been prolonged for a certain time, society may well step in, and certainly should step in, and rescue any children there may be from misery and degradation.”¹⁴⁵ The editorial was clear that asking for public assistance could make families vulnerable to break-up and the loss of children in particular. Pauperism, the editorial argued, “should be energetically attacked not by private philanthropy, but by the arm of the law... People who will not work should be allowed to starve” and refusal to work should result in getting cut off from assistance. In a spirit of “firmness and kindness,” the editorial plainly stated that “the condition of pauperism, involving as it does inability of self-maintenance, involves also a temporary forfeiture at least of the full freedom of the ordinary self-maintaining citizen.”¹⁴⁶ If a poor family came forward and asked for succor, succor was afforded through separation from and institutionalization of their children.

The rise of the protection of children

¹⁴¹ See, Lorraine Vander Hoef, “John Dougall (1808-1886): Portrait of an Early Social Reformer and Evangelical Witness in Canada,” *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society*, XLIII (2001): 115-145; Paul Rutherford, *A Victorian Authority: The Daily Press in Late Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982); Walter Stewart, *Canadian Newspapers: The Inside Story* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1980): 73-83.

¹⁴² John Dougall, editor of the *Montreal Daily Witness*, was instrumental in establishing the Boys’ Farm in 1909. See, Peter Howard Martin, “To Correct their Faults and Reform their Corrupt Souls: A Portrait of Two Quebec Reformatory Schools, 1873-1924,” (Masters Thesis, Concordia University, 1986), 10.

¹⁴³ Bullen, “J.J. Kelso and the ‘New’ Child-Savers,” 109.

¹⁴⁴ Editorial, “Pauperism,” *Montreal Star*, 30 November 1883.

¹⁴⁵ Editorial, “Pauperism,” *Montreal Star*, 30 November 1883.

¹⁴⁶ Editorial, “Pauperism,” *Montreal Star*, 30 November 1883. Emphasis added.

Canadian historians generally point to the Ontario Statutes of 1888 and 1893 regarding the Protection of Children as the first Canadian legislation to protect children from “unnatural parents.”¹⁴⁷ In Quebec, the Industrial Schools Acts of 1869 and 1884 provided earlier and similar, though less extensive protection.¹⁴⁸ According to Muriel Douglas, “for the first time, legislation was passed permitting society to intervene between child and parent.” The emphasis was on law enforcement and rescue under the “doctrine of ‘*parens patrie*,’ the right and duty of the state to interfere on behalf of the neglected child.”¹⁴⁹ The 1869 Act specified the “Classes of Children to be Detained in Certified Industrial Schools” as “any child under the age of fourteen...that is found wandering and not having any home or settled place of abode, or proper guardianship, or visible means of subsistence; that is found destitute, either being an orphan or having one surviving parent who is undergoing penal servitude or imprisonment.”¹⁵⁰ Note the link between the homeless, the poor and criminal parents. This section on the classes of

¹⁴⁷ Sutherland’s periodization and focus has been challenged by Patricia T. Rooke and R. L. Schnell, “Childhood and Charity in Nineteenth-Century British North America,” *Histoire sociale – Social History* XV, no. 29 (mai-May 1982): 157-179. Nonetheless, the idea persists even in recent work that “In English-speaking Canada, the child-saving movement started in Toronto in the late 1880s.” The Montreal’s SPWC was established in 1882 by Anglophone Protestants. See, Chen, *Tending the Gardens of Citizenship*, 27. For an important comparative analysis between Montreal and Toronto, see Pierre Dubois and Jean Trépanier, “L’Adoption de la *Lois Sur Les Jeunes Délinquants* de 1908: Étude compare des quotidiens Montréalais et Torontois,” *Revue d’histoire de l’Amérique française* 52, no. 3 (hiver 1999): 354-381. Although more extensive, the 1888 Ontario Statute was similar to the Quebec Industrial School Acts. The Ontario statute outlined that “on proof that a child under fourteen years of age, by reason of the neglect, crime, drunkenness, or other vices of its parents, or from orphanage, or from any other cause, is growing up in circumstances exposing such a child to bad, or dissolute life, or on proof that any child under fourteen years of age, being an orphan, has been found begging in any street, highway, or public place, a Judge may order such a child to be committed to any Industrial School or Refuge for boys or girls...” See, *An Act for the Protection and Reformation of Neglected Children, Ontario Statutes 1888*, Vic. 51, c.40, s. 2. The scope of the protection of children in Ontario was greatly expanded with *An Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to, and better Protection of Children, Ontario Statutes 1893*, Vic. 56, c. 45. See also, Pierre Dubois and Jean Trépanier, “L’Adoption de la *Lois Sur Les Jeunes Délinquants* de 1908.”

¹⁴⁸ Renée Joyal, “L’Acte concernant les écoles d’industrie (1869): Une mesure de prophylaxie sociale dans un Québec en voie d’urbanisation,” dans *Entre surveillance et compassion: L’évolution de la protection de l’enfance au Québec, Des origines à nos jours*, Renée Joyal dir., (Sainte-Foy, Québec: Presses de l’Université du Québec, 2000):35-48; Renée Joyal, “L’évolution des modes de contrôle de l’autorité parentale et son impact sur les relations entre parents et enfants dans la société québécoise,” dans *Entre tradition et universalisme*, Françoise-Romaine Ouellette et Claude Bariteau dirs., (Québec: Institute Québécoise de Recherche sur la Culture, 1994):245-258.

¹⁴⁹ Muriel H. Douglas, “A History of the Society for the Protection of Women and Children in Montreal from 1882 until 1966,” (Masters Thesis, School of Social Work, McGill University, 1967), 10. Chen translates *parens patrie* as “parent of the nation. This doctrine was used to provide the state and its representatives authority respecting children, which was seen as normally belonging to parents.” Chen, *Tending the Gardens of Citizenship*, 19.

¹⁵⁰ *An Act Respecting Industrial Schools, Statutes of Quebec 1869*, c. 17, s.12. In this Act, detention did not extend “beyond the time when the child will attain the age of sixteen years.” s. 16.

children to be admitted was repealed in 1884 and replaced by a seemingly wider net¹⁵¹ to include “any child between the ages of seven and twelve years, [who] owing to the continual sickness or extreme poverty of his parents, or by reason of their habitual drunkenness or other vicious habits, requires to be protected and cared for.”¹⁵² This aspect of the Act was reaffirmed in the Revised Quebec Statutes of 1888.¹⁵³ It was only in 1912, in the revision of the statute on juvenile delinquents, that children who were “habitually beaten or cruelly treated” by their parents or guardians came under the scope of the law.¹⁵⁴ Poverty, both material and moral, and parental drunkenness were earlier and more pointedly outlined in the Industrial School Acts than physical cruelty.

Historians have shown that “industrial schools were perceived by their supporters as more progressive, up-to-date, humane and effective institutions.”¹⁵⁵ The reader may recall Charles Alexander’s representation of industrial schools as homes with “kind and

¹⁵¹ At its annual meeting in January for 1884, the SPWC complained that “owing to the act passed last session prohibiting the sending of children to schools of industry unless they were orphans or had both parents in a penitentiary the work of the society had been somewhat hampered.” “Protecting Women and Children: Annual Meeting of the Society in the Natural History Rooms,” *Montreal Star*, 24 January 1885, 4. The SPWC comment is about section 12; the poverty and / or habitual drunkenness of parents is outlined in section 15 of the legislation. Interestingly, the arrests and detentions by Detective Cinq Mars outlined below occurred under the amendment. Historians argue that the 1884 amendment extended the power of the law as well as cast a larger net of “classes of children to be detained.”

¹⁵² *An Act to amend the act 32 Victoria, chapter 17, concerning Industrial Schools, Statutes of Quebec* 1884, c. 23, s. 15. This amendment, stipulated that no child shall be detained after he is twelve years old. The Act fixed to the term to a maximum of five years. The SPWC felt that the 1884 act put restrictions on their attempts to place children in industrial schools, unless the children were orphans or their parents were in penitentiaries. The Society felt that their work was “somewhat hampered” by the 1884 amendment. National Archives, Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children, MG 28, series I129, Minute Book 1882-1891. “Protecting Women and Children: Annual Meeting of the Society in the Natural History Rooms,” *Montreal Star*, 24 January 1884, 4; “Protecting the Helpless,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 30 January 1884, 2.

¹⁵³ *Industrial Schools, Revised Quebec Statutes* 1888, c. 3, s. 3140.

¹⁵⁴ Renée Joyal, “L’évolution des modes de contrôle de l’autorité parentale et son impact sur les relations entre parents et enfants dans la société québécoise,” 248. *An Act to amend the Revised Statutes, 1909, respecting Juvenile Delinquents, Statutes of Quebec* 1912, c. 39, s. 4031. The section reads: “Any rate-payer of a municipality may cause to be brought before two justices of the peace or a magistrate, or a coroner, or the sheriff or the prothonotary of the district, any child of not more than fourteen years of age who is an orphan, or fatherless, or motherless, if the surviving parent is badly behaved or is condemned to jail, or to the penitentiary, for a criminal offence; or any child who, in consequence of the neglect of or of the drunkenness or other vices of, his parents, or his guardian or the person with whom he resides, is brought up without education, or without wholesome control or under circumstances which expose him to lead an idle and disorderly life; or any child who is a vagrant or is found at large at improper hours, or who is without shelter and appears to be deserted and abandoned; or any child who is *habitually beaten or cruelly treated* by its parents, or by the person with whom he resides; or any child who, owing to his being infirm or without a tutor or without any relative in the direct line in a position to take care of him or worthy of doing so, is liable to become a vagrant or to starve to death.” Emphasis added.

¹⁵⁵ Andrew Jones, “Closing Penetanguishene Reformatory,” 235.

humane management” rather than as prisons.¹⁵⁶ Although reformers wished to create “family-like” institutions, historians have also shown “in spite of the ‘cottage plan’ rhetoric, the facilities were far from ‘homes’. Instead industrial schools were “highly regulated and routinized like most coercive ‘total institutions’ of the time.”¹⁵⁷ Industrial schools were regimented, rule-bound institutions in which children were confined and strictly regulated and their access to their parents and the pernicious outside world was extremely limited.¹⁵⁸ These institutions sometimes fell short of what was expected of them; sometimes children were endangered in the institutions that were meant to protect them.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ “Public Opinion: Our Unmanageable Boys and Girls: How we shall reform them,” *Montreal Star*, 20 March 1872, 2.

¹⁵⁷ Bennett, Taming, “‘Bad Boys’ of the ‘Dangerous Class,’” 76 and 84. Bennett offers Erving Goffman’s definition of “total institution” as “a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed formally administered round of life.”

¹⁵⁸ In her Ph.D. thesis on the Ladies Benevolent Society, Janice Harvey explains: “The ladies running these charities [the Protestant Orphan Asylum and the Montreal Ladies Benevolent Society] believed that the children they admitted would benefit from a home-like environment designed to provide them with the education, moral training and skills they would need for the future. Both institutions were Protestant in every sense of the word. In creating a proper Protestant “home,” the ladies emphasized the middle-class values of obedience, order, discipline, and cleanliness, and they designed the institutional routine and activities to this end. Religious instruction was central to the charities’ work. Family prayers were held twice a day, ministers visited regularly and both moral and religious instruction were part of the curriculum. Education and work were also basic Protestant values and central components of a proper middle-class upbringing, these activities took up most of the day’s work. As a result, despite the ladies’ desire to create a real ‘home’ institutional life was highly regimented and routine. Children followed a daily schedule of prayers, meals, school and work, a routine that was rigorous and unchanging. Except for Sundays and holidays: up at six, morning prayers followed by breakfast, school from nine to noon, dinner at one, play, school from four to four thirty (LBS) two to five (POA), play, supper at six, evening prayers, bed at eight. Minor alterations in the winter had them rising later and retiring earlier. On Sundays they attended Church and Sunday school. Bells rang the time and signaled the different activities. It was the teacher’s duty to march the children to the appropriate room in orderly style and to keep them quiet. This was not an environment in which the spontaneity and energy of childhood could find a place. There was certainly little room for freedom or individuality. Determined to protect the children from unsavory influences, the ladies permitted very little contact with the outside community. The children attended school inside the institutions and for the most part had no contact with other children except at Sunday School. Parents were allowed to visit, but these visits were limited to once a week on Saturday afternoon. Complaints about visitors bringing too many sweets and children being sick afterwards led the POA to limit visiting rights to once a month by 1895. The LBS introduced a rule to limit sweets, but it was disregarded by parents. Because of this and the Committee’s evaluation that regular visits were too disruptive, by 1899 they had reduced parental visits to twice a month.” Janice Harvey, “The Protestant Orphan Asylum and the Montreal Ladies Benevolent Society: A Case Study in Protestant Child Charity in Montreal, 1822-1900,” (Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 2001), 172-173.

¹⁵⁹ In its annual report for 1913, the SPWC noted their efforts to help shut down the “so-called industrial school” Paspébiac, six hundred miles outside Montreal, “where children were subjected to the most atrocious cruelties ever heard or known of in the Province of Quebec.” McGill University, McLennan

At one level, the Industrial Schools Act empowered parents to bring before a magistrate a child they were “unable to control...by reason of his bad and vicious habits” to be sent to an industrial school. These parents were obliged “to cover the cost of maintenance of such a child in the industrial school,” thereby keeping parents financially responsible for their children.¹⁶⁰ At another level, the Act allowed for the removal of children who were not considered to be “under proper guardianship.” As Harvey suggests, these “evaluations were fraught with class prejudice, as the charity Committees imposed their middle-class definitions of appropriate behaviour on working-class individuals with a different culture and economic possibilities.”¹⁶¹ With the passage of an 1871 Act to empower the Managers of Industrial and Reformatory Schools, and of certain Charitable Institutions, to apprentice or place out children under their charge, “the rights, power and authority of the parents over and in respect of such child...[ceased and became]...vested and exercised by the managers of the industrial or Reformatory School.”¹⁶² The Industrial Schools Act and subsequent related legislation slowly eroded the supremacy of parental authority.¹⁶³

The Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children (SPWC) was established in 1882 and employed the Industrial Schools Act in its child-saving efforts. The Montreal Society was modeled on the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NYSPCC), which had been born with the Mary Ellen case.¹⁶⁴ The Montreal *Herald* considered the NYSPCC’s Seventh annual report “of special interest on

Library, Rare Book Room. Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children, Thirty-First Annual Report, 1913, 7.

¹⁶⁰ *An Act to amend the act 32 Victoria, chapter 17, concerning Industrial Schools, Statutes of Quebec* 1884, Vic. 47, c. 23, s. 14. This wording was retained in the *Quebec Statutes* 1888, c. 3139. The original Industrial School Act empowered parents to bring in a child that they are “unable to control.” *An Act Respecting Industrial Schools, Statutes of Quebec* 1869, Vic. 32, c. 17, s. 14.

¹⁶¹ Harvey, “The Protestant Orphan Asylum and the Montreal Ladies Benevolent Society,” 198.

¹⁶² *An Act to Empower the Managers of Industrial and Reformatory Schools, and of certain Charitable Institutions, to apprentice or place out children under their charge,* *Quebec Statutes*, Vic 35, c. 13, s. 7.

¹⁶³ The Civil Code of 1866 considered children as the “property” of their parents or guardians. See, Tamara Myers, “The Voluntary Delinquent: Parents, Daughters, and the Montreal Juvenile Delinquents’ Court in 1918,” *Canadian Historical Review* 88, 2 (June 1999) 266. See also, Paul-A. Crepeau and John E. C. Brierley, eds., *Code Civil – Civil Code: 1866-1980: Édition historique et critique – An Historical and Critical Edition* (Montréal: Société Québécoise D’Information Juridique, 1981), Article 243, 113.

¹⁶⁴ “Protection of Children,” *Montreal Gazette*, 13 February 1882 and “The Protection of Children,” *Montreal Gazette*, 18 February 1882 in National Archives, Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children, MG 28, series I129, Minute Book 1882-1891, n. p. See also, *An Act to amend chapter seventy-one of the Consolidated Statutes of Canada, and the act of this province 32 Victoria, chapter 43, Statutes of Quebec*, 1882, Vic. 45, c. 37, s.1.

account of a similar institution recently formed in this city.”¹⁶⁵ The object of the New York Society was “the prevention of physical pain and suffering to children...Its officers go into the slums and dens of New York city, remove helpless and wronged children by the strong arm of the law.”¹⁶⁶ Physical pain and suffering was clearly limited to slums and dens rather than the drawing rooms of the middle class. The children were placed in “institutions” to “reform their vicious habits, give them moral and intellectual training and procure comfortable homes for them.” The “business of the society is to bring little children at all hours from the streets.”¹⁶⁷

As we have seen, before the SPWC was established, certain images, tropes and scenarios were entrenched. The drunken parent and the neglected child were captured in “The Clew,” an illustrated scene in which “the child was evidently lost! – cried bitterly – could not tell us where its parents lived, or whether she was an Orphan, or what her Father was – or where she went to School. - Enter Intelligent Policeman. Policeman (in a friendly whisper) [asked], ‘Where does your Mother get her Gin, my dear?’ And the mystery was solved!”¹⁶⁸ There were also stories about youth like Pierre Lionais, “a homeless wanderer,” an eleven year old with no parents who “lived by begging through the day and sleeping wherever he could at night.” He was sent to the reformatory to “learn a trade.”¹⁶⁹ Another report centered on a policeman who followed two young beggars home, where their father denied having sent them out to beg. But the children said that they were afraid to go home because they had not enough money yet.¹⁷⁰ Absent parents, drunken parents, parents who sent their children out to beg framed the contemporary imagination of children in need of protection. For example, consider the following report by the *Montreal Star* on the SPWC:

its agent, Detective Cinq Mars, this morning *laid violent hands* upon two little waifs that had been abandoned by their parents. Adele and Rosanna Destras, aged respectively 7 and 4 years, were found in a hovel on Manufacturers street, where they had been subsisting for some time on the charity of the neighbors. The attention of the Society has been directed to a class of children who make a precarious livelihood by selling papers. If these sales had not been good, these

¹⁶⁵ “Prevention of Cruelty to Children: The New York Society,” *Montreal Herald*, 11 March 1882, 1.

¹⁶⁶ “Prevention of Cruelty to Children: The New York Society,” *Montreal Herald*, 11 March 1882, 1.

¹⁶⁷ “Prevention of Cruelty to Children: The New York Society,” *Montreal Herald*, 11 March 1882, 1.

¹⁶⁸ “The Clew,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 18 April 1879, 4.

¹⁶⁹ “City Items – A Homeless Wanderer,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 13 November 1879, 2.

¹⁷⁰ “A Policeman follows two little beggars home,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 21 November 1879, 8.

unfortunates are afraid to go home, and hang about St. James street until midnight, hiding in doorways, out of which they rush to accost every passer-by with a pitiful tale of 'only one paper left,' and a moving recital of the 'licking' they will receive when they reach home. These children are put up to this dodge by their worthless parents, who expend every cent of the money thus gained for liquor.¹⁷¹

This early report indicates that children were searched out in the "hovels" where they were living. The presence of children working in the streets and especially at night was considered highly problematic, more so because commentators imagined that the money went to supply their "worthless parents" with alcohol. The specter of the threat of physical punishment on returning home empty handed further vilified these "worthless parents".

Interestingly and in contrast to the centrality of "wayward boys" in the secondary literature on child-saving,¹⁷² according to Montreal reporters "Most of the street Arabs are girls, to whom this mode of life must be destructive of all moral feelings."¹⁷³ In another report, "Detective Cinq Mars of the S.P.W.C. arrested three little girls...for begging on the streets and brought them before the Recorder. Marie Josephine Lamontagne, aged 18 [hardly a "little girl"], was sent to the Reformatory for three years and Annie and Delia Lalonde, aged respectively 8 and 5 years, were each *sentenced* to five years in the Industrial School."¹⁷⁴ There was also the case of "the three little daughters of Roblin, the old blind beggar," who had lost his sight by a blast when mining,

¹⁷¹ S.P.W. C.: More Waifs – The Little Night Wanderers Taken Care of," *Montreal Star*, 23 November 1883, 4. Emphasis added.

¹⁷² Janice Harvey's work on the Recorder's Court record of industrial school admissions argues that from 1883 to 1917 "more boys than girls were admitted to the Ladies' Benevolent Industrial School." In her work on Toronto, Xiaobei Chen argues that "the key concern of child savers was the dirty-looking, ill-clothed and wayward boy." See, Harvey, "Poverty and the Law," 10n19; Chen, "Cultivating Children as You Would Valuable Plants," 462; See also, Bryan Hogeveen, "The Evils with Which we are Called to Grapple,"; Leonard Berlanstein, "Vagrants, Beggars, and Thieves: Delinquent Boys in Mid-Nineteenth Century Paris," *Journal of Social History* 12, no. 4 (Summer 1979)531-552.

¹⁷³ S.P.W. C.: More Waifs – The Little Night Wanderers Taken Care of," *Montreal Star*, 23 November 1883, 4. The Annual Reports of the Montreal Recorder's Court confirm that girls outnumbered boys in the early years. In 1881, 24 females under 14 sent to industrial school. In 1882, 40 under 14 females sent to industrial school. In 1883, 67 children "without proper guardianship" came before the Recorder. 21 were males & 42 were females & 4 were protestant and were sent to the Ladies Benevolent Society. In 1884, 110 "children without proper guardianship" (53 males & 57 females) were sent to industrial school. See, City of Montreal Archives, Recorder's Court Annual Reports, 1881-1884. See Appendix 1 at the end of the chapter.

¹⁷⁴ "Police Matters - Begging without a license – An ill-used wife – Deserting from service – Robbing his employers – Recorder's Court," *Montreal Gazette*, 30 January 1884, 3. Emphasis added.

and spent his days begging on street corners. His “children, aged respectively 11, 8 and 6 years, were found in a hovel in rear of No. 26 Dubord street, perishing with hunger and cold. With their thin, haggard faces and scanty rags, the children presented such a pitiful sight in the Court, that the Recorder ordered the group be photographed so that the general public could form an estimate of what real destitution is. The children were all sentenced to five years in the Industrial School.”¹⁷⁵ In this rendition, the accident at the mine where their father had worked is a detail amidst the description of their poverty rather than its source. The girls were found in a “hovel,” presumably their home rather than on the streets where their father currently worked for what he could earn by begging. The way protection was envisioned and practiced was through detention; the girls were given the maximum sentence allowed by law for confinement in various institutions.¹⁷⁶

Poor families were separated when children were removed and institutionalized. Under the headline “Clearing out the slums,” the *Montreal Gazette* reported that “On Saturday morning Detective Cinq Mars of the S.P.W.C., *unearthed* a family named Roy living in a wretched hovel on Montcalm street in a state of destitution. They had only arrived recently in this town from Rimouski where the father died two, [sic] years ago, and the mother and the oldest girl have since become sick from want and exposure. The three youngest, Zenon, aged 11, Napoleon, 10, and Thomas, 7, were brought before the Recorder, who sent them to the Industrial School, Thomas for three and the others for two years. The St. Vincent de Paul Society will take care of the rest of the family.”¹⁷⁷ Again, this family was “unearthed”, searched out in their home. Their crime was “destitution.” The sentence was separation and institutionalization of the children. As this case demonstrates, the younger the child, the longer the sentence. Presumably as a way of helping children, sentencing reflected a desire to keep children confined to industrial schools for the maximum period permitted by the law.

Among the primary tasks of the SPWC was literally “Gathering *in* the Waifs” – both boys and girls.¹⁷⁸ The “gathering in” referred not only to bringing children from the

¹⁷⁵ “More Misery: Shocking Picture of a Destitute Family,” 22 December 1883, 6. Emphasis added.

¹⁷⁶ *An Act to amend the act 32 Victoria, chapter 17, concerning Industrial Schools, Statutes of Quebec* 1884, c. 23, s. 2.

¹⁷⁷ “Police Matters – Clearing out the slums – A curious mania – Fond of music – Selling liquor on Sunday – Recorder’s Court,” *Montreal Gazette*, 14 January 1884, 3. Emphasis added.

¹⁷⁸ “Gathering in the Waifs: S. P. W. & C.,” *Montreal Star*, 3 December 1883, 4. Emphasis added.

street before the Recorder, but also to their ultimate detention and confinement to years in an Industrial School or other institution. As we have seen, it was reported that the children were on the streets begging for their parents, despite the fact that part of their work on the street may have been about earning their *contribution* to the family economy. For instance, “four boys, aged respectively 3, 5, 11 and 12 years, picked off the street while begging for their parents, were sent to the reformatory or the Industrial School for terms ranging from three to five years.”¹⁷⁹ In another case “Three children named Henriette, Emma and Joseph Déschesne, aged respectively 11, 7 and 5, were rescued from the streets yesterday afternoon by Detective Cinq Mars of the S.P.W.C. and brought before the Recorder. The eldest child, through exposure has had her face severely frost-bitten. They will be sent to the Industrial School at Point Levis.”¹⁸⁰ There is no doubt that in this case child rescuers were trying to help; it is the way they envisioned and implemented a particular regime of help that I wish to bring into focus.

The centrality of poverty cannot be overlooked in this study of the apprehension of children. The story about “a little eight year old boy named Corristine” who was sentenced to five years in the Industrial School is illustrative: “In the examination of this little chap, who did not wear a stitch of underclothing,” he stated that “his mother kept such a disreputable house that he ran away and lived with the mother of a little friend, who was one of the boys provided for on Saturday. This woman sent both of them to beg and lived on their earnings. On Saturday he collected fifty cents, and gave all over to her.”¹⁸¹ His former “disreputable house,” his lack of undergarments, and being sent out to beg were all signs of his poverty and rendered him in need of protection. The disreputable nature of the women in his life also marked him as endangered.

The charge of not having “proper guardianship,” as stipulated under the 1869 Industrial Schools Act, brought many children before the Recorder.¹⁸² The unemployed, those on the tramp for work, and those who consumed alcohol were not considered proper guardians and their children were apprehended. Consider the case of Henri and

¹⁷⁹ “Gathering in the Waifs: S. P. W. & C.,” *Montreal Star*, 3 December 1883, 4.

¹⁸⁰ “Police Matters – A light list – Waifs cared for – Stealing Butter – Not providing - Recorder’s Court,” *Montreal Gazette*, 12 January 1884, 3.

¹⁸¹ “Gathering in the Waifs: S. P. W. & C.,” *Montreal Star*, 3 December 1883, 4.

¹⁸² *An Act Respecting Industrial Schools, Statutes of Quebec* 1869, c. 17, s. 12. This section was repealed in the 1884 amendment.

Joseph Rochon, aged respectively 8 and 11 years, who were “arrested...by Detective Cinq Mars, of the S.P.W.C., on a charge of not being under proper guardianship. Their father is a drunken loafer, and their mother deserted them a month ago. They were brought before the Recorder, who sent them to the Industrial School, the former for two and latter for three years.”¹⁸³ In another case, “Detective Cinq Mars brought up a little girl named Agnes Narbonne, aged 11, for not being under proper guardianship. The girl’s mother was dead and her father, brother and sister had deserted her and left the Tanneries where they lived. His Honour sent her to the Industrial School for four years.”¹⁸⁴ Many girls who were deserted by their parents were brought before the Recorder.¹⁸⁵

There is no doubt that, like girls on the streets, women too were vulnerable. As breadwinners and sole parents, single mothers were vulnerable and in need; succor was afforded through the confinement of their children to industrial schools. For instance, Cinq Mars “took in charge three children residing on Bronson lane named Catherine Johnston, aged 13, Henry 8, and William 5. Their father is in prison, and their mother being obliged to go out to work by the day, was afraid to leave them alone. Besides she was unable to support them. The girl was sent to Bon Pasteur for two years, and the boys for five years each.”¹⁸⁶ Children who were deserted by their fathers and whose mothers lay dying in the hospital, were brought before the Recorder by Cinq Mars, the “four little waifs named respectively Emelia Chenier 9, Pamela Chenier 8, Edward Fortin 5, Chas.

¹⁸³ “Police Matters – Waifs and Vagrants – Driving on the sidewalk – Beating her husband -Recorder’s Court,” *Montreal Gazette*, 16 January 1884, 3. For other cases of children sent to the Industrial School at Levis “for not being under proper guardianship,” see, “Police Matters – The Fulham street affray – Wife beating – Gathering in the Waifs – Selling liquor on Sunday – Police Court,” *Montreal Gazette*, 7 April 1884, 3; “Police Matters – Drunk and loitering – Wife beating – Attempted Suicide – A disorderly passenger – Special Sessions – Recorder’s Court,” *Montreal Gazette*, 7 May 1884, 3.

¹⁸⁴ “Police Matters – Undesirable neighbors – Unfilial conduct – Sad case of desertion – Attempted Suicide – Recorder’s Court,” *Montreal Gazette*, 19 February 1884, 3.

¹⁸⁵ Mary Ann Tracey, “being deserted by her parents,” was brought before the Recorder by Cinq Mars. “She was sent to the Industrial School for two years.” See, “Police Matters – Warning to boys – Work of the S.P.W.C. – Stowaways – Loose, idle and disorderly – Recorder’s Court,” *Montreal Gazette*, 24 May 1884, 3.

¹⁸⁶ “Police Matters – A light day’s business – Waifs and strays – Stealing from the cars – Shop-lifting – Recorder’s Court,” *Montreal Gazette*, 30 April 1884, 3. For another case of a mother deserted by her husband and her “children sent to the industrial school by Detective Cinq Mars,” see, “Police Matters – Discharging firecrackers – An unfortunate family – Deserting from his ship – Shop breaking – Recorder’s Court,” *Montreal Gazette*, 28 May 1884, 3.

Fortin 4 years old...[they were] sent to the Industrial School for five years.”¹⁸⁷ In these two instances, clearly mothers without help and support from their children’s fathers were most in need of assistance. That assistance came in the form of the institutionalization of their children.

When mothers transgressed prevailing moral codes of conduct, their children were vulnerable to apprehension. For instance, Detective Cinq Mars “made a descent... on a house occupied by Alphonsine Masse ...[he] arrested her three illegitimate children named respectively Alexis, Jean and Alexander. They were living in a frightful state of destitution. He brought them before the Recorder who sent them to the industrial school at Point Levis for five years.”¹⁸⁸ Their illegitimacy and their frightful destitution were important descriptors. It is also important to note that the SPWC detective descended on their house; these children were not apprehended in the street. In another case, Cinq Mars “arrested a young girl named Georgiana Parent, the natural child of a woman who is living with a man named Labelle...She was charged with not being under proper guardianship, and his Honor sent her to the Industrial School for three years.”¹⁸⁹ In her work on the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Linda Gordon has argued that child neglect became “by definition a female crime.”¹⁹⁰ The poverty of single mothers (because women earned far less than men), and cultural double standards which held mothers to a higher standard than fathers and made women more responsible for the moral upbringing of their children all, worked to cast single mothers as “child-neglecters.”¹⁹¹

In Montreal, although the offense was not common, women were predominant among those convicted of cruelty to children. (See Appendix C) Most children who came before

¹⁸⁷ “Police Matters – The Recorder’s Record – Homeless waifs – Assault cases – Deserting sailors – A mean theft, Recorder’s Court,” 10 July 1884, 3. There were other cases of children being sent to industrial schools because their parents were dead and “no one to care for” them. See, “Police Matters,” *Montreal Gazette*, 21 May 1884, 3; “Police Matters – A specimen of cool cheek – An amusing scene in court – Insubordinate seamen – A complicated case, Recorder’s Court,” *Montreal Gazette*, 15 May 1884, 3. See also, “More Waifs: A New Regulation,” *Montreal Star*, 25 March 1884, 3. On a case where Cinq Mars tracks down a mother but not the father for child desertion, see, “Child Desertion: Unwelcome Addition to a Family on Cadieux Street,” *Montreal Star*, 4 March 1884, 4.

¹⁸⁸ “Waifs Provided For,” *Montreal Gazette*, 9 February 1884, 3.

¹⁸⁹ “Police Matters – Robbing her benefactors – Refusing to provide – False pretenses – Recorder’s Court,” *Montreal Gazette*, 7 March 1884, 3.

¹⁹⁰ Gordon, *Heroes of their Own Lives*, 4.

¹⁹¹ Gordon, “Single Mothers as Child Neglecters,” *Heroes of their Own Lives*, 92-98.

the Recorder were either charged for vagrancy or for not being under proper guardianship: there were very few cases of cruelty to children. Of a total of fifteen cases for the period from 1867 to 1890, a twenty-three year period, eleven of those arrested for cruelty to children were women. Despite the commonly-held view that men are abusers¹⁹² of animals, women and children— in Montreal, it was women who were most often charged and convicted for cruelty to children.

Mothers who worked in the sex trade were most vulnerable to losing their children. Judith Fingard plainly states that John Naylor, the force behind Nova Scotia's Society for the Prevention of Cruelty, "automatically condemned prostitutes... as neglectful mothers. It was inconceivable to him that a woman who sold her body for a living could possibly be a good mother."¹⁹³ Children of single mothers who work in the sex trade continue to be vulnerable to apprehension and removal by Children's Aid Societies.¹⁹⁴ Clearly, some houses were considered dangerous – none more so than "disorderly houses." When Detective Cinq Mars and Sergeant Beauchemin "raided two disorderly houses on Jurors street," they "arrested Clara Fitzgerald, wife of John Abbott, and her three children, Robert, John and George, aged respectively 11, 5 and 4 years. In the other house were Mary Moffat, aged 29, Rosa Morris, wife of Joseph Brothurst, Edward Brothurst, aged 9, and Annie, aged 5 years."¹⁹⁵ Cinq Mars, "who made the arrest, testified that they had found these people living in a most wretched state of destitution, without any fires and scarcely any clothing. The children were without boots, and before the police could venture to take them out into the cold, they had to wrap up their feet and legs in rags."¹⁹⁶ The following day "the men and women were discharged on proving that they worked for their livelihood. Four of the children were sent to the Industrial School for three years, and the fifth was discharged on his mother promising to

¹⁹² Carol Bauer and Lawrence Ritt, "'A Husband is a Beating Animal': Frances Power Cobbe Confronts the Wife-Abuse Problem in Victorian England," *International Journal of Women Studies* 6 no. 2 (1983): 99-118.

¹⁹³ Fingard, *The Darker Side of Life of Victorian Halifax*, 184.

¹⁹⁴ Deborah R. Brock, *Making Work, Making Trouble: Prostitution as a Social Prostitution* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998): 81.

¹⁹⁵ "Disorderly Houses," *Montreal Gazette*, 28 January 1884, 3. For another report on a raid of a "disorderly house" by Detective Cinq Mars and a squad of men from the No. 6 police station, see, "Police Matters – Discharging Firearms – Assault on a female – Carter refusing a fare – Housebreaking – Youthful depravity – Recorder's Court," *Montreal Gazette*, 23 April 1884, 3.

¹⁹⁶ "More Destitution," *Montreal Star*, 29 January 1884, 1.

apprentice him to a trade at once.”¹⁹⁷ Although the adults were discharged, the children faced years of confinement in industrial schools. In another case, “a mother was convicted on her little daughter’s evidence...in her evidence, this little girl [she was thirteen] showed that she had witnessed the most degrading scenes in her home, and was conversant with all kinds of crime.” While the adults were sentenced to six months each, the thirteen year old and her six year old brother were sentenced “to terms of detention in the Industrial Home.”¹⁹⁸ Detective Cinq Mars also brought up two children, Calisxe Parent, aged 13, and Helene, aged 5, the former for being an inmate of a disorderly house on St. Charles Borrommee street, and the latter for not being under guardianship. They were sent to the Reformatory, the one for three and the other for five years.¹⁹⁹ From this ruling, it appears that having no proper guardianship was a comparable crime to being an inmate of a disorderly house.

Evidence suggests that in general, the law was harsher on children than on adults, for similar infractions. As we have seen, the 1874 statute on vagrancy extended the maximum sentence for the offence to six months imprisonment; the Industrial Schools Act provided for a longer maximum sentence, five years in 1869 and three years in the 1884 amendment. For instance, Maxime Beaudry, an adult charged with vagrancy, “was sent down for three months.” When Maxime Perrault and Mary Ann Carney were arrested on a charge of vagrancy, “the former was sent down for two months at hard labour, the latter who is only eleven years of age, was sent to the reformatory for three years. Marie Louise Drapeau, aged fifteen, was sent to the Reformatory for two years; James Laverty, aged nine, who was arrested by Detective Cinq Mars for not being under proper guardianship, was sent to the Reformatory for two years.”²⁰⁰ In another case, “Marie Dupre, whose husband had deserted her five years ago, was brought by Detective

¹⁹⁷ “Police Matters, Disorderly houses – An unfilial son – Shoplifting – The Abbe Chabert cases – Recorder’s Court,” *Montreal Gazette*, 29 January 1884, 3.

¹⁹⁸ “A Mother Convicted on her Little Daughter’s Evidence,” *Montreal Star*, 6 March 1884, 3.

¹⁹⁹ “Police Matters – Sad cases of destitution – Keeping filthy premises – Assault and robbery – Stealing Tobacco – Recorder’s Court,” *Montreal Gazette*, 29 February 1884, 3. For another case in which a six year old and her nine year old sister, whose father was dead and their mother was “keeping a suspected house in St. Charles [also on] Borommee street,” were sentenced to five and three years respectively to a school of industry, See, “Police Matters – Obstructing passengers – Stealing a ride – A customs officer with a weakness for spoons – False pretenses – Recorder’s Court,” *Montreal Gazette*, 21 March 1 1884, 3.

²⁰⁰ “Police Matters – Refusing to Provide – Juvenile Delinquents – Liquor Cases – Shoplifting – Recorder’s Court,” *Montreal Gazette*, 22 February 1884, 3.

Cinq Mars, of the S.P.W.C., she being utterly destitute, on a charge of vagrancy... was fined 20c [sic] or three months.”²⁰¹ When fourteen year old Joseph Marion was brought up by Detective Cinq Mars on the charge of vagrancy, he was sent to the Industrial School for three years.²⁰² On the other hand, “Mrs. Phillips, brought up by Detective Cinq Mars on a charge of vagrancy, was sentenced to six months imprisonment.”²⁰³ Children received far longer sentences than adults. Contemporaries translated the idea of child protection as prolonged detention. The age that came to see children as beings distinct from adults, also institutionalized them for years over and above their adult contemporaries. Although to children kept from their families it may have felt like punishment, it was the way humanitarians envisioned and implemented a regime of help and protection for children.

According to the *Montreal Star*, the SPWC “prosecut[ed] its work in regard to street waifs with great vigor.”²⁰⁴ In an 1884 report the *Witness* described “how the officers of the SPWC do their work” in a report on “a night with one of them.” The reporter followed Detective Cinq-Mars on his beat as he visited “shanties” and rooms where there was “misery.”²⁰⁵ In one room, when the woman saw the detective she said “she had never needed to ask for assistance from any society and did not want any.”²⁰⁶ As its detective, Cinq Mars rigorously pursued his work and “as usual” brought before the Recorder “a batch of prisoners.”²⁰⁷ His rigor of bringing children before the Recorder cannot be attributed to the fact that at the beginning of his career with the SPWC he was paid \$1 a case and an extra \$1 per conviction.²⁰⁸ In February 1884, his salary became

²⁰¹ “Police Matters – Sad cases of destitution – Keeping filthy premises – Assault and robbery – Stealing Tobacco – Recorder’s Court,” *Montreal Gazette*, 29 February 1884, 3.

²⁰² “Police Matters - A youthful vagrant – Keeping a house of ill-fame – Wife beating – The Lachine robberies – Recorder’s Court,” *Montreal Gazette*, 18 April 1884, 3.

²⁰³ “Police Matters – Passing Counterfeit Coin – Stealing from the Person – False Pretenses – Recorder’s Court,” *Montreal Gazette*, 19 April 1884, 3. An “old” woman, Ellen Hennesey, arrested by Cinq Mars for vagrancy was also sentenced to six months imprisonment. See, “Police Matters – Recorder’s Court,” *Montreal Gazette*, 21 April 1884, 3.

²⁰⁴ “Gathering in the Waifs: S. P. W. & C.,” *Montreal Star*, 3 December 1883, 4.

²⁰⁵ “How the Officers of the SPWC do their work – A Night with One of Them,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 7 May 1884, 5.

²⁰⁶ “How the Officers of the SPWC do their work – A Night with One of Them,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 7 May 1884, 5.

²⁰⁷ “Police Matters – A light day’s business – Waifs and strays – Stealing from the cars – Shop-lifting – Recorder’s Court,” *Montreal Gazette*, 30 April 1884, 3.

²⁰⁸ National Archives, Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children, MG 28, series I129, Minute Book 1882-1891, 10 December 1883, 32.

\$300 a year, “instead of so much per case,”²⁰⁹ but his rigor did not diminish. In July, his zealous approach led to his dismissal from the SPWC; Cinq Mars was fired.²¹⁰ The circumstances of his dismissal illustrate not only that he took the work seriously but also help to contextualize what it meant to (respectable) contemporaries to be brought before the Recorder.

Cinq Mars had brought a girl, Albertine Champagne, 14, before the Recorder “as a bad character without bringing any proof to support the charge and the girl was discharged by the Recorder stating that she left the court without a stain on her character.”²¹¹ The secretary, Edward Hollis, only learned of the case when he read the newspaper report despite the fact “that he had continually told Cinq Mars to report every case at the office first and get his instructions before proceeding but that he had not done so.” Cinq Mars was fired and the SPWC sent letters to the local press to exonerate the Society.²¹² “Entirely on suspicion,” Cinq Mars had charged Champagne with “being a person who has no peaceable profession or calling to maintain herself by, unlawfully does for the most part support herself by the avails of prostitution.”²¹³ A *Montreal Star* editorial agreed that the SPWC

has done a sensible thing in getting rid of its detective. Such a Society properly conducted is invaluable, but unless the greatest care is exercised by its officers, may easily become an aggressive nuisance. A Society for the persecution of women and children could do no worse thing than to drag an innocent girl into a police court, and without a particle of evidence accuse her of immoral conduct. Women are convicted of these offenses on very little evidence in Montreal. Some of the police seem to assume that every woman is immoral until she is proved virtuous...A policeman never ventures to arrest a thief, on general principles, simply because he is a thief, he arrests him when he gets the chance for some particular theft.²¹⁴

²⁰⁹ National Archives, Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children, MG 28, series I129, Minute Book 1882-1891, 12 February 1884, 37.

²¹⁰ National Archives, Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children, MG 28, series I129, Minute Book 1882-1891, 25 July 1884, 43.

²¹¹ National Archives, Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children, MG 28, series I129, Minute Book 1882-1891, 25 July 1884, 43; “Police Matters – The usual drunks in the Recorder’s Court – Argument in the Westgate-Simpson case – Another perjury case – Four Years in the Penitentiary – Recorder’s Court,” *Montreal Gazette*, 25 July 1884, 3.

²¹² National Archives, Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children, MG 28, series I129, Minute Book 1882-1891, 25 July 1884, 44; “S.P.W.C – The Services of Detective Cinq Mars Dispensed with,” *Montreal Star* 25 July 1884, 3.

²¹³ S.P.W.C. – The Services of Detective Cinq Mars Dispensed with,” *Montreal Star* 25 July 1884, 3.

²¹⁴ “Editorial,” *Montreal Star*, 26 July 1884, 4.

After Cinq Mars' dismissal, the SPWC decided "to carry out its operations without the aid of a special detective. Any complaints made to the Society would be thoroughly investigated."²¹⁵

That summer, charges were brought against the secretary of the SPWC Edward Hollis, for "abducting a girl from the care of her alleged guardian." The case against Hollis was eventually discharged.²¹⁶ Although the details of the case against Hollis require further research, the charge against this SPWC secretary resembles the charges brought against other child reformers, including W. T. Stead in Britain and C.J. South of the Vancouver Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in 1903. South was charged with indecent assault of nine year old Mary Gray, "a female under the age of fourteen." Historian Robert Adamoski argues that "the incident can be interrogated as an expression of the struggles that surrounded the emergence of a new mode of regulating families in British Columbia,"²¹⁷ which it clearly was. On the other hand, the British reformer W. T. Stead wanted "to prove to the public how easy it was to procure a young girl" for prostitution and so he "obtained one himself."²¹⁸ Stead's plan backfired and he was charged and found guilty of abduction of the thirteen year old Eliza Armstrong from her parents' home.²¹⁹ "Philanthropic abduction,"²²⁰ children "stolen" from their parents without due process,²²¹ even in attempts to help or save them had compromised the integrity of the SPWC and led to arrest of its secretary. After Cinq Mars was fired and Hollis was arrested, the SPWC certainly became more cautious and brought far fewer children before the Recorder.²²²

²¹⁵ "S.P.W.C. – The Result of an Unfounded Charge," *Montreal Gazette*, 26 July 1884, 3.

²¹⁶ "Protecting Women and Children: Annual Meeting of the Society in the Natural History Rooms," *Montreal Star*, 24 January 1885, 4.

²¹⁷ Adamoski, "Charity is One Thing and the Administration of Justice is Another," 153. Adamoski does not consider the role of age of consent legislation.

²¹⁸ Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 101.

²¹⁹ Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful*, 81-134; Ann Stafford, *The Age of Consent* (London: Hooder and Stoughton, 1964).

²²⁰ Parr, *Labouring Children*, 62-69.

²²¹ Gordon, *Heroes of their own Lives*, 94.

²²² "Mr. Hollis, Secretary, read the annual report for 1888, which stated that since the organization of the society 738 cases had been attended to and out of the prosecutions instituted 435 convictions had been obtained. It was found necessary to remove from brutal parents and improper surroundings 281 children who were cared for in various institutions in the city...in the past year 21 children [were] placed in institutions." In contrast to its first annual meeting when it was reported that in its year, "58 children [were] taken from miserable homes and placed in various institutions in the city." See, "Women and Children: The

In Britain in 1885, according to Judith Walkowitz, “Stead’s campaign forced the passage of the age-of-consent legislation... [which] raised the age of consent for girls from thirteen to sixteen.”²²³ In Canada, an Act for the Protection of Women and Girls, fully supported by the SPWC, was passed in June of 1886. The Act criminalized seduction or attempted seduction of “any girl of previously chaste character” over the age of twelve and under the age of sixteen.²²⁴ In 1890, the age of consent was raised to fourteen through the amendment to the Criminal Law which made it a felony for “every one who unlawfully and carnally knows and abuses any girl under the age of fourteen.”²²⁵ In Canada, the SPWC failed in its attempts to raise the age of consent to “at least” sixteen.²²⁶

The infantilizing²²⁷ aspects of the SPWC’s efforts to raise the age of consent are clear in the context of the shifts in categorization by age. For instance, the 1869

Society for Promoting Their Protection Holds Its Annual Meeting,” *Montreal Star*, 26 January 1889, 6; S.P.W. & C.,” *Montreal Star*, 13 February 1884, 3. In its report for 1885, the Society stated that “during the past year there had been few prosecutions, owing to the careful and precautionary measures adopted, and every means were tried to arouse public opinion and sympathy, and quicken the hearts of the people to the thorough realization of the spirit of the Christian faith and the principles and duties of civilization.” See, “Protection of Women and Children: Fourth Annual Meeting of the Society Last Evening – Satisfactory Results – Election of Officers,” *Montreal Star*, 30 January 1886, 5.

²²³ The bill also gave police far greater power to prosecute streetwalkers and brothel-keepers as well as criminalized relations between men and boys of all ages, to protect working class boys from paying middle class youth. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 82; Karen Dubinsky, *Improper Advances: Rape and Heterosexual Conflict in Ontario, 1880-1929* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993), 68 & 81. In the Nova Scotia SPC annual for 1889, five girls under sixteen were “rescued from Houses of ill-fame and sent to institutions or to friends.” Nova Scotia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty, *12th Annual Report*, (1889) 11. “Recent feminist scholarship has shown that age of consent “was a misnomer, since the rationale behind the law was prohibiting rather than empowering in its attitude to women.” See, Matthew Waites, “Sexual Citizens: Legislating the Age of Consent in Britain,” in *Politics of Sexuality: Identity, Gender and Citizenship*, eds. Terrell Carver and Veronique Mottier (London: Routledge, 1998), 26.

²²⁴ *An Act to punish seduction, and like offenses, and to make further provision for the Protection of Women and Girls, Statutes of Canada*, 1886, Vic. 39, c. 52, s. 1.

²²⁵ The penalty for “carnally knowing” a girl under fourteen made every one “liable to imprisonment for life, or for any term not less than five years, and to be whipped.” The amendment also made it a “misdemeanor” for any “attempts to have unlawful carnal knowledge of any girl under fourteen... liable to two years’ imprisonment, and to be whipped.” *Offenses Against the Person, Statutes of Canada*, 1890, Vic. 53, c. 37, s. 39 & s. 40. The 1892 Criminal Code also confirmed that a person under fourteen could not consent “to the act of indecency.” *The Criminal Code, Statutes of Canada*, 1892, Title V, s. 261.

²²⁶ National Archives, Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children, MG 28, series I129, Minute Book 1882-1891, 12 February 1889, 84; 24 June 1890, 125; 13 January 1891, 138. See also, Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children, “Moral Legislation: A Statement,” (Montreal: Gazette Printing Co., 1890), 6. The SPWC wanted to raise the age of consent in Canada from twelve years “to a point somewhat nearer to ‘civilized decency,’” that is, to sixteen.

²²⁷ According to the Oxford English Dictionary Online, “infantilization consists in the performance of activities in the care of a child beyond the time when such activities usually occur.”

Industrial Schools Act targeted children under fourteen, “but not in any case extending beyond the time when the child will attain the age of sixteen,”²²⁸ the 1884 amendment of the Act targeted children over seven and under twelve,²²⁹ the 1888 revised statutes retained the 1884 age groups and lowered detention from the five year maximum of the 1884 statute to a three year maximum.²³⁰ So while legislators lowered the age of youth to be detained at these institutions, the SPWC was trying to raise the age of consent. In effect, protection meant delayed capacity and responsibility which infantilized and disempowered girls.

Consider, too, the SPWC’s strong support of the 1885 Quebec Factory Acts²³¹ in which girls, defined by the act as signifying those “aged over fourteen and under eighteen,” were legally regulated to work a maximum of ten hours a day, six days (60 hours) a week; the same maximum was legally mandated for boys over twelve.²³² According to the SPWC in its support of the Factory Acts and their advocacy to raise the age of consent to sixteen, a girl could work for two years at a factory at 60 hours, six ten hour days a week, and not have the capacity to consent to sex.²³³ The SPWC resisted attempts to lower the legal age to thirteen for factory work for girls, which it considered “cruel and against the best wishes of society.”²³⁴ Its efforts were meant to protect girls

http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/cgi/entry/50116136?case_id=pgvR-MgvTph-9724&p=1
15 December 2006.

²²⁸ *An Act Respecting Industrial Schools, Statutes of Quebec* 1869, c. 17, s. 12 & s. 16.

²²⁹ “...unless his parents oblige themselves to pay the cost of his board and maintenance, or unless such a child be prevented from leaving by sickness or bodily infirmities.” *An Act to amend the act 32 Victoria, chapter 17, concerning Industrial Schools, Statutes of Quebec* 1884, c. 23, s. 15b.

²³⁰ *Industrial Schools, Revised Quebec Statutes*, 1888, c. 3, s. 3142.

²³¹ Lorna Hurl notes that the SPWC were alone among reformers to petition the government for “protective labour legislation,” although Hurl was not able to locate information on the SPWC. See, Lorna F. Hurl, “Restricting Child Factory Labour in Late Nineteenth Century Ontario,” *Labour / Le Travail* 21 (Spring 1988), 106n.34.

²³² *An Act to protect the life and health of persons employed in factories, Statutes of Quebec*, Vic. 48, c. 32, s.2 (9) & s. 10. The Act defined “a child” as a “person less than fourteen” and a “woman” as “a woman aged eighteen and upwards.” On the Ontario Factory Acts, see, Susan E. Houston, “The ‘Waifs and Strays’ of a Late Victorian City: Juvenile Delinquents in Toronto,” in *Childhood and Family in Canadian History*, ed. Joy Parr (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), 139.

²³³ The relation between work and sex in these pieces of legislation on youth needs to be explored further. With the exception of Karen Dubinsky’s *Improper Advances* the history of age of consent is understudied and undertheorized by Canadian historians. Carolyn Strange’s only brief mentions of this age related legislation. See, Carolyn Strange, *Toronto’s Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasure of the City, 1880-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1995), 97-98.

²³⁴ National Archives, Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children, MG 28, series I129, Minute Book 1882-1891, 14 October 1890, 134.

but they also undercut girls' autonomy, other options and possibilities for earning a livelihood and for self-expression.

Conclusion

I have argued in this chapter that the rise of the movement for the protection of children was firmly set within prevailing ideas of poverty, rather than a movement to combat physical cruelty and violence. The children that Cinq Mars brought before the Recorder were there because of their families' poverty, not because of violence inflicted on them by their parents. Children in their homes and on the streets, whether they worked the streets or loafed on them, were targeted as "poor helpless creatures" in need of assistance.²³⁵ This chapter has argued that the history of child protection is inextricably linked to contemporary responses to poverty and to poor families in particular. The origins of this movement emerged in the context in which some parents were vilified as "unnatural" and therefore did not deserve the "natural rights" of parents to live with and raise their children. The chapter demonstrates that under the rubric of protection, children were searched out in their homes and removed from the streets and sentenced to long terms in institutions. Their poverty was central to their appearance before the Recorder. The impulse to help them was framed as humanitarian, rather than as punitive. Industrial schools and other institutions of confinement were envisioned as a way, at once, to remove children from danger and protect society. I suggest that efforts to protect children may have made them vulnerable in new ways. By limiting their employment options and their freedom of movement, and by removing them from their networks of kin and neighborhoods, these children were made helpless in new ways.

In the west, humanity to man and beast was about to take a turn for the worst. At the very moment that the CSPCA was being established in the east, the greedy white hunter was in the process of exterminating the buffalo. Once the buffalo disappeared, despite treaty promises to trust the Queen's benevolence, indigenous people were treated contemptuously as beggars, which further facilitated their dispossession. An inherited set of Anglo-Saxon ideas about poverty and how best to deal with it, were imposed on the west. Work for rations policies were implemented which kept indigenous people on the

²³⁵ National Archives, Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children, MG 28, series I129, Minute Book 1882-1891, 21 March 1890, 121.

verge of starvation. Philanthropists championed Indian rights by arguing for the removal and institutionalization of indigenous children in residential schools. In the east and in the west, the same models were employed in response to man's responsibility for his neighbor - in ways that justified and secured protestant Anglo-Saxon hegemony and mystified the culpability of imperialism and capitalism in the suffering of adults, children and animals.

Chapter Three
The "wanton destruction"¹ of the buffalo and its Historians

Expansionists in the nineteenth-century foretold the buffalo's disappearance. The west, these civilized men believed, could be put to more productive and profitable use. It was only a matter of time before the buffalo disappeared and made the west ripe for settlement. Civilization doomed the buffalo. In contrast to the 1869 Canadian anti-cruelty to animals statute, no law restricted white men's treatment of the buffalo. No spiritual law duty-bound him to humanity to the wild, albeit, noble beast. Despite these self-evident truths, the debate about who killed the buffalo began in the years following the buffalo's disappearance from the Canadian plains in 1879 and from the US in 1883. Prior to that, writers were clear about the white civilized man's responsibility for the destruction of the buffalo. While it was ongoing, even contemporary white observers who believed that Indians as savages were improvident, also argued that they alone would not have destroyed the buffalo. They wrote that white hunters were primarily responsible. Once the buffalo disappeared, other writers began to argue that Indian hunting was also responsible for its disappearance north of the Platte River and south of the Great Slave Lake. This new discourse which blamed Indians did not replace the earlier discourse which blamed white hunters, but was concurrent and had its own proponents. The debate has raged ever since. By the 1970s, the white hide hunter had triumphed and was situated by historians as centrally responsible for the fate of the buffalo herds. Then, beginning in 1991, the centrality of the white hunter was displaced by a new generation of bison historians who revised history and argued that Indian buffalo hunting was unsustainable and therefore detrimental to the herds. The white hunter has been displaced from his supremacy in the destruction of the buffalo by historical narratives which also implicate Indians and the Métis for the destruction of the buffalo.² The debate that began in the 1880s continues today. The most recent academic writing on the destruction of the buffalo has resurrected what is in fact a century old idea.

¹ "The Indians, the Dominion Government and the Pacific RR," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 26 April 1873, 1; "Preservation of the Buffalo," *Toronto Globe*, 27 March 1877, 4.

² For instance, in *The Canadian Prairies: A History* Gerald Friesen writes, "on the virtual extinction of the Canadian buffalo herd between 1874 and 1879": "No satisfactory explanation, aside from an incredible slaughter by natives and white hunters who were supplying the American hide trade, has ever been offered

In the late 1880s, blaming Indians for the destruction of the buffalo justified the dispossession of indigenous people of their lands and resources. The idea that Indians were wasteful of the land and destructive of its resources was cemented by the emerging narrative of the Indian destruction of the buffalo. Blaming Indians helped to lay the ideological groundwork to confine indigenous people to reserves and to make them subject to game legislation, both of which contravened treaty negotiations which had ensured freedom of movement and guaranteed hunting and fishing rights. In many ways then, the destruction of the buffalo and narratives about it created optimal conditions for white usurpation of the land and resources. At the end of the twentieth century, white historians' work in dismantling the icon of the ecological Indian and the return of the buffalo to the plains³ has resulted in the resurgence of Indian blaming discourses. The colonial project of the dispossession of indigenous people continues to be important in our day just as it was when the west was won.

The Métis

This work does not attempt to provide a reassessment of the Métis contribution to the destruction of the buffalo. Although some sources which are cited in this work do lay partial responsibility on the Métis, it is important to note that not all contemporaries or historians agree.⁴ My focus is on the question of Indian responsibility and whether

for this sudden destruction of the prairie food supply." Barry Potyondi, in his essay on the ecological history of the prairies, writes that "through participation in the buffalo robe trade, natives and Métis contributed significantly to the loss of the traditional 'buffalo landscape' of the plains before 1880s." Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 149 & Barry Potyondi, "Loss and Substitution: The Ecology of Production in Southwestern Saskatchewan, 1860-1930," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 5 (1994), 213. Friesen's and Potyondi's works are cited as examples of contemporary scholarly knowledge and information presented by non-bison specialist historians on the destruction of the buffalo. See also, Theodore Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground: A Human and Environmental History of the Northwestern Plains* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001).

³ Winona Laduke, "Return of the Buffalo Nation: For Native Peoples of the Plains, Visions of a Buffalo Commons" *Native Americas* (Winter 1998), 10-23; Stephen C. Torbit, "A Commentary on Bison and Cultural Restoration: Partnership Between the National Wildlife Federation and the Intertribal Bison Cooperative," *Great Plains Research* 11 (Spring 2001), 175-182; Judith L. McDonald, "Essay: Bison Restoration in the Great Plains and the Challenge of their Management," *Great Plains Research* 11 (Spring 2001), 103-121.

⁴ See, McGill University Library, Charles Mair, "The American Bison: Its Habits, Method of Capture and Economic Use in the North-West, with Reference to its Threatened Extinction and Possible Preservation," *The Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* VIII, Section II, 1890 (Montreal: Dawson Brothers, Publishers, 1891), 100; Bibliothèque Nationale de Quebec, Frank G. Roe, "The Red River Hunt," *The Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* XXIX, Section II, (1935), 178 & Frank G. Roe, Chapter XIV,

historians' focus on Indians is warranted in relation to the available primary evidence. Historians like John Foster, who implicate the Métis in the destruction, use Hudson's Bay Company records which demonstrate Métis involvement in the buffalo robe trade.⁵ To provide a reassessment of the Métis contribution would necessitate the re-examination of a different set of primary materials including documents produced in and around Red River and Manitoba by the local press, by local observers, officials and the Hudson's Bay Company archives. These are outside the scope of this study, which has present-day Saskatchewan and Alberta as its focus. Métis history also has a distinct and separate historiography with its own set of debates.⁶ There can be no doubt that the Métis put a strain on the herds and competed with First Nations for the remaining buffalo,⁷ but that claim is substantially different from assigning responsibility to the Métis for the wholesale destruction of the buffalo in Canada.⁸

The Historians

In the 1870s, contemporary white writers argued that white hunters were destroying the buffalo. Once the buffalo disappeared, in the 1880s, some writers began to argue that Indian buffalo hunting had also been detrimental to the herds. By the late 1880s and early 1890s, there were at least two distinct schools of thought on the extermination of the buffalo.⁹ The older view held that white men were centrally

"The Numbers of the Buffalo: The Red River Hunt," *The North American Buffalo: A Critical Study of the Species in its Wild State* 2nd edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 374.

⁵ John Foster, "The Métis and the End of the Plains Buffalo in Alberta," *Buffalo* edited by John E. Foster, Dick Harrison & I.S. MacLaren (Edmonton: University of Alberta: 1992), 61-77.

⁶ See for instance, D. N. Sprague, *Canada and the Métis, 1869-1885* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1988) & Gerhard J. Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Métis in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

⁷ Hugh A. Dempsey, *Big Bear: The End of Freedom* (Vancouver & Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1984), 54-55; Norma Sluman and Jean Goddwill, *John Tootoosis: A Biography of a Cree Leader* (Ottawa: Golden Dog Press, 1982), 51-52; Norbert Welsh, *The Last Buffalo Hunter* as told to Mary Weeks, (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1939), 97-98; Alexander Cowie, *The Company of Adventurers: A Narrative of Seven Years in the Service of the Hudson's Bay Company During 1867-1874* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1913), 303. Cowie is referenced by Arthur J. Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade: their role as hunters, trappers, and middlemen in the lands southwest of the Hudson Bay, 1660-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 231n.37.

⁸ Like Dan Flores, Shepard Krech denies the impact of white hunting on the Canadian herds and states that "In Canadian territory the hunters were mainly of joint European and native extraction." See, Shepard Krech III, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1999), 142.

⁹ There are other discourses, for instance, see Rudolph W. Koucky, M.D. "The Buffalo Disaster of 1882," *North Dakota History* 50 (1983), 23-30. Koucky argues "it is, in fact, my firm belief that several million buffalo died from disease." On the role of the United States army in the destruction of the buffalo see, David Smits, "The Frontier Army and the Destruction of the Buffalo: 1865-1883," *Western Historical*

responsible. The new emerging discourse also blamed Indians. This new view was exemplified by William T. Hornaday, in his 1889 report "The Extermination of the American Bison," written for the US national museum of science, the Smithsonian Institution. Hornaday argued that south of the Platte River the buffalo was destroyed by the arrival of the railway and white hunters.¹⁰ In contrast, north of the Platte and into the Canadian prairies south of Slave Lake, Hornaday argued that it was Indians and half-breeds who were responsible for the destruction. He wrote, "the Canadian Pacific Railway played no part whatever in the extermination of the bison in the British Possessions, for it had already taken place. The half-breeds of Manitoba, the Plains Cree of Qu'Appelle, and the Blackfeet of Southern Saskatchewan country swept bare a great deal of the country stretching east and west between the Rocky Mountains and Manitoba."¹¹ According to Hornaday, "had there not been a white hunter in the whole Northwest the buffalo would have been exterminated there just as surely, though not so quickly by perhaps ten years, as actually occurred."¹² Hornaday captured an emerging discourse¹³ and his seminal text became the master narrative on the destruction of the buffalo into the twentieth century.

Quarterly XXV, no.3 (Autumn, 1994), 313-338; William A. Dobak, "The Army and the Buffalo: A Demur, A Response to David D. Smit's 'The Frontier Army and the Destruction of the Buffalo, 1865-1883,'" *Western Historical Quarterly* XXVI, no. 2 (Summer 1995), 197-202; David D. Smit's "More on the Army and the Buffalo: The Author's Reply," *Western Historical Quarterly* XXVI, no. 2 (Summer 1995), 203-208; Andrew . Isenberg, "Toward A Policy of Destruction: Buffaloes, Law and the Market, 1803-1883," *Great Plains Quarterly* 12 (Fall, 1992), 227-241; Wayne Gard, *The Great Buffalo Hunt* (New York, Alfred A Knopf, 1960), 214-216; John R. Cook, *The Border and the Buffalo: The Untold Story about the Southwest Plains* (New York: Citadel Press, 1967); Eugene D. Flaherty, *Wild Animals and Settlers of the Great Plains* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 303. Flaherty's book offers a positive reading of the transformation of the prairie landscape. He ends his text with the assertion that "those who take time to acquaint themselves thoroughly with the flora and the fauna of the Great Plains may well enjoy a richer fauna than in 1865."

¹⁰ According to William Hornaday: "At the time of the great division made by the Union Pacific Railway [1865] the northern body of buffalo extended from the valley of the Platte River northward to the southern shore of the Great Slave Lake, eastward almost to Minnesota, and westward to an elevation of 8,000 feet in the Rocky Mountains." William T. Hornaday, "The Extermination of the American Bison, with a Sketch of its Discovery and Life History," (1887. Reprint. Seattle: The Shorey Book Store, 1971), 503.

¹¹ Hornaday, "The Extermination of the American Bison, 504.

¹² Hornaday, "The Extermination of the American Bison, 506.

¹³ For instance, in June of 1887, the *Saskatchewan Herald* editorial on the "Food Supply of the West" argued that "the buffalo were not exterminated from their breeding grounds by the advance of civilization and the construction of railways. They had vanished before any of these agencies had gained a foothold in the regions so pathetically described as the happy home of the poor Indian. The buffalo were exterminated by the Indians themselves through their wanton and persistent slaughter of the females and of the young. They were allowed no rest. When they roamed over the prairies in numbers that seemed to defy even the

Embodying an older view on the destruction of the buffalo, Charles Mair's 1891 paper for the Royal Society of Canada, "The American Bison," maintained that "the work of the extermination speedily began" with the arrival of "the American pot-and-hide hunters."¹⁴ Within "three years nearly six million animals were destroyed." Like his contemporaries, Mair assigned improvidence to the "Red River Half-breed" buffalo hunters but despite the "great waste...their destruction bore a small proportion to the immense slaughter"¹⁵ by "civilized man."¹⁶ In contrast to Hornaday, who could not find any evidence to support the idea that "Indians killed with more judgment and care for the future than did the white man,"¹⁷ Mair argued that "the Indians lived upon [the herds] but with savage conservatism, severely punished anyone who wantonly butchered them."¹⁸ With these two writers, we see the polar extremes in the debate about Indian hunting by white writers. Both expressed relatively new ideas. Mair's language of the savage as conservationist was as novel as the idea of the Indian as the destroyer of the buffalo. Despite the apparent differences between Mair and Hornaday, within both narratives there are elements that functioned to support Indian dispossession.

Although Mair and Hornaday differed in how they assigned responsibility, both writers presented the suffering of the Indians in the aftermath of the destruction of the buffalo as the buffalo's avenger. Hornaday experienced a "feeling of grim satisfaction" when he read "that many of the ex-slaughterers are almost starving for the millions of pounds of fat and juicy buffalo meat they wasted a few years ago."¹⁹ He told his readers about the "Heart-rending stories of suffering and cannibalism," of destitution and deaths by starvation in the Athabasca and Peace River country where "a party of twenty-nine Cree Indians was reduced to three in the winter of 1886." According to Hornaday, "if ever thoughtless people were punished for their reckless improvidence, the Indians and

reckless slaughter of the Indians, it is a matter of history, that thousands were annually slain 'just for the fun of the thing.'" See, Editorial, "Food Supply in the West," *Saskatchewan Herald*, 4 June 1887, 2.

¹⁴ McGill University Library, Charles Mair, "The American Bison: Its Habits, Method of Capture and Economic Use in the North-West, with Reference to its Threatened Extinction and Possible Preservation," *The Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* VIII, Section II, 1890 (Montreal: Dawson Brothers, Publishers, 1891), 100.

¹⁵ Mair, "The American Bison."

¹⁶ Mair, "The American Bison," 93.

¹⁷ Hornaday, "The Extermination of the American Bison," 480.

¹⁸ Mair, "The American Bison," 95.

¹⁹ Hornaday, "The Extermination of the American Bison," 480-81.

half-breeds of the Northwest Territory are now paying the penalty for the wasteful slaughter of the buffalo a few short years ago. The buffalo is his own avenger, to an extent his remorseless slayers little dreamed he ever could be."²⁰ Similarly, Mair told his readers that "the history of the North-West plain Indians down to the time of the transfer of the territories was simply a history of raids and reprisals begot of horse stealing which begot of the chase." Following a fight "between the Blackfeet and the Cree Indians on the plains southwest of Batoche," Mair described for his readers the Cree "dancing over a Blackfoot scalp...which was infected with the virus of small-pox, [and] spread the fatal disease all over the North Saskatchewan, and decimated the Cree race." Mair argued that small pox was "the Saskatchewan bison's avenger."²¹ What these two narratives have in common is that starvation, smallpox, illness, and death are visited upon Indians for their treatment of the buffalo. The specter of the wanton destruction of the buffalo, of carelessly destroying their own resources, of stealing, and scalping would have repulsed readers and affirmed the moral necessity of Indian dispossession of their land and resources. Irrespective of how these authors assigned responsibility for the destruction of the buffalo, both texts worked to justify the ascendancy of settlers over Indians and the land. In the context of the starvation which followed the disappearance of the herds, both texts functioned to erase colonial responsibility to provide relief and assistance for Indian suffering.

Although the discourse that blamed white hunters did not disappear, Hornaday became "the authoritative historian"²² of the northern herd. When Canadian naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton and writer C. Gordon Hewitt produced their narratives on the destruction of the buffalo, both relied on Hornaday. As naturalist to the Government of Manitoba, in his 1909 publication, *Life Histories of Northern Animals: An Account of the Mammals of Manitoba*, Seton argued that "The extermination of the Buffalo has been so fully and admirably treated by Dr. W. T. Hornaday in his volume of that name (1889), that I [Seton] can do little more than condense his account, acknowledge my

²⁰ Hornaday, "The Extermination of the American Bison," 527.

²¹ Mair, "The American Bison," 103.

²² Frank Gilbert Roe, *The North American Buffalo: A Critical Study of the Species in its Wild State*, 2nd ed (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 9. All citations are from this edition, unless otherwise noted.

indebtedness, and add a few later facts.”²³ Similarly, in his paper on “The Coming Back of the Bison,” “consulting Zoologist to the Commission of Conservation” in Ottawa, C. Gordon Hewitt also relied exclusively on Hornaday and repeated his conclusion that the northern herd was decimated by “the half-breeds of Manitoba, the Plains Cree of Qu’Appelle, and the Blackfeet of the South Saskatchewan country.”²⁴

In the mid-twentieth-century, Frank Gilbert Roe lamented that the buffalo had not been “very fortunate with their historians.”²⁵ Roe was a Canadian railway engineer and self-taught scholar who earned an honorary LLD for his scholarship.²⁶ Through his encyclopedic use of nineteenth century sources, Roe challenged Hornaday’s analysis, beginning with an early article on “The Extermination of the Buffalo in Western Canada” in the March 1934 issue of the *Canadian Historical Review*.²⁷ The following year, his paper on “The Red River Hunt” was published by the Royal Society of Canada. In it, Roe challenged Hornaday’s classification of “the Red River Hunt as the earliest phase of the systematic destruction.”²⁸ Roe rejected Hornaday’s conclusions about the Métis, “an entire (and large) body of hunters who are historically known to have imposed upon themselves a considerable measure of beneficial but restrictive regulations” “to “preserve the buffalo from wanton destruction.”²⁹ Roe’s major work on the topic, *The North American Buffalo*, a 991-page book, first appeared in 1951 and was reprinted in 1970. Roe’s tome became the classic study of the bison. Roe argued that the “time spirit” in

²³ Ernest Thompson Seton, *Life Histories of Northern Animals: An Account of the Mammals of Manitoba, Volume 1, The Grass-Eaters* (New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1909), 292.

²⁴ University of Victoria, McPherson Library, C. Gordon Hewitt, “The Coming Back of the Bison,” *Natural History* XIX, no. 6 (1919), 558. Mflm: CIHM no. 78537.

²⁵ Roe, *The North American Buffalo*, 9.

²⁶ Grace Alexander, “An Examination of the Works of Frank Gilbert Roe and His Interpretation of the Culture Contact Period on the Great Plains, 1850-1890,” (Master’s thesis, University of Victoria, 1981).

²⁷ Frank Gilbert Roe, “The Extermination of the Buffalo in Western Canada,” *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. XV no. 1 (March 1934), 1-23; For a discussion on Roe’s work by R. O. Merriman and A.S. Morton and Roe’s reply see, “Correspondence: *The Extermination of the Buffalo*” *Canadian Historical Review* Vol. XV no.2 (June 1934), 213-218. Merriman argued that the chief slaughter of the buffalo in Canada took place prior to 1870 and took place for the sake of food products.” He argued that Roe “overlooked the slaughter for buffalo meat.” Merriman argued that cows were preferred for making pemmican which further reduced potential buffalo population, involving as it did “the death of unborn and newly born calves...Slaughter for meat, was therefore more destructive than the corresponding slaughter for other reasons.” Merriman, “Correspondence,” 213-214.

²⁸ Bibliotheque nationale de Quebec. Frank. Gilbert. Roe, “The Red River Hunt,” *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* XXIX, Section II (1935), 171.

²⁹ Roe, “The Red River Hunt,” 209 & 214.

which Hornaday wrote was “not favorable to the Indian.”³⁰ The result was that “those portions of Hornaday’s essay dealing with the Indian are the most unsatisfactory of the entire work.”³¹ For Roe, the white hunter was central to the destruction of the buffalo. He argued that “The United States has no monopoly in the so-called sportsman, the type of man who can see nothing in the wild creature except a target.”³² For Roe, it was white hunters who were wasteful.³³

Roe devoted an entire manuscript to the defense of Indians against charges of destroying the buffalo, yet “Not Guilty! The True Story of the Indian and the Buffalo” was never published.³⁴ In it, Roe argued that the buffalo was “exterminated by white men” and the “assumption that hide-hunters did little more than hasten a finish which the extravagance of the buffalo tribes had long made inevitable” had its basis in an “anti-Indian feeling of prejudice.”³⁵ Roe argued that Hornaday shared “the popular prejudices of his day.”³⁶ In his examination of texts produced in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, Roe argued “to put the case in plain English, whatever either malice or misconception might have to say about the ‘born-slayer’; the legend of the wasteful Indians, the reckless and insensate destroyer of his own food, the dissipater of the resources of half a continent, hadn’t yet been invented.”³⁷ According to Grace Alexander’s analysis of Roe, “it was only after settlers entered the Great Plains area that

³⁰ In his 1876 introduction to Colonel Dodge’s *The Plains of the Great West* the British investor and financier, William Blackmore wrote “it has become almost impossible to exaggerate the antipathy existing between the settlers of the Western Plain and the aboriginal inhabitants.” This was also true for the Canadian context. In 1889, the Methodist missionary John McLean explained that “in several of our western towns the hatred towards Indians is great.” See, William Blackmore, “Introduction,” to *The Plains of the Great West and Their Great Inhabitants: Being a Description of the Plains, Game, Indians, &c. of the Great North American Desert* by Richard Irving Dodge, (1876rpt., New York: Archer House, 1959), li; John. MacLean, *The Indians, Their Manners and Customs* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1889), 284.

³¹ Roe, *The North American Bison*, 664. Despite his critique of Hornaday, Roe’s text does contain Indian-hating ideas, including Roe’s assertion of “the almost universal Indian capacity for starving.” See, Roe, *The North American Buffalo*, 659.

³² Roe, *The North American Buffalo*, 423.

³³ Roe, *The North American Buffalo*, 413-453.

³⁴ University of Victoria, McPherson Library, Special Collections, Roe Collection, Series C, Item 8. “Not Guilty!: The True Story of the Indian and the Buffalo” According to Grace Alexander, the manuscript was under consideration for publication in the 1960s and 1970s but editors felt that it was too long and that all his essential arguments and evidence had already been published in his *North American Bison*. Roe thought that it was his defense of Indians that blocked the manuscript’s publication. See, Grace Alexander, “An Examination of the Works of Frank Gilbert Roe and his Interpretation of the Culture Contact Period on the Great Plains 1850-1890,” 87-98.

³⁵ Roe, “Not Guilty!” 262 & 241.

³⁶ Roe, “Not Guilty!” 165.

³⁷ Roe, “Not Guilty!” 88.

the anti-Indian sentiment with respect to the Plains Tribes raised the question of who exterminated the buffalo..."³⁸ Blaming Indians for the destruction of the buffalo is a discourse that emerged at a particular historical moment rather than a reflection of the historical causes of the destruction of the buffalo. This narrative reflected the ascendancy of settlers over the land.

It is important to note that Roe shared with Hornaday and Mair a particular reading of starvation. In his book *The North American Buffalo*, Roe perpetuated the idea of "the almost universal Indian capacity for starving."³⁹ Despite what appears to be a "pro-Indian" narrative in his history of the destruction of the buffalo, Roe's discussion attributed the poverty of indigenous people to their own habits and ways of life rather than seeing it as an outcome of the imperial and colonial domination of their lands and resources. This logic helped Roe elide the question of state and colonial responsibility to relieve starvation since, according to his assessment, Indians were used to starving. There are many ways to normalize and inscribe the ascendancy of settlers over the land, without blaming Indians for the destruction of the buffalo.

Roe's publication *The North American Buffalo* emerged in the context of a larger body of work which resurrected the centrality of the white hunter in the narrative of the destruction of the buffalo, including E. Douglas Branch's *The Hunting of the Buffalo* (1929), Mari Sandoz's *The Buffalo Hunters* (1954), Wayne Gard's *The Great Buffalo Hunt* (1960), Francis Haines' *The Buffalo* (1970) and Cy Martin's *The Saga of the Buffalo* (1973).⁴⁰ These American texts, despite their differences, share a number of important elements which helped to shape a narrative which blamed the destruction of the buffalo on the coming of the white man, his civilization, railroads and hide hunters.⁴¹ Cy

³⁸ Alexander, "An Examination of the Works of Frank Gilbert Roe," 24.

³⁹ Roe, *The North American Buffalo*, 659.

⁴⁰ E. Douglas Branch, *The Hunting of the Buffalo* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1929); Mari Sandoz, *The Buffalo Hunters: The Story of the Hide Men* (New York: Hastings House, 1954); Wayne Gard, *The Great Buffalo Hunt* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960); Francis Haines, *The Buffalo* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1970); Cy Martin, *The Saga of the Buffalo* (New York: Hart Publishing Company, Inc., 1973).

⁴¹ Branch writes "that the restriction of this [buffalo] range, gradual and then suddenly ruthless; the coming of new peoples who hunted; the ways, the tools, the laws of the hunt: that is the meat of this narrative. Naturally emphasis is given to that loud, lusty frontier of the eighteen-seventies and eighteen-eighties, when the western herd, when the western herd of over seven million buffaloes was shattered and annihilated." Sandoz writes, "it was the modern man who came, bringing with him his horse, the first creature able to overtake the buffalo, and bringing also the long and powerful extension of his arm that was

Martin's argument that the "slaughter of the buffalo began when white men set foot on these shores" and that "Indians, of course, made little dent on the total bison population" are typical of the literature on the destruction of the buffalo that emerged in this time period.⁴² These authors argue that although Indian buffalo hunting was wasteful, Indians "never engaged in wholesale slaughter to compare with that of the white men."⁴³ These authors also agree that "the relentless destruction of the buffalo" by white hunters was "bitterly opposed" by Indians and led to what became known as the "Indian Wars" of the 1860s and 1870s.⁴⁴ For these historians, the centrality of white hide hunters to the destruction of the buffalo is clear, for both the southern and northern herds.

In contrast to Hornaday, these authors argue that the herds in Canada were directly affected by events in the US. According to Branch, Colonel Herchmer of the North West Mounted Police charged that, "in revenge for the Custer massacre,"⁴⁵ the US government equipped "sharpshooters" with Winchester rifles "to destroy the buffalo" in the northern buffalo range. According to Branch, "At the season when the buffalo were in the Yellowstone country, fires – incendiary or natural – burned the grasses to the north of the herd, and thus hindered any migration into Canada, where the hunters could not follow."⁴⁶ Twenty-five years after Branch's publication, Sandoz corroborated Branch's

his fire weapon. Close behind him came the fire road that brought and carried away." See, Branch, *The Hunting of the Buffalo*, vi; Sandoz, *The Buffalo Hunters*, xii.

⁴² Martin, *The Saga of the Buffalo*, 14. The extreme end of this spectrum is Sandoz's argument that "nothing the Indian could do could change the drift of these tremendous herds." Sandoz, *The Buffalo Hunters*, xii.

⁴³ Gard, *The Great Buffalo Hunt*, 257. Sandoz, *The Buffalo Hunters*, 339.

⁴⁴ Martin, *The Saga of the Buffalo*, 66. Gard argues that "Indians were alarmed over the reduction of the herds by white men" and Indians resisted the presence of "whites on their hunting grounds." Branch cites the Cree Council of 1857 at Qu'Appelle as well as other "serious complaints" by Indians to white authorities about the destruction wrought by white buffalo hunters on their territories. See, Gard, *The Great Buffalo Hunt*, 38-39 & 154-5; Branch, *The Hunting of the Buffalo*, 83 & 177. See also, Haines' Chapter 19 "Buffalo Country Troubles, 1860-65" and Chapter 21 "The Last Stand of the Plains Tribes" 166-171 & 180-87. I explore this aspect of the narrative in greater detail in my section on primary evidence.

⁴⁵ This point is also alluded to in Cy Martin's text. He writes "Custer and the Seventh Cavalry were wiped out at the Little Big Horn in 1876, and this forced the Army to chase Chief Sitting Bull's savage Sioux and teach them a real lesson. The boom of the big .50 was frequent on the northern ranges, and Miles City grew to several blocks of cabins, stores, honky-tonks." See, Martin, *The Saga of the Buffalo*, 138. See also, See, James O. Gump, *The Dust Rose Like Smoke: The Subjugation of the Zulu and the Sioux* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970), 273-313.

⁴⁶ Branch, *The Hunting of the Buffalo*, 184 & 210. Norman Fergus Black in his 1913 *History of Saskatchewan and the Old North West* cites Doctor MacRae's *History of Alberta* who also quotes Colonel Herchmer, "formerly Commissioner of the Royal North West Mounted Police, as having expressed to him the belief that the extinction of the buffalo herds was consummated under the deliberate management of the

analysis: “by the spring of 1882” Sandoz placed “over five thousand hunters and skinners on the northern range.” These hunters “blocked the buffaloes from the waterways in their annual spring march toward Canada...With the rifles and wide expanses of fire and new-burnt prairie, very few escaped.”⁴⁷ Almost two decades later, Francis Haines also maintained “a cordon of camps formed along the northern border, attacking any herds moving toward Canada and burning off a wide belt to prevent the buffalo from straying out of the country.”⁴⁸ These historians locate white hunters decimating the northern herd and preventing the buffalo from escaping into Canada, rather than Hornaday’s focus on Canadian Indians’ impact on the herds.

Nonetheless, these texts also put Indians at the scene of “the final slaughter,” and in this way implicate Indians in the destruction. In the context of the American defeat by the Sioux at the Battle of Little Big Horn, referred to above as the “Custer massacre,” the Sioux were particularly maligned. Branch offered the most extreme analysis of the “final orgy” where the Sioux “hasten[ed] their own humiliation by joining in the hunt and disposing of the hides they took to professional hunters.”⁴⁹ Gard also attributed the final slaughter to the Sioux: in October of 1883 when the last “herd of a thousand to twelve hundred in western Dakota” were slaughtered by “Chief Sitting Bull and nearly a thousand of his braves...from Standing Rock Agency...‘There was not a hoof left,’ said Vic Smith, who witnessed the butchering.”⁵⁰ In these texts then, while white hide hunters were blamed for the wholesale destruction of the buffalo, Indians participated in the final slaughter. Although the presence of Indians hunting buffalo cannot be equated with the destruction of the buffalo, Indians are thus placed in an impossible position. In order for

American military authorities, with a view to reducing the Sioux to submission.” See, Norman Fergus Black, *History of Saskatchewan and the Old North West* (Regina: North West Historical Co., 1913), 200.

⁴⁷ Sandoz, *The Buffalo Hunters*, 349.

⁴⁸ Haines, *The Buffalo*, 204. For a contemporary source confirming that General Miles was “preventing the buffalo from going north...[in order] to compel Sitting Bull to move south...” See, Editorial, “Our Indian Policy,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 7 August 1879, 4.

⁴⁹ Branch, *The Hunting of the Buffalo*, 219 & 217. In the late spring of 1883, Sandoz places “a few reservation Indians and white sportsmen after them, in addition to the ravenous hide men booming away rear and flank...” at the final herds. According to Haines, in 1883, when news spread of the appearance of a herd 10,000 strong, hunters both red and white flocked in...About 9,000 hides were taken in a few weeks, and the remaining 1,000 head were annihilated in a grand two-day hunt staged by several hundred Sioux led by Sitting Bull and joined by a crowd of white hunters. This was the last big buffalo hunt staged by any of the Plains tribes. While this herd was being wiped out in South Dakota, about 5,000 or more white hunters were at work on the Montana herd, estimated at 75,000 animals.” Sandoz, *The Buffalo Hunters*, 349; Haines, *The Buffalo*, 204.

⁵⁰ Gard, *The Great Buffalo Hunt*, 274.

Indians not to be blamed for annihilating the herds, they would need to be absent from the hunt on which their principal nutrition, livelihood, and way of life depended.

In the 1970s, a number of prairie First Nations leaders' narratives were published and provided long suppressed written perspectives on the history of the west.⁵¹ In these narratives, the white hunter is central to the destruction of the buffalo. In *Recollections of an Assiniboine Chief* (1972), Dan Kennedy argued that

the historians, the biologists, and the writers of today are still arguing over the mysterious and abrupt disappearance of the mighty buffalo...But no one has ever taken the trouble to ask the Indian what became of his buffalo. It was a known fact that the Indian was by nature a conservationist. The buffalo was the staff of his life, so how could he commit suicide by wantonly destroying his only means of survival.⁵²

Writing from personal experience, Kennedy recalled, as a young boy, seeing "acres and acres of dead buffalo packed closely together, bloated and rotting in the sun...later that evening as we were eating our supper our elders voiced their indignation and anger at the carnage. 'It is the work of "Play-ku-tay," the white vandals,' they said."⁵³ Years later, in 1897, Kennedy recounted his story to Major Thomas W. Aspdin, a veteran of the NWMP who had been stationed at Fort Walsh in the Cypress Hills. Kennedy described to Aspin "the winter of 1880-81 at Cypress Hills, when we had to eat our horses to survive, and the winter of 1883-84, when five hundred or six hundred of my people starved to death at Wolf Point because of the ruthless slaughter of the buffalo by Play-ku-tay." According to Aspin, "these 'Play-ku-tay' were sent by the U.S. Government in order to starve the Indians into submission."⁵⁴ Kennedy's narrative dovetails nicely with those of other 1970s historians who place white hide hunters on the northern ranges, and link them to the destruction of the buffalo.

⁵¹ For instance, Edward Ahenakew "wrote extensively throughout the 1920s. He also attempted, repeatedly, to have his work published" with only limited success. It was only after his death in 1961 and the transfer of his papers to Ruth Matheson Buck that some of his work was edited and published as *Voices of the Plains Cree* in 1973. See, Christine Wilna (Willy) Hodgson, forward to *Voices of the Plains Cree*, by Edward Ahenakew, ed. Ruth M. Buck (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1995), vii.

⁵² Dan Kennedy, *Recollections of an Assiniboine Chief* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972), 49.

⁵³ Kennedy, *Recollections of an Assiniboine Chief*, 50.

⁵⁴ Kennedy, *Recollections of an Assiniboine Chief*, 50-51. Kennedy goes on to quote an Indian Agent stationed at Fort Pelly who "estimated that there were five hundred white 'flint' hide hunters along the Missouri River...Equipped with these guns [high-powered long-range rifles which were effective at a range of perhaps a mile and a half], the hunters would sight a herd of buffalo from a great distance and kill the leaders; then the herd, instead of stampeding, would 'mill' and the hunters would be able to kill the whole herd. By this method great numbers of these animals were slain in a remarkably short period of time."

In *John Tootoosis: A Biography of A Cree Leader*, Norma Sluman and Jean Goodwill argued that “the Americans, in effect, were doing the dirty work of the Canadians by so impelling the northern Indians into treaty”:⁵⁵

The buffalo had to go before the Indians could be confined to reserves and forced to farm in order to eat. What future settlers would be attracted into areas where buffalo could break down fences and trample fields at will or where shooting-galloping Indians would likely be after them? The old west was doomed.⁵⁶

Tootoosis helps us rethink the binary division between Canada and the United States in the history of “how the west was won,” and suggests we pay attention to the similarities and influences between the two imperial nations who divided the western part of the continent between themselves.⁵⁷ Tootoosis argued that

the white men on both sides of the border knew very well that the wild herds would have to go before the Indian people could be controlled and serious settlement would take place and no serious consideration was given to protecting the bison. In Canada no such laws were passed until it was too late for them to be practical or enforceable.⁵⁸

Whether in Canada or the US, the herds had to be decimated to allow for the colonization of the west.

Similarly, Joseph Dion’s posthumously published *My Tribe, the Crees* (1979) clearly held white men were responsible for the destruction of the great herds:

As the white man began to make inroads on our stamping grounds, bringing with him new and wicked weapons, he set to work to destroy everything wherever he

⁵⁵ Norma Sluman and Jean Goodwill, *John Tootoosis: Biography of A Cree Leader* (Ottawa: Golden Dog Press, 1982), 9.

⁵⁶ Sluman and Goodwill, *John Tootoosis*, 24.

⁵⁷ For comparative historical work on the two frontiers, see, Carol Higham and Robert Thacker, eds., *One West, Two Myths* (Calgary: Alberta: University of Calgary Press, 2004); Jill St. Germain, *Indian Treaty-Making Policy in the United States and Canada, 1867-1877* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001); C.L. Higham, *Noble, Wretched and Redeemable: Protestant Missionaries to the Indians in Canada and the United States, 1820-1900* (Alberta: University of Calgary Press, 2000); Rebecca B. Bateman, “Talking with the Plow: Agricultural Policy and Indian Farming in the Canadian and U.S. Prairies,” *The Journal of Canadian Native Studies* XVI, 2 (1996), 211-228; Seymour Martin Lipset, *Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Barry M. Gough, “The Indian Policies of Great Britain and the United States in the Pacific Northwest in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* II, 2 (1982), 321-337; Robin Fisher, “Indian Warfare and the Two Frontiers: A Comparison of British Columbia and Washington Territory during the Early Years of Settlement,” *Pacific Historical Review* 50, 1 (1981), 31-51; Robin Winks, *The Relevance of Canadian History: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada* (Toronto: McMillan of Canada, 1979). With the exception of Winks and Lipset, most scholars are in agreement that the two frontiers shared similarities.

⁵⁸ Sluman and Goodwill, *John Tootoosis*, 10.

went. Buffalo hides and furs were bringing a fair price so he wantonly shot down thousands of our noble animals, stripped off their hides and left tons of meat to rot on the prairies. Some of these independent hunters with a view of easily obtaining a few wolf pelts deliberately set poison at random, thereby killing immense numbers of flesh-eating animals and birds. This utter disregard for natural law coupled with the white man's diseases and his plain cruel selfishness created for the proud and easy-going Plains Cree a period of untold misery and brought about their ultimate degradation.⁵⁹

In Dion's text, the destruction wreaked by white men on the land, its animals and its people is unequivocally illustrated. The suffering experienced by the Plains Cree is attributed to the advent of these intruders and usurpers.

In sharp contrast to histories presented by these First Nations leaders as well as by historians from 1929 to the 1970s,⁶⁰ the recent and growing historiography argues that Indian buffalo hunting was also responsible for the destruction of the buffalo. In *The North American Buffalo*, Roe had meticulously worked against the "various writers and publicists (partly expressing and, perhaps, partly creating a legend or tradition)...[who] suggest that...the red man, brought the buffalo to the verge of extinction by wastefulness and greed, long before the final butchery. This last, in fact, is considered by many, with reference to the period from 1849 onward, to have merely hastened an inevitable event."⁶¹ This is precisely the argument that has been resurrected and reinvented by the "revisionist studies" in the "new canon of bison ecology,"⁶² beginning with Dan Flores, in his 1991 article "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy: The Southern Plains from 1800 to 1850." In this article, Flores challenged "the standard work, Frank Roe's *The North American Bison*" who had argued that "'that there was not a shred of evidence' to

⁵⁹ Joseph F. Dion, *My Tribe, the Crees* edited with an introduction by Hugh A. Dempsey (Calgary: Glenbow Museum, 1979), 65.

⁶⁰ In his book *The Last Refuge*, J. G. Nelson concluded that "no evidence has been found in this study which would indicate that the Indians were hunting any animal so heavily as to cause the severe depletion and possible extinction prior to the arrival of the white man." His conclusion was repeated by Irene Spry. See, J. G. Nelson, *The Last Refuge* (Montreal: Harvest House, 1973), 189; Irene M. Spry, "The Tragedy of the Loss of the Commons in Western Canada," in *As Long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies*, Ian A. L. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier eds., (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), 206.

⁶¹ Roe, *The North American Buffalo*, 154.

⁶² Pekka Hamalainen, "The First Phase of Destruction: Killing the Southern Plains Buffalo, 1790-1840," *Great Plains Quarterly* 21 (Spring 2001), 101-2, 109.

indicate that the horse Indians were out of balance with the bison herds.”⁶³ Instead, Flores argued that native peoples had not “established a society in ecological equilibrium.”⁶⁴ According to Flores, white hide hunters only hastened the destruction of the buffalo begun by the Indians.

In 1991, Flores did for the southern herd what Hornaday had done for the northern herd in 1889. As we have seen, Hornaday argued that white hide hunters had destroyed the southern herd but “had there not been a white hunter in the whole of the Northwest the buffalo would have been exterminated there just as surely, though not so quickly by perhaps ten years, as actually occurred.”⁶⁵ Flores’s approach of applying “the *longue durée*” to the environmental history of the Southern Plains led him to conclude that

drought, Indian market hunting, and cow selectivity must stand as critical elements – albeit augmented by *minor factors such as white disturbance*, new bovine diseases, and increasing grazing competition from horses – that brought on the bison crisis of the mid-century Southern Plains. That explanation may also illuminate the experience of the Canadian Plains, where bison disappeared without the advent of white hide hunting.⁶⁶

Clearly, Flores dismissed 1970s white historians who indicate the negative impact of white hunters on the northern herds. The movement of the animals on the prairies, irrespective of the border, makes it difficult to accept his argument that on the Canadian prairies buffalo were exterminated “without the advent of white hide hunting.”

How does Flores reach his conclusions? Flores’ larger analysis derived from “a wide range of data” including widely varying estimates on Indians and buffalo on the Southern Plains, Indian caloric intake and buffalo mortality, studies done on “other large American ungulates,” the 1910 agricultural census, census data for livestock from that year, the Plains bovine capacity of 1910, and Indian “religious conception of the infinity

⁶³ Dan Flores, “Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy: The Southern Plains from 1800 to 1850,” *The Journal of American History* 78 (September 1991), 465-85. For a case study which critiques Flores’ thesis see, Richmond Clow, “Bison Ecology, Brule and Yankton Winter Hunting, and the Starving Winter of 1832-33,” *Great Plains Quarterly* 15 (Fall, 1995), 259-270.

⁶⁴ William A. Dobak, “Killing the Canadian Buffalo, 1821-1881” *Western Historical Quarterly* 27 (Spring 1996), 34-35. These factors include “the sheer human population pressure on the Plains, and from outside the region, the expanding capitalist market system and its demand for tanned buffalo robes, which were exchanged for European goods. Native beliefs in a supernatural sanction for buffalo hunting probably played a part as well.” See also, Flores, “Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy,” 485.

⁶⁵ Hornaday, “The Extermination of the American Bison,” 506.

⁶⁶ Flores, “Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy,” 483-484. Emphasis added.

of nature's abundance."⁶⁷ This evidence led Flores to conclude that "the more familiar events of the 1870s [the destruction of the buffalo by white hide hunters] *only* delivered the *coup de grace*...white hide hunters can be documented as taking *only* 3.5 million animals from the Southern Plains."⁶⁸ The fact that they did so within a few decades receives no analysis within his *longue durée* framework. The herds were not given a chance to recuperate from what contemporaries called the "incessant persecution"⁶⁹ and "unceasing pursuit"⁷⁰ by white hide hunters, a recovery which may have been possible with less incessant hunting over the *longue durée*.⁷¹ For Flores, "it is very clear that the ecology of the Southern Plains had become so complicated by the mid-nineteenth century that neither the Indians nor the Euro-Americans of those years could have grasped how it all worked."⁷² This logic makes it possible to avoid all contemporary written evidence which blamed white hunters for the destruction, since, according to Flores, contemporary observers did not know what was happening, even as they witnessed it. As Vine Deloria has argued, assertions about the Indian destruction of the buffalo can only be made by "ignoring all the evidence that contradicts it."⁷³

William Dobak brought Flores' paradigm to the Canadian context in his 1996 essay "Killing the Canadian Buffalo, 1821-1881." In this essay, Dobak stated that "whether the destruction of the buffalo in the United States resulted from a deliberate

⁶⁷ According to Vine Deloria, Dan Flores "estimates the carrying capacity of the plains based on some vague census done about forty years later on cattle in the region." MariJo Moore, interview with Vine Deloria, personal communication, February 19, 2004. Flores' acknowledges that the numbers of the Indians, buffalo and buffalo robes are estimates, and vary widely from source to source, and between different time periods. He states that his evidence is fragmentary, that he is extrapolating from sources and studies conducted on different animals for other later time periods. See, Flores, "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy, 470-71, 478-79, 481, 483, & 484-85. In 1973, J. G. Nelson argued that "the calculation of any relationship between bison and man is...impossible" because numerical data is fragmentary. See, J. G. Nelson, *The Last Refuge*, 153.

⁶⁸ Flores, "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy," 485. Emphasis added.

⁶⁹ Joel Asaph Allen, *The American Bisons: Living and Extinct*, (1876. Reprint. New York: Arno Press, 1974), 153.

⁷⁰ Dodge, *The Hunting Grounds of the Great West*, 134.

⁷¹ According to Judith L. McDonald, "Bison, once nearly extinct, have made an amazing numerical recovery." See, Judith L. McDonald, "Bison Restoration in the Great Plains and the Challenge of their Management" *Great Plains Research* 11 (Spring 2001), 103.

⁷² Flores, "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy," 484.

⁷³ An Interview with Vine Deloria by Derrick Jensen, "Where the Buffalo Go: How Science Ignores the Living World," first published in *The Sun*, (July 2000) reprinted in *Green Anarchy* 11 (Winter 2003) <http://greenanarchy.org/zine/GA11/vinedeloria.php> (13 February 2004): See also MariJo Moore, "Vine Deloria, Jr.'s Reaction to Sheppard Krech's book *The Ecological Indian*," (2001). <http://www.sacredland.org/marjo.html> (13 February 2004).

government policy or from market forces alone, commercial hide hunters did the final damage.” The rest of his essay attempts to explain “how and why native groups were able to drive the buffalo out of Canada.”⁷⁴ Like Flores, Dobak determined the Indian impact on the buffalo by comparing partial and fragmentary Indian population numbers with speculatively estimated numbers of buffalo, returns at trading posts, and Indian religious beliefs. These factors are the focus of his article and are used to sustain his argument.

Dobak concluded that “evidence indicates that the Native peoples of Canada, living on the northern edge of the grassland, killed the buffalo at an unsustainable rate.”⁷⁵ In answer to his own question, “how were Native peoples able to drive the buffalo from the Canadian Plains?” Dobak argued that

The most obvious answer is sheer population pressure, augmented by commercial demand, which claimed the skins of 30 percent more buffalo than Natives required for their minimum needs. (Immigration of Sioux and *métis* [sic] into the Canadian plains during the years between 1862 and 1876 more than offset losses from the smallpox epidemic of 1870.) Cows were especially subject to attrition, for their skins were lighter and more easily worked than those of bulls, and their meat was more tender. The ability of equestrian hunters to select cows would have restricted reproduction severely. Another part of the answer, though, may lie in the spiritual worldview of Native peoples.⁷⁶

This Native worldview conceived of “the buffalo as an infinitely renewable resource of supernatural origin.”⁷⁷ According to Dobak, Native peoples were using more than their minimal needs required. The horse allowed Natives to kill more discriminatingly but also to the ultimate detriment of the herds. Native peoples’ religious beliefs made it possible to kill the buffalo with impunity rather than respect the buffalo as their sacred animal with whom their survival was intertwined, as Chief Dan Kennedy had argued.

Like Flores, Dobak also suggested that contemporaries were confused about what they were witnessing. He argued that the peoples who lived on the prairies did not know their homeland very well because of “limited vision.”⁷⁸ According to Dobak, although

⁷⁴ Dobak, “Killing the Canadian Buffalo, 1821-1881,” 34 & 35.

⁷⁵ Dobak, “Killing the Canadian Buffalo, 1821-1881,” 52.

⁷⁶ Dobak, “Killing the Canadian Buffalo, 1821-1881,” 49.

⁷⁷ Dobak, “Killing the Canadian Buffalo, 1821-1881,” 51.

⁷⁸ Dobak wrote that “Religious beliefs aside, another explanation for the tribes’ failure to curtail the slaughter may lie in the gregarious nature of the buffalo and the limited outlook of the people whose entire lives were spent on the buffalo range.” The evidence Dobak used to support this claim is from European

the buffalo range was decreasing, when the herds were found by hunters “both Native and European”, the buffalo appeared to be as plentiful as always.⁷⁹ Written evidence challenges Dobak’s assertion: contemporaries continually noted the locations in which buffalo were present as well as the locations where buffalo, previously found, were absent.⁸⁰ Written evidence also clearly demonstrates that indigenous people were “acutely aware” that the herds were diminishing and under serious threat because of white and Métis hunting.⁸¹ The primary record shows that it was indigenous leaders who repeatedly brought the issue of the diminishing herds to the attention of Canadian representatives, including explorers, scientists, missionaries, and government agents.

As we have seen, different variations of a discourse which blame Indian hunting practices for the destruction of the buffalo were cemented by Hornaday in 1889 and enjoyed a comeback one hundred years later. At their core, there is a shared assumption that native hunting was “unsustainable.”⁸² Despite this enduring white historical narrative tradition (a metaphysics of imperialism), in his latest book Shepard Krech attempted to dismantle its opposite, the myth of *The Ecological Indian* (1999). Krech was concerned that positive stereotypes of Indians living in perfect harmony with nature could be as confining as negative ones, as well as being remote from historical reality.⁸³ It is problematic that Krech does not negotiate the equally enduring, negative and opposite tradition of the Indian as destroyer of resources.

sojourners, including the Earl of Southesk and William F. Butler. Dobak continued, “If the judgements of these outside observers are accurate, then the insular outlook of Native peoples should surely be taken into account in trying to explain why they continued to hunt the buffalo as they did. Hunters, both Native and European, continued to see large herds because the density looked the same, even though fewer buffalo occupied a smaller range.” Dobak, “Killing the Canadian Buffalo,” 50 & 51.

⁷⁹ Dobak, “Killing the Canadian Buffalo,” 50 & 51.

⁸⁰ See also, John G. Henderson, “The Former Ranges of the Buffalo,” *American Naturalist*, VI, no. 2 (February 1872), 79-98. Roe’s *The North American Buffalo* meticulously charts the presence and absence of buffalo herds through the works of nineteenth century writers on both sides of the border.

⁸¹ In her assessment of these developments in the historiographical debate on the destruction of the buffalo, Sarah Carter argues that “these perspectives represent a resurgence of cultural relativism, but are difficult to sustain as there is considerable evidence that Plains people were acutely aware of the dwindling supplies of buffalo by mid-century.” See, Sarah Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 97.

⁸² Dobak, “Killing the Canadian Buffalo,” 52.

⁸³ Shepard Krech III, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1999). See also, Shepard Krech III, ed., *Indians, Animals and the Fur Trade: A Critique of Keepers of the Game* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981). See also, Calvin Martin, *Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade* (California: University of California Press, 1978), 2-3, 179 & 184.

In the case of the buffalo pound, a technique of driving buffalo over cliffs, Krech concluded that the practice was wasteful and that “waste is ancient.”⁸⁴ Although he acknowledged that it is ethnocentric to consider the non-use of any one part of the animal as wasteful, he argued that not every part was used.⁸⁵ According to Krech, Indian statements that they did not waste the buffalo are not “wrong...only ungeneralizable.”⁸⁶ He consigned these Indian statements to mythological status: “in their blanket denials of indigenous waste and quickness to contrast presumed native with nonnative behavior, they reflect genuine horror at the excesses of the final stages of the demise of the buffalo. But they must be used with caution, for embedded within them may well be understandings of conservation and ecology co-opted from a discourse in which native people are used as icons of harmonious existence with nature.”⁸⁷ Indians are placed in an impossible position by this analysis. On the one hand, they are expected to conform to an imagined standard of non-wastefulness (of using every part, every time).⁸⁸ Secondly, their defense of their hunting practices is relegated to a (mythical) discourse invented by outsiders. In primary documents there is considerable and persuasive evidence by different white observers of white wastefulness as well as direct statements that Indians themselves would not have destroyed the buffalo.⁸⁹ This evidence is under-theorized and underrepresented in Krech’s text.

In his chapter on the “Buffalo,” Krech explicitly stated that it was not “native demand, drought, the competition from horses, disease, and fires” which doomed the buffalo. Instead, Krech argued that “new markets and means of transportation: the rapidly expanding population of European-Americans” were more centrally responsible

⁸⁴ Krech, *The Ecological Indian*, 144-5. Although Krech notes that the interpretative difficulties of using pound or jump sites because of repeated use and antiquity, nonetheless he bases his conclusions on one site in southern Colorado, Olsen Chubbuck. . This is Vine Deloria’s insight. See, MariJo Moore, “Vine Deloria, Jr.’s Reaction to Shepard Krech’s book *The Ecological Indian*,” (2001) <http://www.sacredland.org/marjo.html> (13 February 2004).

⁸⁵ See, Paul Nadasdy, “Transcending the Debate over the Ecologically Noble Indian: Indigenous Peoples and Environmentalism,” *Ethnohistory* 52, no. 2 (Spring 2005), 294. Nadasdy writes “while many scholars...[including Krech] have acknowledged the culturally contingent nature of concepts like conservation, most nonetheless continue to use them as yardsticks against which to judge indigenous peoples’ beliefs and practices in the ongoing debate over ecological nobility.”

⁸⁶ Krech, *The Ecological Indian*, 145.

⁸⁷ Krech, *The Ecological Indian*.

⁸⁸ Nadasdy calls this “impossible standards of ecological nobility.” See, Nadasdy, “Transcending the Debate over the Ecologically Noble Indian,” 293.

⁸⁹ For example, *Toronto Daily Mail*, January 20 1874, *Toronto Globe*, March 27, 1877, 4, *Montreal Daily Witness*, October 11, 1884, 2 & *Montreal Daily Star*, April 9, 1889, 2.

for the buffalo's destruction.⁹⁰ From his analysis, it is clear that imperialism and colonialism were central to the buffalo's demise. Krech plainly stated that "The role of market hunters is undisputed" and that the Indians "took part until the very end."⁹¹ Here Krech, like other historians before him, presumes that for Indians to be "ecological" they should have stopped hunting – which places them in an impossible position since their survival hinged on the hunt.⁹² Krech wrote "in some areas the Métis killed large numbers. In others, Indians invaded former no-man's lands and hunted out the buffalo." Like Flores, Krech denied the impact of white hunting on the Canadian herds and stated that "in Canadian territory, the hunters were mainly of joint European and native extraction."⁹³ Despite important qualifiers, Krech's narrative blames mainly the Métis at the same time as it represents Indians as over-hunting and wasting the buffalo.

By the mid-1990s, the destruction of the buffalo became firmly anchored within narratives which emphasized the environment. In *The Destruction of the Bison: An Environmental History*, Andrew C. Isenberg argued that a number of different factors contributed to the destruction of the buffalo, including "American hide hunters," Indians, and the environment.⁹⁴ In his introduction to a recent reprint of E. Douglas Branch's 1929 *The Hunting of the Buffalo*, Isenberg concisely summarized his position. He wrote:

the recent investigation of environmental pressures on the bison suggests that there are multiple causes of the demise of the bison: Euro-American hide hunters to the south, western emigrants to the central plains, and Indian hunters to the north where the robe trade was most intense combined with regional drought, cold, habitat degradation, and perhaps disease. Together, hunting and environmental pressures pushed the bison to the brink of extinction.⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Krech, *The Ecological Indian*, 138.

⁹¹ Krech, *The Ecological Indian*, 141.

⁹² In response to a similar assertion made by Hornaday and others, Roe protested: "why should the Indian in the final era of 'intensive slaughter' from 1830 onward, be expected to discipline himself to frugality in buffalo slaughter or consumption which had hitherto been unnecessary, simply in order to leave the more for white men who exercised no such restraint themselves?" See, Roe, "Not Guilty!" 180.

⁹³ Krech, *The Ecological Indian*, 142.

⁹⁴ Richard White, "Animals and Enterprise," in *The Oxford History of the American West* edited by Clyde A. Milner II, Carol A. O'Connor and Martha A. Sandweiss (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 249. See Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A History of the American West* (Norman & London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991). White writes "by the 1840s bison were in trouble, not so much from overhunting, although that was increasingly a factor, as from a combination of drought, habitat destruction, competition from exotic species, and introduced diseases," 216. Andrew C. Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Buffalo: An Environmental History, 1750-1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁹⁵ Andrew C. Isenberg, "Introduction" to E. Douglas Branch, *The Hunting of the Buffalo* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), ix-xvi.

In Isenberg's history, Indians, climate, environmental changes and the American industrial economy are all implicated in the destruction of the buffalo. In contrast to Flores, Isenberg posited that in the case of the southern herd, "the destructive effect of the hide hunters was significantly greater than that of the more numerous nomads."⁹⁶ On the other hand, following a tradition cemented by Hornaday, the "Indian hunters to the north" along with environmental factors "pushed the bison to the brink of extinction."

Isenberg's work continued on the path laid by Krech in his argument that the idea of the "aboriginal ecologist" was not historically accurate. Isenberg argued that "the notion of aboriginal environmentalism holds that the Indians hunted bison only when necessary and wasted no parts of their kills." Instead, Isenberg argued that "the nomadic bison hunters sometimes wasted large amounts of their kills...Indeed, Indian hunters had a hand in the bison's decline."⁹⁷ Nor was the buffalo the first animal the Indians had destroyed. Isenberg argued that they resembled "the hunters, who at the end of the last Ice Age, helped to kill off the giant herbivores...even such precapitalist societies as the equestrian bison hunters of the Great Plains were sometimes given to waste and degradation of resources upon which they depended."⁹⁸ In his book *Red Earth, White Lies*, Vine Deloria Jr. challenged the overkill thesis attributed to these "mythical Pleistocene hit-men". Deloria argued that "advocating the extinction theory is a good way to support continued despoilation of the environment by suggesting that at *no* time were human beings careful of the land upon which they lived."⁹⁹ Indigenous people must be able to situate themselves somewhere other than between the poles of an Euro-American imagined harmonious no-waste eden and overkill.

⁹⁶ Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Buffalo*, 137. Note that "nomads" who might take part in the hide trade are distinct from "hide hunters."

⁹⁷ Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Buffalo*, 10.

⁹⁸ Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Buffalo*, 12.

⁹⁹ Vine Deloria Jr., *Red Earth, White Lies: Native Americans and the Myth of Scientific Fact* (Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 1997), 97. (Italics in the original) Deloria shares his experience at Stanford University when he was invited to speak "on the Indian relationship with the land." He writes "the first question from the audience when I finished was a person asking whether I didn't think running hundreds of buffalo over a cliff was wasteful. The tone of the question implied that the previous weekend other invited Indian speakers and myself had destroyed hundreds of bison somewhere in Wyoming. Since the only recent slaughter of buffalo that I could remember was the Super Bowl, I took offense and refused to answer any more questions. I did not think that political correctness, applied to 15,000B.C., was appropriate."

It is important to make clear that not all scholars accept the emerging master narrative which implicates Indians in the destruction of the buffalo.¹⁰⁰ In his review of Isenberg, Mark Spence writes “one of the most provocative arguments in this book [*The Destruction of the Bison*] deals with the effect of the equestrian nomads on bison populations. Because Isenberg bases much of his analysis on the anecdotal observations of non-Indian sojourners and only quotes three native people in the entire book, his arguments require more testing and will no doubt invite rather than dispel controversy.”¹⁰¹ Or as Richmond L. Clow states, “where the Indian is concerned, the jury is still out.”¹⁰² On the other hand, while Jon T. Coleman is persuaded by Isenberg’s account that “the white hide hunters wallowed in a bloodbath first drawn by Indian hunters....Isenberg makes a strong case for Indian hunters’ contribution to the near extinction of the bison. However, measuring the extent of their contribution is tricky...whether or not they killed enough to eradicate the species remains difficult to prove.”¹⁰³

In Chapter One I took up Isenberg’s argument that “animal protection was a decidedly feminizing movement,”¹⁰⁴ whereas “the preservation of the bison was...the preservation of an imagined, masculine, frontier culture.”¹⁰⁵ I showed that Isenberg’s argument is misleading because it distorts the fact that most of these organizations were often headed by men with mixed gender committees at best or with women relegated to

¹⁰⁰ Citing Flores and Dobak, Jeffrey Ostler argues that while Sioux statements “understate Indian hunting as a contributing factor...[his] view is that some of the recent literature goes too far in blaming Plains Indians for the problems they faced in the 1840s-1860s.” See, Jeffrey Ostler, “‘They Regard Their Passing As Wakan’: Interpreting Western Sioux Explanations for the Bison’s Decline,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 30 (Winter 1999), 482-29. See also Stephen P. Van Hoak, “The Other Buffalo: Native Americans, Fur Trappers, and the Western Bison, 1600-1860,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 72, no. 1 (Winter 2004), 11-13.

¹⁰¹ Mark Spence, review of *The Destruction of the Buffalo: An Environmental History, 1750-1920*, by Andrew C. Isenberg, *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 2 (September 2001).

http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/jah/88.2/br_52.html

¹⁰² Richmond L. Clow, review of *The Destruction of the Buffalo: An Environmental History, 1750-1920*, by Andrew C. Isenberg, *The Western Historical Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (Spring 2001); See also Clow’s critique Flores’ thesis, Richmond Clow, “Bison Ecology, Brule and Yankton Winter Hunting, and the Starving Winter of 1832-33,” *Great Plains Quarterly* 15 (Fall, 1995), 259-270.

http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/whq/32.1br_23.html

¹⁰³ Jon T. Coleman, review of *The Destruction of the Buffalo: An Environmental History, 1750-1920*, by Andrew C. Isenberg, *Ethnohistory* 49, no. 2 (2002). http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/ethnohistory/v049/49.2_coleman.html

¹⁰⁴ Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Buffalo*, 144.

¹⁰⁵ Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Buffalo*, 168.

the work of fund raising or ladies' auxiliaries.¹⁰⁶ The regulation and policing of, predominantly, men's use of animals was men's work. The anti-cruelty to animals movement and the preservation of the buffalo¹⁰⁷ shared a number of important commonalities: both movements were headed by white Christian men and perhaps most importantly, both were regulatory bodies representative of settlers and their emerging social and political order.¹⁰⁸

It is an important historical fact that the rise of the movement for the prevention of cruelty to animals in Canada was contemporary with the mass destruction of the buffalo. The first Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) was established in 1869 Montreal and by 1879 the buffalo had disappeared from the Canadian prairies. The SPCA was a settler institution which established the British organization in the North American context.¹⁰⁹ As these settlers, colonialists and

¹⁰⁶ Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Buffalo*, 144. Isenberg does note the exclusion of women from SPCAs they helped to found establish. See also, Roswell McCrea, *The Humane Movement: A Descriptive Survey* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1910); William Shultz, *The Humane Movement in the United States, 1910-1922* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1924); William Alan Swallow, *Quality of Mercy: History of the Humane Movement in the United States* (Boston: Mary Mitchell Humane Fund, 1963). The Toronto Humane Society had a mixed gender executive until 1917 when they adopted a new constitution modeled on those of American Societies and then relegated women to the ladies auxiliary. See, Georgia Sitara, "Kindness, Mercy, and Justice": A History of the Toronto Humane Society, 1887-1917," (Master of Arts, OISE, University of Toronto, 1994), 79. I take issue with Isenberg's stereotype of SPCAs as efforts to extend "female compassion to men" in my chapter on the Canadian SPCA in Montreal.

¹⁰⁷ See Chapter Four, 12n33.

¹⁰⁸ Andrew C. Isenberg, "The Returns of the Bison: Nostalgia, Profit, and Preservation" *Environmental History* Vol. 2 no. 2 (April 1997), 183. He writes, "The bison preservation movement was a decidedly male concern." There are clear links between the colonization of the west and the Montreal CSPCA. Their chief veterinarian Dr. McEachran was active in the colonization of the west. In 1881, he published his *Notes of a Trip to Bow River North-West Territories* where he traveled for the "purpose of selecting the location of the ranch." He was the vice-president and managing director of the Cochrane Ranche Company on Bow River. In 1881, the buffalo were still around; "doubtless, thousands exist and could be found on the upland prairies or in the canyons of the mountains, but the noise of the approaching steamboat no doubt frightens them out of view." He cannot imagine a place where the prairie was black with buffalo. McEachran's work with the CSPCA informed his philanthropic efforts on the prairies where he undertook a contest to award prizes "for the neatest houses erected by Indians," which replicated an Anglo-American widespread SPCA strategy which awarded prizes to school children from poems and essays on kindness to animals and other humane themes. McGill University Library, D. McEachran, "Notes of A Trip to Bow River, North-West Territories," reprinted from the *Gazette*, Montreal 1881. *Montreal Herald*, 14 June 1890, 4.

¹⁰⁹ Roswell McCrea, *The Humane Movement: A Descriptive Survey* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1910); The following three texts mark the RSPCA centennial, being as they are published in 1924: Sydney Coleman, *Humane Society Leaders in America* (New York: Frank H. Evory & Co., 1924); Edward Fairholme and Wellesley Pain, *A Century of Work For Animals: The History of the RSPCA, 1824-1924* (London: John Murray, 1924); William Shultz, *The Humane Movement in the United States, 1910-1922*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1924); Arthur Moss, *Valiant Crusade: The History of the RSPCA*, (London: Cassell, 1961); E.S. Turner, *All Heaven in a Rage*, (London: Michael Joseph Ltd., 1967); Charles D. Niven, *History of the Humane Movement* (London: Johnson Publications, 1967); James Turner,

expansionists established themselves as the vanguard in the humane treatment of animals, other settlers, colonialists and expansionists were involved in the mass destruction of wild life. This competing inheritance made it possible to lament the involvement of the white race, who by racist reasoning, should have known better than to annihilate the buffalo, as well as to establish the ideological context in which it was possible to blame Indians for the destruction. As whites came to name themselves as the protectors of animals, through the establishment of SPCAs and game laws, Indians came to be seen as those from whom animals needed protection. Dominant settler culture came to present its own model as the best and most appropriate model for ethical human-animal relationships. As game laws came to signify animal protection, Indian hunting became criminalized. Once the buffalo had disappeared, some whites used the chimera of the Indian destruction of the buffalo to restrict Indian hunting of other animals. The political implication of blaming Indians for destroying the buffalo is that, firstly, Indians cannot be trusted to manage the wildlife on which their livelihood depends and, secondly, white expansion into their lands and subsequent destruction of their resources was not as decisive as formerly supposed since the process of destruction of the land and resources was already underway by Indians themselves. Embedded within the history of the destruction of the buffalo is the struggle over the land and its resources. The protection of animals was one more way to impose imperial and state power over Indians, their lands and resources.

White encroachment and hunting has long been considered central to the destruction of the buffalo. Recently there has been a resurgence of writing which centrally implicates Indians in the destruction. I argue that this discourse had its origins in the 1880s, once the great herds had disappeared. In its recent incarnation, scholars base their arguments on predominantly quantitative findings. These findings are problematic in part, as Deloria argues, because they ignore all written evidence and because they are based on partial, fragmentary and speculative evidence. At the same time, Dobak's use of qualitative evidence to support his quantitative argument that

Reckoning with the Beast: Animals, Pain and Humanity in the Victorian Mind (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1980); Brian Harrison, *Peaceable Kingdom: Stability and Change in Modern Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982) & Coral Lansbury, *The Old Brown Dog: Women, Workers and Vivisection in Edwardian England* (Wisconsin: Wisconsin University Press, 1985); Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures of the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

Indians hunted at an “unsustainable rate,” demonstrates that primary sources can be culled in ways that support multiple and contradictory narratives. Historians can use the same set of texts as evidence to support diverse and even oppositional narratives. I have argued that narratives on the history of the destruction of the buffalo serve as an avenue through which settler power over the land is inscribed. Historians today continue to have some power over how we remember and tell stories, and can choose to do so in ways that support decolonization and social justice. In the following chapter, I show that the primary written record does not reflect and justify recent historiographical developments.

Chapter Four

Civilized man as the greedy, savage buffalo hunter: reading the primary record

The contemporary white written record confirms First Nations histories about the centrality of white men to the destruction of the buffalo.¹ Until the end of the 1870s, the primary written record contained two discourses on Indian buffalo hunting both of which argued that the buffalo would have lasted forever as Indians hunted the herds. Whether Indians were cast as improvident or as “conservationist” hunters, writers agreed that Indian buffalo hunting did not have a negative impact on the herds. Instead, published texts blamed the encroachment of white civilization and white hunters for the destruction of the buffalo. It was only once the herds disappeared that some white writers began to blame Indians for the destruction of the buffalo. Although this Indian blaming discourse did not displace the earlier discourse which blamed white hunters, the idea that Indian hunting was responsible for the destruction of the buffalo became one more justification for the dispossession of indigenous people, of their lands and resources. Blaming Indians for the destruction of the buffalo helped to lay the ideological groundwork to confine indigenous people to reserves and to make them subject to game legislation, both of which contravened treaty promises which ensured freedom of movement and guaranteed hunting and fishing rights. The destruction of the buffalo made the west ripe for settlement and colonization; blaming Indians for the destruction of the buffalo provided the moral justification for both.

Rather than blaming Indians for the destruction of the buffalo, the published record contains evidence that in fact First Nations leaders were the first people to call for the protection of the buffalo. They argued that it was the presence of white men, their hunting practices, and their economic imperatives that put the buffalo under pressure. The white record shows that when indigenous people came in contact with white sojourners on the prairies, they argued that white and Métis hunting was detrimental to the herds. Both published and unpublished government records also clearly demonstrate that First Nations leaders’ apprehension about the destruction of the buffalo and the state representatives’ promises of just treatment were instrumental in bringing First Nations to

¹ In many ways, oral and written stories confirm each other even as their content and concerns may differ. See John Burrows, *Recovering Canada: The Resurgence of Indigenous Law* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

treaty in the 1870s. While Canadian officials spoke a language of benevolence and protection, their central concern was to acquire the land and establish optimal conditions for settlement. In the aftermath of the destruction of the buffalo, the new Indian blaming discourse served to mitigate state and settler responsibility both for destroying the buffalo and for providing famine relief to First Nations people who depended on the buffalo for sustenance.

This chapter begins with a brief overview of methodological and theoretical concerns. It then turns to the primary record and explores the advent of white sojourners in the west from the mid-nineteenth century onward. I show that despite these newcomers' descriptions of the plentiful herds, First Nations leaders approached these newcomers with their concern that white encroachment was placing the buffalo under threat. The historical record does not support the widely circulated idea that white hunters were the first to protect the buffalo herds as memorialized in white historiography. Instead, the written record shows that indigenous people were the ones who first called for the protection of the buffalo from outsiders and that they repeatedly urged Canadian representatives to restrain their own peoples' use of the buffalo in order to protect the herds from destruction. The remainder of the chapter then explores the explanations offered by contemporary writers to explain the destruction of the buffalo. It briefly looks at what contemporaries wrote about the buffalo pound and the fur trade. In contrast to current historiography, historical documents place white hunters and traders, and their detrimental practices, on the Canadian prairies. The most recurring explanation offered by contemporary writers was that white people and their civilization were detrimental to the herds. According to the white record, civilized man was the savage hunter responsible for the destruction of the herds. The last section of the chapter examines how contemporaries grappled with the apparent contradiction of civilized man as the ruthless destroyer of animals. Once the herds had disappeared, writers were able to reinvent and ascribe new meanings to the destruction of the buffalo, some of which denied the impact of white civilization and of white hunting on the buffalo.

The new bison revisionist historiography which implicates Indian buffalo hunting in the destruction of the buffalo projects onto Indians a wasteful relationship with the buffalo that more accurately describes how contemporary white observers described

white hunters' encounters with the noble beast. Just like the emerging Indian blaming discourse of the late nineteenth century, historians today are rewriting and assigning their own meanings and explanations to the past. The colonial project of winning the west is ongoing. Historical narratives are one terrain where the colonial project is forged. By writing historical narratives in ways that make social justice possible, historians can contribute to decolonization.

What can be known: How to read the archival record, the content of the record, and the context in which the record was created

I stay very faithful to the language of the primary sources in order to bring their texture to the reader. The term Indian is the standard term in the archival record to refer to indigenous peoples irrespective of how they would identify themselves. Where sources name particular indigenous groups, I include those references. Yet as Noel Dyck has argued, what has been generated under the rubric of the "Indian problem" must be understood as a body of knowledge constructed by non-Indians about Indians.² Rather than providing a source for knowledge about Indians, I want to critically consider this body of knowledge on the history of the buffalo for what it can illuminate about the dominant culture which imagined and authored it. I draw on indigenous perspectives, including references made in texts published from the mid to late nineteenth century which contain indigenous spokesmen's responses to the destruction of the buffalo. Yet, overall, my focus is on Canadian colonial expansion and take over of the west.

The bulk of the research relies on texts published on the west from the late 1850s to the 1890s, including texts by missionaries, travelers, fur traders, explorers and government officials, as well as published government reports.³ The territorial press of

² Noel Dyck, *What is the Indian Problem? Tutelage and Resistance in Canadian Indian Administration*, (Newfoundland: Memorial University, Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1991); Noel Dyck, "Negotiating the Indian 'Problem,'" *The First Ones: Readings in Indian/Native Studies* edited by David R. Miller with Carl Beal, James Dempsey and R. Wesley Heber (Piapot Reserve: Saskatchewan Indian Federated College Press, 1992), 132-140.

³ Archival research was undertaken at the archives at McGill University, la Bibliotheque national et archive de Quebec à Montréal, the University of Victoria, and the archival holdings at the First Nations University of Canada, formerly known as Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, where I also examined microfilm records from the Department of Indian Affairs, 1870s and 1880s.

the lands now known as Saskatchewan and Alberta, from 1878 to 1890,⁴ as well as Montreal English dailies, from 1869 to 1890,⁵ were mined for information on the buffalo. Any and all available miscellaneous surviving written material on the buffalo was also included.⁶ Each of these sets of sources has their particular contribution to make to our understanding of the past. Published travel, fur trade, scientific, and missionary narratives for instance, each with their own vantage point, illuminate Canadian expansion into the west. Published government reports represent the public face of Canadian expansion and management of the west. The press contains both local, recent news as well as reprints from across the Anglo-American world. Taken together, these sources allow me to trace shifts in the narratives on the fate of the buffalo, as these were articulated by white writers, from the mid to late nineteenth century.

There are of course many problems with the surviving published record. As noted above, sources published on the west were produced by bureaucrats, outsiders, and newcomers to the west rather than its original inhabitants. Often these writers had little or no experience with the indigenous peoples their work described and explicated for their readers. Despite this lack of insider knowledge and expertise, their texts served to inform public and official understanding and knowledge about the west, its original inhabitants and their habits including their use of the buffalo. Lacking first-hand knowledge and experience, some writers depended on other writers for information, so that certain ideas were circulated in a number of different texts which had their root in the same source, or set of sources. Published and re-circulated anecdotes and observations accumulated into a familiar narrative, yet at its base was the repetition of one or two key sources.⁷ There is, therefore, a certain amount of circularity in the information contained

⁴ I read the *Saskatchewan Herald* from 1878 to 1890, the *Edmonton Bulletin* from 1880 to 1889, the *Regina Leader* from March 1883 to 1886, the *Qu'Appelle Progress* from November 1885 to 1888 and the *Calgary Herald* for 1889.

⁵ The newspapers include *The Montreal Star*, *the Montreal Daily Witness*, *the Montreal Herald*, *the Montreal Gazette*, *Toronto Daily Mail* for 1874 and *the Toronto Globe* for 1884. The focus on Montreal is because the city was home to the first Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) in Canada. These newspapers present an interesting vantage point to consider articulations around the destruction of wildlife in the context of the rise of the movement for the prevention of cruelty to animals. Toronto's first SPCA was established in 1874.

⁶ For instance, these include papers presented to the *Royal Society*, and articles published in magazines including *Harper's Weekly*, *American Naturalist*, *Scientific American*.

⁷ This is most blatantly illustrated in H. M. Robinson's *The Great Fur Land*. In his preface, Robinson explains, "wherever the personal knowledge of the author has been at fault, the following works of other

in these sources. Secondly, newcomers and outsiders, by and large, came with a particular set of eyes through which they viewed the west. At some level, their narratives conformed to readers' expectations and comprehension. The language of savagery, civilization, and cruelty would have had resonance with readers. Writers and their readers shared common assumptions, along a spectrum of ideas, about the subject matter. Thirdly, the context of these publications helped to shape their content. Although writers came from a variety of vantage points and offered readers insight into diverse aspects of western experience and interpretations, the context of imperial and colonial expansion into the west was a consistent political fact. As Sarah Carter has argued in her analysis of western missionaries' publications, readers of these books would "have been inclined to conclude that there was every justification and, indeed, a great need to transfer the future of the Indians and their land into more capable hands."⁸ From the mid to late nineteenth century, Indians were dispossessed and the literature under consideration "allowed", as Edward Said has argued in *Culture and Imperialism*, "decent men and women to accept the notion that distant territories and their native peoples *should* be subjugated, and, on the other [hand], replenished metropolitan energies so that these decent people could think of the *imperium* as a protracted, almost metaphysical obligation to rule subordinate, inferior, or less advanced peoples."⁹ Although by no means even or straightforward, by the end of the nineteenth century, these narratives formed part of the ideological basis which justified the dispossession of Indians' lands and resources.

Oral History – Aboriginal Voices

I do not possess prairie First Nations stories about the buffalo. It is not my place to attempt to tell such a tale. Nor do I have it to tell. Nonetheless the claim that indigenous people were not responsible for the destruction of the buffalo underpins this work. One evidentiary base for this claim comes from the *Film History Project*

travelers have formed the basis of his descriptions," which include William Butler's *Great Lone Land and Wild North Land*, the earl of Southesk's *Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains* and Milton and Cheadle's *The Northwest Passage By Land*. See, H. M. Robinson, *The Great Fur Land or Sketches of Life in the Hudson's Bay Territory*, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1879): preface.

⁸ Sarah Carter, "The Missionaries' Indian: The Publications of John McDougall, John Maclean and Egerton Ryerson Young," *Prairie Forum* 9, no. 1 (1984), 40. See also, Michael Cottrell, "'To be Useful to the Whiteman and the Indian and the Country at Large': Constantine Scollen, Missionary-Priest, and Native-White Relations in the West, 1862-1885," *Canadian Catholic Historical Association* 66 (2000), 56-73.

⁹ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 10. Italics in the original.

interviews with Elders and others from the 1970s. There are differences among First Nations story-tellers. Edward Ahenakew worked as a Christian missionary and teacher among his people. He wrote in the 1920s that “the times were very hard, for the buffalo had disappeared from the plains, and the Indian quite rightly associated this with the advent of the white man. He recognized that he had taken his own part in that indiscriminate slaughter, but it had been encouraged in the Canadian west, and it had been a deliberate policy, he knew, south of the international border, to subdue the other war-like tribes through starvation.”¹⁰ In his short story on the buffalo pound, Ahenakew described how “traders came to our encampments too, and it was always buffalo hides and pemmican they wanted. Hides. Hides. Shoot. Shoot. See who can shoot the most. A curse upon man’s greed and the Crees for that inordinate slaughter.”¹¹ In an interview, Phillip Lightning, Cree, argues that “the Indians were punished for wasting so much food source, so Manitou took away that form of livelihood, the buffalo.” Lightning argues that the “Manitou had set down a condition that if his children were overdoing things they would be labeled as sinners.”¹² I suggest it is possible that Krech’s hypothesis is reversed here: rather than adopting a euro-american idea of the Indian as conservationist, it is just as likely that Lightning’s argument may reflect its opposite using a Christian idiom.

The idea that Indians were punished does find resonance in other indigenous recollections, but for different reasons. For instance, in their biography of the Cree Leader John Tootoosis, Norma Sluman and Jean Goodwill recount how “The Creator, some of the old men said, was angry with the Crees for signing away the land that had been given to them. The loss of the buffalo was their punishment.”¹³ In *The Amazing Death of Calf Shirt and Other Blackfoot Stories*, Hugh Dempsey explains that in 1879, two years after the signing of Treaty Seven, the buffalo

disappeared like magic. Some Indians thought the Blackfoot were being punished for signing the treaty. As proof, they pointed out that three Blood chiefs who signed the treaty did not live to see the next payment. Others thought that the sun

¹⁰ Edward Ahenakew, *Voices of the Plains Cree* ed. by Ruth M. Buck (Regina, SK: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1995), 73.

¹¹ Ahenakew, “Buffalo Pounds,” *Voices of the Plains Cree*, 37.

¹² Phillip Lightning, Cree, Interview. IH- 191, 6-7. Part of, *Indian Film History Project* which is housed at First Nations University of Canada library. Interviewer: Richard Lightning. Interview location: Pigeon Lake Alberta. 11 April 1975.

¹³ Norma Sluman and Jean Goodwill, *John Tootoosis: Biography of a Cree Leader* (Ottawa: Golden Dog Press, 1982), 26.

spirit was angry with the Indians for letting the white men slaughter the herds. So he had taken the last of his creatures and driven them into a huge cave.¹⁴

In these accounts, Indians are punished by the destruction of the buffalo for “signing away the land” or for allowing “white men to slaughter the herds.”

In general, most prairie First Nations’ oral histories clearly make the link between the destruction of the buffalo and the ascendancy of settlers over the land. Robert Smallboy, Cree, states

another thing, from long ago, people survived on the buffalo. From the hide of the buffalo he made clothing for himself, moccasins, blankets and skins were used to make his tipi. For this reason it seems the white man went after the buffalo, they tried to exterminate them...the white man stole the buffalo for his own use and tried to kill them all.¹⁵

According to Lennox Wuttunee,

Starblanket [Ahtahkakoop] made a statement before the treaties were signed that they had to put their tents in bushes and build corrals around them because there were so many buffalo. As he spoke at the signing [of Treaty Six], he said that now there is hardly any buffalo around to be seen. You see the white people opened that law that allowed them to shoot all the buffalo that they could and eventually they destroyed most of the buffalo. They took away the way that Indians maintained their life, so that they could get the land of the Indians and they finally did get it.¹⁶

These narratives highlight the centrality of the buffalo to Indian life in those years and the centrality of white men to the demise of the buffalo. It was “white people” who “opened the law” that made it possible to destroy the buffalo. It was white hunters who were not regulated or bound by any constraint. These stories also link the destruction of the buffalo and Indian dispossession. As George Cattleman (Cree) stated, “the buffalo wasn’t dealt with in a good manner by the white man, so he has left us. There aren’t too

¹⁴ Hugh A. Dempsey, *The Amazing Death of Calf Shirt and Other Blackfoot Stories: Three Hundred Years of Blackfoot History* (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1994), 8.

¹⁵ Robert Smallboy, Cree, Interview. IH-209, 2-3. Part of, *Indian Film History Project* which is housed at First Nations University of Canada library. Interviewer: Abraham Burnstick. Interview location: Small Boy’s Camp, Alberta. no date.

¹⁶ Lennox Wuttunee, Unidentified, Interview: part of the *1885 Resistance Project* which is housed at the First Nations University of Canada library. Interviewer: Alice Wuttunee, 1994, 33.

many buffalo left with us anymore. He too [the buffalo] was dealt with unjustly.”¹⁷ It was the white man who mistreated the buffalo.

In many ways, these ideas contained in First Nations oral histories have long been known to the general public. In recent years, they are no longer in vogue as explanations for the disappearance of the buffalo. The white record was a colonizing and sometimes hostile record written by outsiders and there is no reason to suppose that white eye-witness after white eye-witness would blame white hunters for the destruction of the buffalo if Indians could have been blamed. Yet the converse is true: the written record demonstrates that indigenous people were the first to mobilize on behalf of the protection of the buffalo from wanton slaughter by newcomers. For many years, historians argued that before the advent of the white hunter, and before the herds were under threat, Indians regulated the hunt.¹⁸ It was the white man, without prohibitive legislation, who wantonly destroyed the buffalo. The white hunter was unconstrained because of the lack of political and spiritual laws which made indiscriminate slaughter possible.

American evidence and context

The history of the destruction of the buffalo and the subjugation of Indians is commonly associated with the American west. In the American context, historians continue to debate to what extent the destruction of the buffalo was part of military and federal policy for the subjugation of the indigenous peoples on the western plains.¹⁹ In

¹⁷ George Cattleman, Cree. Interview: IH-176. Part of, *Indian Film History Project* which is housed at First Nations University of Canada library. Interviewer: Abraham Burnstick. Interview location: Hobbema, Alberta. no date, 3.

¹⁸ Irene Spry writes, “the careful and systematic regulation of the buffalo hunt among plains Indians and, later, Metis [sic] was at least in part conservationist in effect and probably in intention, which is surprising when there seemed as yet to be no danger of scarcity. There would appear to be small reason for conserving a resource that appears to be abundant beyond any conceivable need.” See, Irene Spry, “The Tragedy of the Loss of the Commons in Western Canada,” in *As Long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies*, Ian A. L. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier eds., (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), 207.

¹⁹ On the role of the United States army in the destruction of the buffalo see, David Smits, “The Frontier Army and the Destruction of the Buffalo: 1865-1883,” *Western Historical Quarterly* XXV, no.3 (Autumn, 1994), 313-338; William A. Dobak, “The Army and the Buffalo: A Demur, A Response to David D. Smit’s ‘The Frontier Army and the Destruction of the Buffalo, 1865-1883,’” *Western Historical Quarterly* XXVI, no. 2 (Summer 1995), 197-202; David D. Smit’s “More on the Army and the Buffalo: The Author’s Reply,” *Western Historical Quarterly* XXVI, no. 2 (Summer 1995), 203-208; Andrew . Isenberg, “Toward A Policy of Destruction: Buffaloes, Law and the Market, 1803-1883,” *Great Plains Quarterly* 12 (Fall, 1992), 227-241; Wayne Gard, *The Great Buffalo Hunt* (New York, Alfred A Knopf, 1960), 214-216; John R. Cook, *The Border and the Buffalo: The Untold Story about the Southwest Plains* (New York: Citadel Press, 1967); Eugene D. Flaherty, *Wild Animals and Settlers of the Great Plains* (Oklahoma: University of

Canada, while no government or other ruling body declared war upon the buffalo, its disappearance was considered “inevitable” by all who envisioned colonial expansion and settlement of the west. Despite these differences, the American context and American evidence are important to this study. This chapter suggests that the destruction of the buffalo in the American west was intricately tied to the disappearance of the herds in Canada.²⁰ Primarily, the buffalo moved across the border, as did “Canadian” Indian buffalo hunters. The “Canadian” buffalo were part of what historians have categorized as “the northern herd” which traversed the territory from the Great Slave Lake to the northern Platte River in the US.²¹ The neat political division of the continent by the US and Canada was simply not a natural division of the land and its animals. When US white hunters turned their guns toward the remaining buffalo in Montana, the effects were real for both the buffalo and all the indigenous people who depended upon them. On an ideological level, events in the US also affected conditions in Canada. The United States wars against the indigenous people of the western plains kept “Indian wars” before the Canadian newspaper reading public. Canadians generally have viewed themselves as outside these relations of domination yet both colonial powers were expanding into “the west” in the 1870s.²² The circulation of information on “Indian Wars” also meant that American news reprints in the eastern Canadian press served to inform the ideological

Oklahoma Press, 1995): 303. Flaherty’s book offers a positive reading of the transformation of the prairie landscape. He ends his text with the assertion that “those who take time to acquaint themselves thoroughly with the flora and the fauna of the Great Plains may well enjoy a richer fauna than in 1865.”

²⁰ John Leonard Taylor in his essay “Two Views on the Meaning of Treaties Six and Seven,” supports this contention: “the seeming endless supply of buffalo, especially, was showing signs of diminishing. Pressure on the buffalo for pemmican was no doubt partially responsible. The greatest factor in the disappearance of the buffalo, as for change generally, however, was settlement in the United States, which preceded that north of the boundary by at least a quarter century. The combination of American settlement and hunting was a factor in the steady diminution of the buffalo herds. The trade in buffalo robes played a part in the destruction. This trade was extended from Benton, Montana, to Fort Edmonton in the later 1860s.” in John Leonard Taylor, “Two Views on the Meaning of Treaties Six and Seven,” *The Spirit of the Alberta Indian Treaties* edited by Richard Price, (Alberta: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1980), 11.

²¹ According to William Hornaday, who is considered the historian of the northern herd, “At the time of the great division made by the Union Pacific Railway [1865] the northern body of buffalo extended from the valley of the Platte River northward to the southern shore of the Great Slave Lake, eastward almost to Minnesota, and westward to an elevation of 8,000 feet in the Rocky Mountains.” William T. Hornaday, “The Extermination of the American Bison, with a Sketch of its Discovery and Life History,” (1887. Reprint. Seattle: The Shorey Book Store, 1971), 503.

²² John Tobias challenged the myth of Canada’s humane and just Indian policy in his “Canada’s Subjugation of the Plains Cree, 1879-1885,” *Canadian Historical Review* LXIV, 4, (1983), 319-348. See also Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990); Olive Patricia Dickason, *Canada’s First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times* 3rd ed. (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2002).

context from which Canadians would imagine “the west.”²³ The destruction of the buffalo projected the specter of an “Indian war” onto the Canadian west and ultimately helped to shape how Canadians responded to the destruction and the starvation that followed in its wake.

The primary written record and the destruction of the buffalo

In his book *Forest, Lake and Prairie: Twenty Years of Frontier Life in Western Canada, 1842-1862*, the Methodist missionary John McDougall described the presence of the buffalo on the prairies in the following way: “The whole country was a black, moving mass. The earth trembled to their tread and roar.”²⁴ In their publication of their 1862 travels, *The North-West Passage by Land*, the Viscount Milton and his physician friend, Walter B. Cheadle told their readers that “vast herds covered the ground in every direction, so that the earth fairly shook again beneath their trampling, and at night sleep was almost impossible from the constant lowing, and tumult of their passage.”²⁵ In his recollections of his years of service in the Hudson’s Bay Company, Isaac Cowie wrote that in the summer of 1869 (the year the first Canadian SPCA was established in Montreal), the buffalo were “innumerable. They blackened the whole country, the compact moving masses covering it so that not a glimpse of the green grass could be seen...The earth trembled, day and night, as they moved in billow-like battalions over the undulating plain.”²⁶

Despite what outsiders described as “innumerable” and “vast herds”, in these same years, the contemporary white record also makes it clear that the Plains Indians were concerned that the buffalo was under threat because of outsiders’ hunting and white encroachment. From mid-nineteenth century travel narratives to texts produced near the end of that century, there is consensus that Indians held whites responsible for the

²³ This is my reading and application of Edward Said’s work to the Canadian context. See Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994)

²⁴ John McDougall, *Forest, Lake and Prairie: Twenty Years of Frontier Life in Western Canada, 1842-1862* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1895), 202.

²⁵ Viscount Milton and W. B. Cheadle, *The North-West Passage By Land: Being the Narrative of an Expedition from the Atlantic to the Pacific, undertaken with the view of exploring a route across the continent to British Columbia through British territory, by one of the northern passes in the Rocky Mountains* (1865rpt., Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1970), 69.

²⁶ Isaac Cowie, *The Company of Adventures: A Narrative of Seven Years in the Service of the Hudson’s Bay Company During 1867-1874 on the Great Buffalo Plains, with historical and biographical notes and comments* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1913), 373-374. At the time, Cowie and his party were on “the trail leading to Touchwood Hills...and then headed northeasterly toward the north end of Last Mountain Lake.”

destruction of the buffalo, in contrast to recent historiography which reverses the narrative when white scholars hold Indian hunting as responsible. The German emigrant Frederick A. Wislizenus in *A Journey to the Rocky Mountains in 1839* wrote that “one chief ground of hatred of the Indians for the whites consists in their dread that the buffalo herds will be driven away and destroyed.”²⁷ As Hornaday argued in his 1889 text “The Extermination of the American Bison,”²⁸ the Methodist missionary John MacLean, writing from the Blood Indian reserve in Alberta in the 1890s, argued that “the Indians realized the evil consequence of the white man’s residence in the country. They blame the white man for driving the buffalo from the country.”²⁹ Rather than blaming Indians, these sources demonstrate that Indians blamed whites.

Furthermore, prior to the disappearance of the herds, the written record provides abundant evidence to support the claim that indeed Indians were the ones who protected the buffalo: Indigenous people were the first to make the call for the protection of the buffalo.³⁰ Expansionist and professor of chemistry and geology at Toronto’s Trinity College, Henry Youle Hind published two volumes of his *Narratives of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857 and of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition of 1858*. In his first volume, Hind inscribed what writer Bill Burns calls “one of the first conservation measures”.³¹ During his western travels, Hind was present at a Council with Chief “Mis-tick-oos, or ‘Shortstick’” and his people, including “an extremely old fellow” who remembered “the time ‘when his people were as numerous as the buffalo are now, and the buffalo thick as trees in the forest.’” According

²⁷ F. A. Wislizenus, *A Journey to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1839*, trans. Frederick A. Wislizenus (1912 rpt., New Mexico: The Rio Grande Press Inc., 1969), 53. The book was first published in German in 1840.

²⁸ Writing about the Sioux, Hornaday wrote, “naturally enough, they [Sioux] attributed their [buffalo] disappearance to the white man, who was therefore a robber, and a proper subject for the scalping knife. Apparently, it never occurred to the minds of the Sioux that they themselves were equally to blame; it was always *the paleface* who killed the buffaloes; and it was always *Sioux* buffaloes they killed. The Sioux seemed to feel that they held a chattel mortgage on all the buffaloes north of the Platte, and it required more than one pitched battle to convince them otherwise.” See, Hornaday, *The Extermination of the American Bison*, 490. Emphasis in the original.

²⁹ John McLean, *The Indians, Their Manners and Customs* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1889), 276.

³⁰ For other similar instances, see, Norbert Welsh as told to Mary Weeks, *The Last Buffalo Hunter* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1939), 97-98; Irene M. Spry, “The Tragedy of the Loss of the Commons in Western Canada,” in *As Long as the Sun Shines and the Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies*, Ian A. L. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier eds., (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), 209-210. See also, “The Buffalo Laws,” *Saskatchewan Herald*, 30 December 1878, 2.

³¹ Bill Burns, “Bison: Back from the Brink,” *The Beaver* (October / November 2002), 18.

to Hind, at the council “All speakers objected strongly to the half-breeds’ hunting buffalo during the winter in Plains Cree country. They had no objection to trade with them or with white people, but they insisted that all strangers should purchase dried meat and pemmican, and not hunt for themselves.” According to Hind’s narrative, they also had “strong objections against the Hudson’s Bay Company encroaching upon the prairies and driving away the buffalo. They would be glad to see them establish as many posts as they chose on the edge of the prairie country, but they did not like to see the prairies and plains invaded.” The speakers feared that “the buffalo was fast disappearing before the encroachments of white men.”³² Hind’s inscription of this 1858 council indicates that Indians were arguing that it was white and Métis encroachment that was “driving away the buffalo.” The first people to gather and discuss the destruction of the buffalo and to organize against it were indigenous, in contrast to the white-centered narrative memorialized by historians on bison preservation.³³

In their 1862 western travels, Viscount Milton and Dr. Cheadle were visited by an unnamed “Cree Chief” in the Fort Carleton area who asked them to explain why they had

³² Henry Youle Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857 and of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition of 1858, Vol. 1* (1860. Reprint. Greenwood Press, 1969), 359-360 & 361.

³³ White hide hunters who were most often credited with the buffalo’s demise at the time when it was occurring became in the late 1880s the buffalo’s savior. Among these men was Buffalo Jones, “the most successful buffalo hunter” and then its champion: According to his biographer, Henry Inman, “Let it not be misunderstood. He [Buffalo Jones] did his full share toward the extermination of the buffalo, partly because his necessity was greater than theirs; but even as he destroyed them, he grew to know and regret their fate; and as they faded away from the range, and it became certain that soon they would be gone forever, no heart was fuller of regret than his, and no mind so full of expedients to rescue them.” See, Colonel Henry Inman, *Buffalo Jones’ Forty Years of Adventures on the Plains* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1899), 114. In his essay on the history of bison preservation, Andrew Isenberg explains that William Hornaday “applauded Jones’ ‘heroism’ and Ernest Thompson Seton praised Jones for liberating the bison from the clutches of ‘hostile’ Indians, on whose reservations they grazed, and to bringing them to the safety of domestication.” It should be noted that before these buffalo were ‘saved,’ they were living on Indian reserves. The buffalo herd kept as part of the private menagerie of the warden at Stony Mountain Penitentiary in Manitoba was sold to Buffalo Jones in 1892 for \$25 000. Just as men like Buffalo Jones came to be saviors, Indian hunting came to be criminalized. . See, Andrew C. Isenberg, “The Returns of the Bison: Nostalgia, Profit and Preservation,” *Environmental History* vol. 2, no.2 (April 1997), 179-196. See also, Martin S. Garretson, *The American Bison: The Story of its Extermination as a Wild Species and Its Restoration Under Federal Protection* (New York: New York Zoological Society, 1938); James B. Trelethen, *Crusade for Wildlife: Highlights in the Conservation Progress* (New York: Boore & Crockett Book, 1961); Janet Foster, *Working for Wildlife: The Beginning of Preservation in Canada* 2nd ed., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978); Sheila C. Ogilvie, *The Park Buffalo: Being an Account of the Role of Canada’s National Parks in the Preservation of the North American Bison* (Banff, Calgary: National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada, 1979); John F. Reiger, *American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation* 3rd ed., (Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Press, 2001).

come to the west. The Cree Chief assured the travelers that he knew that they were “great chiefs” in their own land because of their “abundance of blankets, tea, salt, tobacco and rum...splendid guns, powder and shot.” Yet despite their apparent wealth, the Chief argued that “there is one thing you lack - you have no buffalo, and you come here to seek them.” He told the travelers, “I am a great chief also. But the Great Spirit has not dealt with us alike. You he has endowed with various riches, while to me he has given the buffalo alone. Why should you visit this country and destroy the only good thing I possess, simply for your own pleasure?”³⁴ According to the text, the Chief granted them permission to travel and hunt. “He had put the case so truly and forcibly, that we really felt almost ashamed of ourselves, and should have had some difficulty in replying, had he not ended his speech so graciously.”³⁵ What is clear is that Indians considered the buffalo as their animal and argued that white hunters were destroying it “simply for their own pleasure.” As we will see, once buffalo disappeared this narrative was reversed and projected back onto Indians who were then blamed for destroying the buffalo for their own pleasure.

Like Indians in the US,³⁶ whenever Indians on the Canadian side of the border came in contact with white officials, the protection of the buffalo was an important topic of discussion. As imperialism’s advance guard,³⁷ western missionaries were critical intermediaries between indigenous people and the colonial state. In his recollections, *By Canoe and Dog- Train Among the Cree and Saulteaux Indians* (1892), the Methodist missionary Egerton R. Young told his readers that in 1873 he “received a most urgent request from a deputation of Indians to go and visit a band of their countrymen [Saulteaux] who lived on the western side of Lake Winnipeg at a place called Jack Head.” When Rev. Young arrived, the unnamed Chief expressed his peoples’ “anxieties as to their future and that of their children.” They were concerned that “the white people,

³⁴ Cheadle and Milton, *The North-West Passage by Land*, 66-67.

³⁵ Cheadle and Milton, *The North-West Passage by Land*, 67.

³⁶ Butler, *The Wild North Land*, 56; Roe, *The North American Buffalo*, 428 & 433; Oestler, “They Regard their Passing as Wakan,” 484-488. See also, Theodore R. Davis, “The Buffalo Range,” *Harper’s Monthly* XXXVII (January 1869), 152.

³⁷ John McDougall recalled his father Rev. George McDougall “would now and then tell us, we were ‘pathfinders’ for multitudes to follow; we were foundation builders of empire; we were forerunners of a Christian civilization destined to hallow.” See, *Saddle, Sled and Snowshoe: Pioneering on the Saskatchewan in the Sixties* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, c.1896), 252.

more numerous than mosquitoes, were crowding in on the prairies...[W]hite hunters, with their guns and their steel traps, were fast killing off game...the buffalo and deer once so abundant are fast disappearing." According to the Chief, "Our fathers told us long ago that the buffalo was the special gift of the Great Spirit to the Indian, and when it disappeared the Indian must go also."³⁸ Clearly, the people saw their own fate intertwined with the fate of the buffalo. Young wrote that they "went over the business of the approaching treaty [Treaty 5]...and [he] assured them that they need have no fear or alarm. The Dominion Government would treat them honourably and fairly."³⁹ Like Rev. John McDougall, further west in the Treaty Six area, Young promised that Indians could rely on fair and honorable treatment from the Queen and the Canadian state.⁴⁰

Correspondence between government officials also confirms that "other" hunters were detrimental to the herds. As an advocate to "throw open for settlement" the Indian lands "from the north Saskatchewan to the famous Bow River," Charles Bell, who originally came out west with the Wolseley expedition and then settled and became a government employee,⁴¹ wrote about his travels from Manitoba to the Rocky Mountains in 1872 to E.A. Meredith, the Deputy Minister of the Interior in Montreal.⁴² Bell described hunger among the Indians because "*other* sportsmen were robbing him of his only food."⁴³ In terms of legislative and police administration of the west, Bell argued that it would be "for the best advantage...to leave the buffalo to the Indian, even if it means the anger of the Métis."⁴⁴ This strategy was meant to show the Indians that "the

³⁸ Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-Train Among the Cree and Saulteaux Indians* (1892rpt., London: Charles H. Kelly, 1898): 239, 243-244 & 245. Parenthesis in the original.

³⁹ Young, *By Canoe and Dog Train*, 246.

⁴⁰ John McDougall, *Forest, Lake and Prairie*, 195-196.

⁴¹ Charles N. Bell, "A Day with the Buffalo Hunters," *Alberta History* 30, no. 1 (Winter 1982), 25.

⁴² Saskatchewan Indian Federated College Library (SIFC) now First Nations University of Canada (FNUC), RG10, vol. 113609, file 3229, Department of Indian Affairs, Letter from Charles Bell to E. A. Meredith in Montreal, 21 April 1874. According to Sarah Carter, Charles Bell was with the Geological Survey. Carter, *Lost Harvests*, 53.

⁴³ Letter from Charles Bell to E. A. Meredith in Montreal, 21 April 1874. Emphasis added. Bell wrote of meeting with "some" Cree at Victoria last spring who had come in from the plains starving and demanded provisions from the settlers and the H.B. Co. There were no buffalo on the plains all winter and they had suffered frightfully. They told us that many Indians had eaten their horses, dogs, buffalo [document is torn here] and in some cases their snow-shoes and moccasins and had then died." In 1888, when the plains buffalo had disappeared, Bell broadcasted news about where "wood buffaloes" could be found for prospective white hunters. See, "Wood Buffaloes," *Saskatchewan Herald*, 10 March 1888, 1.

⁴⁴ When David Laird argued that Métis buffalo hunting be criminalized because "it brutalizes them." FNUC, RG 10, vol. 3641, file 7530, David Laird, 15 April 1876.

government will deal with them in good faith.”⁴⁵ Yet, like other expansionists, Bell envisioned the end of the buffalo and he called for cattle to replace the buffalo as the Indians’ new food source. This way Indians would become “a contented pastoral people, the natural gradation from the hunter to the agriculturalist.” He suggested “keeping the game for the Indians,” otherwise he predicted they would be out of food in a year to eighteen months and “will then have to be fed by the government to keep them from attacking the settlements along the North Saskatchewan.”⁴⁶ By this logic, the buffalo was destined to disappear to make room for settlers but not before other food sources were made available to Indians, who would otherwise pose a threat to settlers and settlement.

Bell proposed a number of ways to retard the extermination of the buffalo, including the prohibition of exports of “pemmican and hides either as robes or leather” for which “nine tenths of the present buffalo slaughter of buffalo” was occasioned. If Bell believed that it was Indian hunters who were responsible for the destruction of the buffalo, his letter would have indicated as much. On the other hand, his suggestion that the game be kept for the Indians, otherwise they will be out of food, indicates that it was not their hunting practices that were destructive. According to Bell’s letter, it was “other sportsmen” who were responsible for the destruction, although clearly the pemmican and hide trade were seen as depleting the resource. Through his suggestion to prohibit the trade in buffalo products, Bell reduced Indians’ use of the buffalo to subsistence rather than as integral to their economy, including the trade in buffalo products. This argument to limit Indian hunting to subsistence would work to marginalize them in the economy and further impoverish them.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, Indian responsibility for the destruction does not figure at all in his account. Like other expansionists, his main concern was to create optimal conditions for white settlement.

The Deputy Minister for the new Department of Interior, E. A. Meredith’s undated memorandum on “the food question” in the North West Territories was heavily influenced by Bell’s letter. Meredith wrote that “Indians view with uneasiness and discontent the growing settlements of the whites amongst them and the advent of the

⁴⁵ FNUC, RG 10, vol. 113609, file 3229, letter from Bell to Meredith in Montreal, 21 April 1874.

⁴⁶ FNUC, RG 10, vol. 3609, file 3229, Charles Bell, 23 March 1874.

⁴⁷ This logic undermined First Nations farming on the prairies. See, Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests*.

surveyors and explorers onto their country...It is mainly because they believe that all these things bring with them further destruction of their only supply of food."⁴⁸ Again, white contemporary reports provide evidence that Indians were uneasy and discontented and argued that colonization and settlement were destructive of the buffalo. Meredith supported Bell's proposal to "retard" the destruction of the buffalo by prohibiting the sale of hides to American traders. Like other expansionists, Meredith imagined the buffalo would be destroyed – it was only to be delayed in order to avert the cost of feeding the Indians. Like Bell, he imagined turning Indians into a "pastoral people" with cattle to replace buffalo as an "inexhaustible food supply."⁴⁹

Meredith also called for the criminalization of the "present wasteful and destructive practice of drawing buffalos into pounds." In this recommendation, he was clearly targeting a traditional Indian buffalo hunting practice. Like the colonialists cited by historian Shepard Krech, Meredith imagined the buffalo pound to be wasteful.⁵⁰ When the ordinance for the protection of the buffalo was passed in 1877, the criminalization of the buffalo pound was first on the list of prohibited practices. Despite highlighting the buffalo pound as problematic, Meredith urged that "the buffalo had to be left to the Indians...If this is not done the Crees will be out of food within a year to eighteen months and will have to be fed by the government to keep them from attacking settlements along the Saskatchewan."⁵¹ He argued that "If the slaughter continued at the same rate the buffalo would be exterminated in two or three years and we can expect serious disturbances among the Indians, possibly an Indian war, or a repetition of the Sioux massacre."⁵² For expansionists and colonial officials in Canada, the destruction of the buffalo raised fears of the threat to settlers and settlement.

From these reports, it is clear that officials had knowledge that the buffalo was under severe threat. Officials argued that it was the Indians who were complaining about

⁴⁸ FNUC, RG 10, vol. 3609, file 3229, "Memorandum: Indian Policy in the North West Territories and the Food Question," E. A. Meredith, n. d.

⁴⁹ FNUC, RG 10, vol. 3609, file 3229, "Memorandum: Indian Policy in the North West Territories and the Food Question," E. A. Meredith, n. d.

⁵⁰ I write "imagined" because it is not clear from the record whether Meredith ever actually saw a buffalo pound, let alone a buffalo hunt using this hunting method.

⁵¹ FNUC, RG 10, vol. 3609, file 3229, "Memorandum: Indian Policy in the North West Territories and the Food Question," E. H. Meredith, n. d.

⁵² FNUC, RG 10, vol. 3609, file 3229, "Memorandum: Indian Policy in the North West Territories and the Food Question," E. A. Meredith, n. d.

outsiders who were destroying the herds and these officials were in agreement the buffalo should be left to the Indians and outsider traders should be prohibited. In his analysis, Meredith espoused the prevailing idea that Indians were wasteful hunters, but he was also concerned about the comparatively enormous waste brought on by the hide trade and the threat to Indian livelihood. Indians were wasteful and they needed protection at the same time – from the even more wasteful practices of whites and Métis. They needed protection, first and foremost, because white settlers would thereby be protected.

According to the Report of the Department of the Interior for 1876, in “the last ten years the numbers of the buffalo have greatly diminished” and Indians were apprehensive for their future:

The Indian feels therefore that on the existence of the buffalo his own existence really depends. He cannot view without dismay the wanton and indiscriminate slaughter of these animals, mainly it is to be observed, by the Whites and Half-breeds, who have intruded into the domain of the red man, and who wage war upon the buffalo as an enemy instead of protecting him as a friend.⁵³

Almost twenty years after Hind’s recorded council, this 1876 published government report makes it very plain that Indians remained very concerned about the fate of the buffalo. The report clearly points to non-Indian culprits – “Whites and Half-Breeds” – who waged war on the herds that Indians had long “protect[ed]...as a friend.”

Superintendent M. G. Dickieson reported that the preservation of the buffalo was “the subject which at present takes precedence” in connection with the “Indian question in the North-West Territories.” He wrote that “the rapid decrease in the numbers of the buffalo have become a matter of alarm to the Indians, who see that, unless steps are speedily taken to arrest it, their future condition will be one of extreme hardship.” While the buffalo were still “plentiful in the south and east,” “there were few or none to be found in the west and north, and the Blackfeet and other tribes in these quarters were said to be starving and following the buffalo eastward.”⁵⁴ This directly challenges Dobak’s

⁵³ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, “Report of the Department of the Interior” for the year Ended 30th June 1876, 40 no, 11 (1877), xiii. The report states, “There is one question at least which for some years past has sorely disquieted the mind of the Indian in Saskatchewan which causes him to look forward with increasing anxiety to the future. The question is this: how will he find subsistence when the buffalo is destroyed? Until the last few years the buffalo which roamed over the prairie in apparently inexhaustible herds, furnished the Indian with a supply of food practically unlimited.”

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, M.G. Dickieson, xxxv. Dickieson wrote, “while at the Qu’Appelle Lakes the Cree Chiefs, accompanied by their principal headman, waited upon me and represented that they were becoming

assertion of contemporaries' "limited vision."⁵⁵ In the press reprint of M.G. Dickieson's report to the Minister of the Interior, the *Saskatchewan Herald* reported that

while at the Qu'Appelle Lakes, the Cree Chiefs, accompanied by their headmen, waited upon me [Dickieson] and represented that they were becoming alarmed on account of their means of subsistence failing, and begged me to report what they said to the Government, and to convey their request that something should be done to prevent the entire extermination of the buffalo. To show the importance that they attach to this question I may remark that each chief and his head man separately made the same request.⁵⁶

From these early contemporary reports penned by government officials, settlers and missionaries, it is clear that Indians were bringing the issue of diminishing herds to the attention of officials. Indigenous leaders were the first to call for the protection of the buffalo. In effect, they were asking for the Canadian state to control its people's use of buffalo in order to protect the buffalo from wanton slaughter. Nowhere in these contemporary documents by officials is there mention that Indians were responsible for the destruction. Instead commentators were primarily concerned that hungry Indians would commit "outrages...which would result in an Indian war."⁵⁷

The destruction of the buffalo was central to bringing some First Nations leaders to treaty negotiations.⁵⁸ Methodist missionary John McDougall's posthumously published *Opening the Great West* provides a description of the Treaty Six negotiations, covering most of present day central Saskatchewan and Alberta, at Fort Pitt in 1876. Chief Sweetgrass, Christianized Cree and main treaty adherent, asked specifically for the

alarmed on account of their means of subsistence failing and begged me to report what they had said to the Government, and to convey their request that something should be done to prevent the entire extermination of the buffalo." See, A. J. Looy, "Saskatchewan's First Indian Agent, M. G. Dickieson," *Saskatchewan History* 32, no. 3 (1979), 105.

⁵⁵ Dobak, "Killing the Canadian Buffalo, 1821-1881," 49.

⁵⁶ Editorial, "Indian Matters," *Saskatchewan Herald*, 2 June 1879, 2.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, xxxvi. "Should the buffalo be exterminated it is not to be expected that the Indians will refrain from helping themselves to the supplies to be found in the stores of the Hudson's Bay Company and other traders, and compelled by hunger, outrages might be committed by them which would result in an Indian war."

⁵⁸ According to historian John Tobias, "when Big Bear met with Treaty Commissioner Morris at Fort Pitt in September 1876, he extracted a promise from Morris that non-Indian hunting of the buffalo be regulated. Big Bear refused to take treaty in 1876, despite receiving assurances Morris' assurances about the regulation of the hunt." See, Tobias, "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree," 523 & Morris, *The Treaties of Canada*, 241.

protection of the buffalo. Writing 37 years after the fact,⁵⁹ McDougall recalled that Chief Sweetgrass, “placing the governor’s [Alexander Morris] hand on his heart, [said], ‘God is looking down on us today. He has opened a new world for us. He pities those who live by the buffalo...I want you to commence to protect the buffalo. I myself will commence at once to prepare a piece of land and my kinsmen will do the same.’”⁶⁰ Again, it was indigenous leaders who were concerned with the destruction and protection of the buffalo and they asked white officials to restrain their own people, to regulate non-Indian buffalo hunting.⁶¹

As part of his report to the Department of Interior, published in the *Sessional Papers*, Alexander Morris, the chief negotiator on behalf of the Crown and Canadian state, explained that he “shaped his address so as to give them [the Indians] confidence in the intentions of the government and to quiet their apprehensions.”⁶² Morris recalled that “The Indians were, as they had been for some time past, full of uneasiness. They saw the buffalo, the only means of their support, passing away. They were anxious to learn to support themselves by agriculture, but they felt too ignorant, to do so, and they dreaded that during the transition period they would be swept off by disease or famine.”⁶³ Morris finally conceded that “if a general famine came upon the Indians the charity of the government would come into exercise.”⁶⁴ Treaty Six Indian leaders were successful in gaining a “famine clause” which promised provisions to avert starvation when the buffalo were gone. The food question and possible starvation were such pressing concerns for

⁵⁹ J. Ernest Nix, “Introduction” to *Opening the Great West: Experiences of a Missionary in 1875-76*, by John McDougall (Calgary: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1970), 11. McDougall described an address his father, the Rev. George McDougall, gave to the Plains Cree led by Chief Maskepetoon, in which his father “congratulated them on their country. He foretold of the extinction of the buffalo...he prophesied the ultimate settling of this country. He assured them that the Government would do the fair and just thing by them; that this had been the history of the British Government in her dealings with the Indians, always to do justly and rightly by them.” See, McDougall, *Forest, Lake and Prairie*, 195-196.

⁶⁰ Chief Sweetgrass quoted in McDougall, *Opening up the West*, 59.

⁶¹ See also John Tobias’s analysis of Big Bear’s meeting with Morris when Big Bear “extracted a promise from Morris that non-Indian hunting of the buffalo would be regulated.” See, Tobias, “Canada’s Subjugation of the Plains Cree,” 523; Morris, *The Treaties of Canada*, 241.

⁶² Canada, *Sessional Papers*, “Report of the Department of the Interior” for the year Ended 30th June 1876, 40 no 11 (1877), Alexander Morris, lv. These fears were about being confined to reserves and being made to abandon their hunting. Their hunting rights although guaranteed in the treaties would be made subject to game protection legislation, as we will see.

⁶³ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, “Report of the Department of the Interior” for the year Ended 30th June 1876, 40 no 11 (1877), Alexander Morris, lvi.

⁶⁴ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, “Report of the Department of the Interior” for the year Ended 30th June 1876, 40 no 11 (1877), Alexander Morris, lviii.

the First Nations parties to Treaty Six that they likely left Morris no choice but to include a promise of assistance and succor if he wanted to make treaty at all.

But Morris altered his articulation. There was a big distinction, by his own account, between what Morris said when he spoke to Indians and what he said when he spoke to other government officials. The following day when the negotiations resumed, Morris wrote that he “explained that we could not assume the charge of their every day life, but in a time of great national calamity they could trust to the generosity of the Queen.”⁶⁵ Morris’s rearticulation of the famine clause as a “national” famine obscured the local nature of the destruction of the buffalo and in this way mitigated the state’s responsibility to avert hunger and suffering. The Treaty Six document itself states that if the Indians were “overtaken by any pestilence, or by a general famine” the Queen, once “satisfied and certified thereof by her Indian Agent...will grant Indians assistance” that the Chief Superintendent of Indian Affairs “shall deem necessary.”⁶⁶ His immediate superiors were not happy with Morris’s concession to the famine clause.⁶⁷ What Morris promised, successive Canadian governments would not deliver.⁶⁸

The protection of the buffalo from destruction was also of vital importance to the Treaty Seven negotiations encompassing the southern part of present day Alberta and Saskatchewan.⁶⁹ In 1877, as the new Lieutenant Governor, David Laird replaced Morris as the principal treaty commissioner to negotiate with the Blackfoot, Piegan, Sarcee and Stoney of Treaty Seven. In his report of the negotiations, included in Morris’ official account, Laird wrote that on his way to the negotiations, his party “observed portions of many buffalo carcasses on our route, from not a few of which the peltries had not been

⁶⁵ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, “Report of the Department of the Interior” for the year Ended 30th June 1876, 40 no 11 (1877), Alexander Morris, lvi.

⁶⁶ Stonechild and Waiser, “Appendix One: Treaty Six,” *Loyal Till Death: Indians and the North-West Rebellion* (Calgary: AB: Fifth House Ltd., 1997), 244.

⁶⁷ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, “Report of the Department of the Interior” for the year Ended 30th June 1876, 40 no 11 (1877), xi. David Laird, as Lieutenant Governor, in his annual report stated, “there is inserted in this treaty a provision in reference to aid promised to Indians in case of famine or pestilence, which is wholly new, and which I [David Laird] greatly regret was agreed to by the commissioners, as it may cause the Indians to rely upon the government instead of upon their own exertions for subsistence, especially as their natural means of subsistence is likely to diminish with the settlement of the country.” Here Laird points to settlement as a significant factor in the diminishment of the buffalo.

⁶⁸ Dean Neu and Richard Therrien, *Accounting for Genocide: Canada’s Bureaucratic Assault on Aboriginal People* (Winnipeg: Fernwood Books, 2003), 68-84.

⁶⁹ Treaty 7 Elders and Tribal Council, *The True Spirit and Original Intent of Treaty 7*, 9, 25 & 324.

removed.”⁷⁰ In his published speech, Laird told the Indians that “the Great Mother heard that the buffalo were being killed very fast, and to prevent them from being destroyed her Councillors have made a law to protect them. This law is for your good... This will save the buffalo, provide you with food for many years yet, and it shews [sic] you that the Queen and her Councillors wish you well.”⁷¹ Perhaps this articulation would have appealed to those present because it left the buffalo to Indians, just as the Great Spirit had intended.

Rather than Indians being responsible for the destruction of the herds, Morris’ text, like other contemporary reports, makes it clear that they were the ones most concerned about the destruction of the buffalo. He wrote that “the subject was constantly pressed on [his] attention by the Indians.” Morris agreed “to the necessity of regulations being made for the preservation of the buffalo. These animals are fast decreasing in numbers, but I am satisfied that a few simple regulations would preserve the herd for many years.”⁷² These “few simple regulations” for the protection of the buffalo were passed by the territorial government in 1877. Resembling other game legislation, the hunt would be regulated through a closed season on hunting, from November 15 to August 14, with a shorter three month prohibition period for Indians. As with other officials, in the House of Commons discussion the Indians’ reliance on the buffalo was a central concern because without the buffalo “they [the Indians] would be thrown upon the country for support.” The press coverage of the debate on the legislation stated that “in former times the Indians had protected the buffalo themselves.”⁷³ The “wanton destruction of the buffalo” in this House of Commons discussion was attributed to the “half-breeds, who frequently killed the buffalo for tongues alone.”⁷⁴ The “Ordinance for the Protection of the Buffalo” was passed on 22 March 1877. The buffalo pound, a

⁷⁰ David Laird quoted in Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians*, 252.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 268; Steele, *Forty Years in Canada*, 118.

⁷² Canada, *Sessional Papers*, “Report of the Department of the Interior” for the year Ended 30th June 1876, 40, no 11, (1877), Morris, lxiii.

⁷³ “Preservation of the Buffalo,” *Montreal Gazette*, 27 March 1877, 2 & “Preservation of the Buffalo,” *Toronto Globe*, 27 March 1877, 4.

⁷⁴ “Preservation of the Buffalo,” *Toronto Globe*, 27 March 1877, 4.

traditional Indian hunting practice, was the first practice to be criminalized: “wanton destruction” was second on the list.⁷⁵ The law was withdrawn the following year.⁷⁶

Contemporaries and historians have offered various interpretations of the law’s failure.⁷⁷ The Ordinance contained a clause which made it “lawful for any traveler or other person in circumstances of pressing necessity to kill buffalo to satisfy his immediate wants.”⁷⁸ It can be surmised, then, that without replacing the food source, it

⁷⁵ Canada, *Sessional Papers* 41, no.4 (1878), 26. “An Ordinance for the Protection of the Buffalo...1) no pound pit, or like enclosure of contrivance shall, at any time, be formed or used in the North-West Territories for the capture of buffalo nor shall it be lawful to destroy buffalo by running them into the rivers and lakes, or over steep banks and precipices. 2) It shall be unlawful at any season, to hunt or kill the buffalo, from the mere motive of amusement, or wanton destruction, or solely to secure their tongues, choice cuts or peltries; and the proof that in any case, that less than one half the flesh of the buffalo has been used or removed shall be sufficient evidence of the violation of this section.” The ordinance prohibited the hunting of young buffalo under two years and the hunting of female buffalo from November 15 to August 14 every year. The fine was set at a maximum of \$100 or three months.

⁷⁶ Roe, *The North American Buffalo*, 476.

⁷⁷ Former NWMP inspector Denny, in his 1939 publication *The Law Marches West*, recalled that the “country was so vast and the more pressing duties of the small force were so arduous, that it [the law against killing buffalo calves] had little effect.” In his 1930 history *In the Shadow of the Rockies*, MacInnes argues that “although this ordinance was passed in the interest of the half-breeds and Indians, it was repealed the following year owing to their destitution, and in any case, it was useless because it had passed too late to achieve its purpose.” In *The Park Buffalo*, a history of Canadian buffalo conservation, Sheilagh Ogilvie suggests that MacInnes should have added that “most people were unaware of the ordinance’s existence; and that in any event, the legislation was declared *ultra vires* [out of the Territorial government’s powers] by the federal Minister of Justice.” Frank Roe argues that “the date of the first attempt at conservation (1877) makes it difficult to resist the conclusion that nothing would have been done to merely check the hide hunters. In that year, however, an important political event increased the numbers of buffalo using Indians in Canada very considerably. In 1877, after having defeated the rash and foolhardy Custer and his force at the Little Big Horn in June the previous year, Sitting Bull and a large number of his Sioux followers crossed the border into Canada. To what extent the law which was enacted that year reflected the wishes or influence of the hide hunters, it is impossible to say. It was, perhaps, not unnatural that while the Indians ardently desired protection for the buffalo against white hunters, protection against themselves was very distasteful.” George Colpitts in his recent study *Game in the Garden* offers no explanation on why the legislation was withdrawn except to state that “the era of conservation was still decades away. Progressive-era confidence and American initiatives were necessary to begin the conservation movement in Canada.” The famous naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton explained how the destruction of the buffalo came to be “one of the most remarkable results of civilization” by providing an answer to the questions, “why was this extermination allowed? Why did not the Government act?” According to Seton, “There is but one answer. *It was absolutely inevitable.* The Buffalo ranged the Plains that were needed by the overcrowded human swarms of Europe. Producing Buffalo was not the best use to which those Plains could be put. The Buffalo, possessed of vast size and strength, of an obstinate, impetuous disposition that would stampede in a given line and keep that line to the utter destruction of all obstacles or of himself, was incompatible with any degree of possession by white men and with the higher productivity of the soil. Therefore he had to go.” See, Denny, *The Law Marches West*, 60; Charles Malcolm MacInnes, *In the Shadow of the Rockies* (London: Rivingtons, 1930), 145; Sheilagh C. Ogilvie, *The Park Buffalo: Being an Account of the Role of Canada’s National Parks in the Preservation of the North American Bison* (Banff, Calgary: National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada, 1979), 17; Roe, *The North American Buffalo*, 475-476; Colpitts, *Game in the Garden*, 54; Seton, *Life Histories of Northern Animals*, 301-302.

⁷⁸ Canada, *Sessional Papers* 41, no.4 (1878), “An Ordinance for the Protection of the Buffalo”, 26.

would not have been possible to prohibit buffalo hunting even if there was the manpower and moral power to do so. Indians would certainly have felt betrayed so near the signing of the treaties in which their traditional hunting and fishing practices had been guaranteed.⁷⁹ As we shall see, Indians would later become subject to game legislation. Their hunting was criminalized and game conservation became one more reason to confine Indians on reserves.⁸⁰ But in 1878 they were not yet so weakened by hunger as to pose no challenge to settlement. In 1894, once the buffalo had disappeared, Canada passed another law “to protect the buffalo”: a five year hunting prohibition.⁸¹

In 1880, Alexander Morris published his book *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories*, which he hoped would serve as the “story of these treaties,” the official “record of the negotiations” with “the sons of the forest and the plain.”⁸² In his text, Morris denied that there was a law passed for the protection of the buffalo which prohibited the hunting of buffalo during a “closed season”, and which would also apply to Indians. According to Morris “a white gentleman had passed through their [Indian] country and told them that the North West Mounted Police had received orders to prevent all parties from killing buffalo or other animals except for three months.” Morris called this “a sample of false statements by parties who would rejoice to see a conflict of the races.”⁸³ Yet it was precisely this type of law which was passed in 1877 by the Northwest Council and then withdrawn the following year, and which had been discussed since 1875. Morris’ book was published in 1880. In a recent analysis of Treaty Six, *Bounty and Benevolence* (2000), authors Arthur J. Ray, Jim Miller, and Frank J. Tough caught Morris’ lie. Morris explained that a law to

⁷⁹ See, Richard Price, ed., *The Spirit of the Alberta Indian Treaties*; Treaty & Elders and Tribal Council with Walter Hildebrandt, Sarah Carter, and Dorothy First Rider, *The True Spirit and Original Intent of Treaty 7* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996); Neal McLeod, “Rethinking Treaty Six in the Spirit of Mistahi Maskwa (Big Bear)””; See also his essay, “Coming Home Through Stories,” *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 18 (Fall 1998), 51-66.

⁸⁰ C. Gordon Hewitt, *The Conservation of Wild Life in Canada* (New York: Scribner, 1921). Hewitt a state employed “conservationist” argued that settlement and cultivation made the destruction of the buffalo “inevitable.” He argued that conservation laws must also be applied to Indians, despite treaty assurances that there would be no interference with hunting and fishing practices. Alan Herscovici, *Second Nature: The Animal-Rights Controversy* (1985 rpt., Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Co., 1991), 43.

⁸¹ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 26 April 1894, 2039-2040. For more discussion in the House on “preservation of game” See, 1 June 1894, 3537-3541.

⁸² Alexander Morris, *The Treaties of Canada*, 11. See also, David T. McNab, “Treaties and an Official Use of History,” *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 13, no.1 (1993), 139-143.

⁸³ Morris, *The Treaties of Canada*, 175.

protect the buffalo was going to be passed by the government but he told the Cree at the Treaty Six negotiations in August of 1876, “what the law will be I cannot tell.”⁸⁴ *Bounty and Benevolence* authors write that, “at a meeting of 23 November 1875, the council of the North West Territories had discussed this issue. James McKay had proposed regulations that were approved” the following day.⁸⁵

The protection and preservation of the buffalo was a central thread in the way Morris (mis)represented the “difficult and protracted”⁸⁶ negotiations. The destruction of the buffalo was “a subject constantly pressed” on his attention by the Indians.⁸⁷ Morris wrote that “It was impossible not to listen to them without interest, they were not exacting, but they were very apprehensive about their future.”⁸⁸ He repeatedly assured the Indians, by his own account, that they must “trust the generosity of the Queen.”⁸⁹ Morris orated that he came to see the Indians as a “duty.” In order to entreat leaders into treaty, Morris stated “as I came here I saw tracks leading to the lakes and water-courses, once well-beaten, now grown over with grass; I saw bleaching bones by the wayside; I saw places where the buffalo had been, and I thought what will become of the Indian.”⁹⁰ Despite his humanitarian posture and his assurances throughout the text that there would be no restrictions to hunting and fishing and that the Indians’ way of life would not be interfered with, by the end of his text on the Treaty Six negotiations, when the Indians are not textually present, Morris stated “that the North-West Council is considering the framing of a law to protect the buffalo, and when they make it, they will expect the Indians to obey it.”⁹¹

*Indian Buffalo Hunting: Driving buffalo into a pound, surround, enclosure, or pen*⁹²

As is evident from Meredith’s earlier memorandum and the prohibition of the pound in the Ordinance to protect the buffalo, some white contemporaries considered this

⁸⁴ Morris, *The Treaties of Canada*, 228.

⁸⁵ Arthur J. Ray, Jim Miller, Frank J. Tough, *Bounty and Benevolence*, 139.

⁸⁶ Morris, *The Treaties of Canada*, 175.

⁸⁷ Morris, *The Treaties of Canada*, 194-5, 188, & 192.

⁸⁸ Morris, *The Treaties of Canada*, 185.

⁸⁹ Morris, *The Treaties of Canada*, 211.

⁹⁰ Morris, *The Treaties of Canada*, 232-3.

⁹¹ Morris, *The Treaties of Canada*, 241.

⁹² Defined loosely, these methods involved a pen or pound, whether constructed of wood or a natural drop like a cliff, where animals were driven and once confined, they were killed.

hunting method “cruel” and wasteful.⁹³ For instance, while on the Palliser expedition to assess the suitability of the land for settlement, Dr. Hector described the scene of buffalo driven into a pound at the Vermillion River in December 1857 as “more repulsive than pleasant or exciting ... [He] helped by trying the penetrating power of rifle balls on the shaggy skulls of the animals with invariable success; and it was the least cruel way of killing them, as they drop at once.”⁹⁴ Perhaps the most widely circulated description of a buffalo pound came from the pen of Prof. Hind during his time at Qu’Appelle in 1858.⁹⁵ Hind considered it “a sight most horrible and disgusting” where “240 animals had been killed in the pound, and it was its offensive condition which led the reckless savages to construct a new one.”⁹⁶ He described it as “a revolting and terrible scene, dreadful from the excess of its cruelty and waste of life, but with occasional displays of wonderful brute strength and rage; and while man in his savage, untutored, and heathen state shows both in deed and expression how little he is superior to the noble beasts he so wantonly and cruelly destroys.”⁹⁷ The two texts by these civilized men of science tell us that Hector preferred the gun and instant death, and for Hind, the struggle between man and beast demonstrated that the beast was more “noble” than the “savage” who “so wantonly and cruelly destroys” him.

⁹³ As historian Shepard Krech argues, “in a pound many white men discovered their sensibilities assaulted by their first experience of a slaughter house.” See, Krech, *The Ecological Indian*, 130.

⁹⁴ See, Irene M. Spry, ed., *The Papers of the Palliser Expedition, 1857-1860* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1968), 197-198; Hector’s description was circulated in the late nineteenth century in John Macoun, *Manitoba and the Great North-West: The Field for Investment, the Home of the Emigrant, Being a Complete History of the Country* (Guelph, Ontario: The World Publishing Company, 1882), 344-346.

⁹⁵ In his 1924 history of Saskatchewan, John Hawkes quotes Hind’s description at length “as an illustration of the ‘wanton destruction’ the Buffalo Ordinance was intended to check.” See, John Hawkes, *The Story of Saskatchewan and Its People* (Regina: S.J. Clarke, 1924), 51-54. In his published report for Kentucky Geological Survey, *The American Bisons, Living and Extinct* (1876), J. A. Allen and Hornaday in his 1889 report for the Smithsonian Institute, both quoted Hind extensively. Hornaday considered Hind’s “the best description of this method to come under our notice.” See, Hind quoted in Allen, *The American Bison*, 206 and in Hornaday, “The Extermination of the American Bison,” 478-480. See, Irene M. Spry, ed., *The Papers of the Palliser Expedition, 1857-1860* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1968), 197-198; Hector’s description received some circulation in the late nineteenth century in John Macoun, *Manitoba and the Great North-West: The Field for Investment, the Home of the Emigrant, Being a Complete History of the Country* (Guelph, Ontario: The World Publishing Company, 1882), 344-346.

⁹⁶ Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Expedition, Vol. 1*, 356-357.

⁹⁷ Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Expedition, Vol. 1*, 358-359.

Yet, not all nineteenth century white observers were disgusted by the pound.⁹⁸ In *Saddle, Sled and Snowshoe: Pioneering on the Saskatchewan in the Sixties*, the Methodist missionary John McDougall explained that the pound made it possible “to catch them [buffalo] in larger numbers than could be obtained by killing them with bows and arrows.”⁹⁹ What “surprised” McDougall “was that these men who went after the buffalo and endured such physical hardship and nervous strain, did not receive any more than the rest in the partition of what buffalo might be brought into the pound.”¹⁰⁰ Charles Mair, also a resident in the west, in his 1891 paper to the Royal Society of Canada, explained that “Pound-making... was intended to supply the helpless and needy in a great camp with the necessaries of life.”¹⁰¹ Even Hornaday conceded that Indians “would drive a whole herd over a precipice to secure a week’s rations of meat for a single village.”¹⁰²

Yet in 1925, writer Paul Kennedy¹⁰³ chose to reproduce the traveling artist Paul Kane’s description of Indians driving buffalo into an enclosure somewhere between Fort Carlton and Edmonton in 1859. Historian I. S. Maclaren has demonstrated that the anti-Indian sentiments expressed in Kane’s book *Wanderings of an Artist* belong to the editor who wanted to ensure “brisk sales.”¹⁰⁴ Irrespective of the question of authorship, like

⁹⁸ In his private letters to a friend in England, the son of the famous novelist, Francis Dickens, a NWMP officer stationed at Fort Macleod near the buffalo jump Head-Smashed-In (now a world heritage site) wrote “As abattoirs go, the place was no more grisly than what you’ll find at Thames-side, but it still made me shudder, the horror of that cloudburst of flesh.” See, Eric Nicol, ed., *Dickens of the Mounties: The Astounding Long-lost Letters of Inspector F. Dickens, NWMP, 1874-1886* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1989), 143-144

⁹⁹ John McDougall, *Saddle, Sled and Snowshoe: Pioneering in the Saskatchewan in the Sixties* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, c1896), 282.

¹⁰⁰ McDougall, *Saddle, Sled and Snowshoe*, 280-281.

¹⁰¹ Charles Mair, “The American Bison,” 108. Former fur trader Isaac Cowie wrote “and there is one thing to the credit of the Indians which must be recorded – old, helpless men and women could go and help themselves freely to the best carcasses on the field and it were a shame to say them nay, for to the widows and the weak belonged the spoils according to Indian traditional custom. It was generally from the widows that the finest marrow fat and tallow and the best dried meat and pemmican were obtained by the traders.” Cowie, *Company of Adventurers*, 329.

¹⁰² Hornaday, “The Extermination of the American Bison,” 487.

¹⁰³ Kennedy came out west as a special correspondent of “the little war”, the Northwest Rebellion, for the *Montreal Daily Witness*. He was on the field with Col. Otter and his troops when they attacked Poundmaker’s sleeping camp on reserve land on Cut Knife Hill in May of 1885.

¹⁰⁴ This has been most clearly illustrated in I.S. Maclaren’s essay on Paul Kane’s book, *Wanderings of an Artist*. Maclaren has demonstrated that the Paul Kane’s unpublished travel journals “diverged significantly” from the publication which bore his name and was supposedly based on Kane’s travels in the west. Among the important discrepancies found by Maclaren’s comparison of the published and unpublished material was that the publication contained many negative remarks about Indians which were not in the original journals. Maclaren argues that Kane was not the author of his own book, which was written to ensure “brisk sales” and to be “comprehensible to the armchair traveler.” See, I. S. Maclaren, “I came to Rite

other mid-nineteenth century writers, Kane's book explained that "the slaughter in the enclosure was more painful than pleasing."¹⁰⁵ Where his text differed from other writers was in its argument that "the Indians in this manner destroy innumerable buffaloes, apparently for the mere pleasure of the thing... There are thousands of them annually killed in this manner; not one in twenty is used in this way by the Indians, so that thousands are left to rot where they fall." Furthermore, "this improvidence, in not saving the meat, often exposes them to great hardships during the seasons of the year in which the buffalo migrates to the south."¹⁰⁶ Almost sixty-five years later, Kennedy recirculated "the disgusted artist[']s" description of "putrefying carcasses" and repeated Kane's assessment of the "innumerable" waste "apparently for the mere pleasure of the thing. Not one in twenty is used in any way, so that thousands are left to rot where they fall."¹⁰⁷ Kennedy added his own flourish to the narrative by stating that "even the wolves, hovering around while the slaughter was going on, could not dispose of such a monstrous feast. Who can wonder at the disappearance of the buffalo, massacred like that?" Yet Kennedy also argued, like historians publishing in the mid-twentieth century, that "the Indians might have gone on hunting them on foot with bows and arrows forever without making much difference to the herd." What proved to be detrimental to the herds, according to Kennedy was the arrival of the horse, "then the gun, and then the crowd of Métis wanting pemmican to feed white traders as well as themselves – with all this against him, the King of the Plains could not hope to survive."¹⁰⁸ So while the pound was considered painful and wasteful, the horse and the gun brought by Europeans (and used by both Europeans and Indians), the fur trade and the Métis were considered more central to the buffalo's demise. The famous naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton also

Thare Portraits': Paul Kane's Journals of his Western Travels, 1846-1848," *The American Art Journal* XXI, no. 2 (1989), 7-19; Paul Kane, *Wanderings of an Artist Among the Indians of North America, from Canada to Vancouver's Island and Oregon through the Hudson's Bay Company's Territory and Back Again* (1859; rpt., Toronto: The Radisson Society of Canada, 1925). Howard Angus Kennedy reproduced as fact many of the observations on the buffalo and buffalo hunting contained in *Wanderings of an Artist* in his 1925 publication, *Book of the West*. This also illustrates the problem of the circularity of knowledge. See, Howard Angus Kennedy, *Book of the West* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1925), 61-85. See also, Heather Dawkins, "Paul Kane and the Eye of Power: Racism in Canadian Art History," *Vanguard* (September, 1986), 24-28.

¹⁰⁵ Kane, *Wanderings of an Artist*, 81-82.

¹⁰⁶ Kane, *Wanderings of an Artist*.

¹⁰⁷ Kane quoted in Kennedy, *The Book of the West*, 62

¹⁰⁸ Kennedy also added drowning, disease and starvation as "other calamities" which "overtook" the buffalo. See, Kennedy, *The Book of the West*, 62.

argued that “before the coming of the horse and the rifle, the Red man did little harm to the great Bison herds. These two principal aids arrived together on the buffalo range, about the close to the eighteenth century, and marked the beginning of the epoch of extirpatory slaughter by man.”¹⁰⁹ Seton may have considerably underestimated the use of the pound, but in his assessment he articulated a widely shared belief, that ultimately the pound was not the means by which the buffalo was destroyed. Historian Frank Roe agreed with Seton: before the coming of the horse and firearms, “the Plains tribes made little really serious impression upon the buffalo herds.”¹¹⁰ In 1955, ethnographer John Ewers argued that it was horses and guns put too much pressure on the herds, not the buffalo pound.¹¹¹ Here, we see the beginning and the evolution of a multi-causal explanation for the destruction of the buffalo.

If not the pound, then what destroyed the buffalo?

It is difficult to assess the impact of the fur trade on the destruction of the buffalo. Firstly, accounts published from the late 1850s to the 1870s were written when the end of the Hudson Bay Company’s reign over the west was anticipated. Secondly, many who wrote were advocates of settlement, some were commissioned by the state to assess the potential of the west and were themselves committed expansionists. Writers’ negative assessment of fur trade practices may reflect this teleological thrust and their assessments need to be tempered by the historical fact that the land was being transferred away from the fur trade monopoly to agricultural settlement. As late as 1925, in *The Book of the West* Kennedy described Canada as “the last great fur preserve of the world.”¹¹² Long after settlement, the fur trade continued to be viable. Nonetheless, Hind, the mid-nineteenth century scientific observer, told his readers that he was “surprised at the extraordinary absence of animal life” in his 250 mile voyage down the South Saskatchewan River. He suggested that in the country north of the Touchwood Hills there were “vast numbers of aquatic birds and of the larger four-footed animals which now form the small remnant of the earlier representatives of animal life in these wilds,

¹⁰⁹ Seton, *Life-Histories of Northern Animals*, 271.

¹¹⁰ Roe, “Not Guilty!,” 241.

¹¹¹ For Ewers, “abundance of buffalo, coupled with the efficient method of hunting them provided by the use of horses, encouraged the prodigal waste of meat.” Ewers, *The Horse in Blackfoot Culture*, 169. Isenberg too emphasizes that the horse “facilitated bison hunting” and also “competed with bison for scarce water and forage.” See. Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison*, 2, 6 & 26.

¹¹² Howard Angus Kennedy, *The Book of the West*, 1 & 193.

before the fur trade led to their destruction, either for the sake of their flesh or their skins.”¹¹³ Using the example of the furs one Indian man was to trade at Fort Ellice, Hind argued that the fur trade compelled this man to kill “at least three times as much as he would need to feed his family.” It was “the influence of the fur trade [which] has been mainly instrumental in reducing many parts of the country, once very thickly stocked with wild animals of the deer tribe, to a comparative desert, scarcely able to support the few wandering savages who depend upon the chase for subsistence.”¹¹⁴ Hind was another outsider who limited Indian hunting to subsistence rather than as part of a dynamic economy. At the same time, for Hind, this overkill was due to the fact that “the Indian would receive in trade articles not exceeding their aggregate value one-third...[the] sum” of the furs’ worth.¹¹⁵ Hind’s anti-fur trade analysis, from its destruction of fur bearers to the white fur trader as an unfair businessman, reflects in part his desire that the land be used for settlement. His “enthusiasm” for settlement led Hind to overestimate the west’s agricultural potential: it may have also led him to exaggerate the negative effects of the fur trade.

William Francis Butler was another government adviser for settlement. The reader may recall Butler from the end of Chapter One. After successfully helping to quell the Métis resistance at Red River in 1869-1870, Captain Butler “accepted a commission from the Canadian Government to investigate conditions prevailing among the Indians and traders of the North-West Territories and make recommendations for the establishment of the rule of law.”¹¹⁶ He published a record of his journey west in *The Great Lone Land* (1872). The following year he made another journey which he encapsulated in *The Wild North Land* (1874). In his first book, Butler argued that “the Indians who then occupied these regions killed only what was required for the supply of the camps – a mere speck in the dense herds that roamed up to the very doors of the

¹¹³ Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition, Vol. 1*, 393-394.

¹¹⁴ Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition Vol. 1*, 424.

¹¹⁵ Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition Vol. 1*, 424 & 361. At the aforementioned Council, Indians expressed dissatisfaction since the merger of the two companies, HBC with the Northwest Company. “They had not fared half so well, had received bad pay for their provisions, and were growing poorer, weaker and more miserable year by year.”

¹¹⁶ Edward McCourt, “Introduction to the New Edition,” *The Wild North Land: Being the Story of A Winter Journey, With Dogs Across Northern North America*, by William Francis Butler (1874. Reprint. Edmonton: M. G. Hurtig Ltd., 1968), x.

wigwams.”¹¹⁷ It was when “the trader pushed his adventurous way into the fur regions of the North, [that] the herds of the Saskatchewan plains began to experience a change in their surroundings.” Buffalo meat, in the form of pemmican, “was found to supply a most excellent food for transport service, and accordingly vast numbers of buffalo were destroyed to supply the demand of the fur traders.” Butler attributed the use the buffalo pound, “a plan by which great multitudes could be easily annihilated,” to meet fur trader demand for pemmican.¹¹⁸ For his second journey, he recorded his travels with dogs and expanded his earlier argument to include dogs’ consumption of buffalo. According to Butler, between the South Saskatchewan and the Eagle Hills “lay scattered not less than 15,000 wild people, all preying with wasteful vigour upon these scattered herds; but the numbers killed for the consumption of these Indian and half-Indian men formed but a small item in the lists of slaughter.” Despite this wasteful vigour, what proved detrimental to the survival of the herds was all the pemmican required to feed the *voyageur* and his “dozen hungry dogs.”¹¹⁹ In his analysis of the dwindling numbers of buffalo, Butler articulated a vital and recurring theme in the nineteenth century literature: Indian slaughter was wasteful but its impact was “small” in comparison to that of the white fur trader and his dogs.

In his reminiscences, *The Company of Adventurers*, the former HBC trader, Isaac Cowie also noted the disastrous effects of fur trader demand for pemmican. In his description of a scene following the “Blackfeet massacre [of] sixty young warriors,” Cowie wrote that the “fathers...of the young [dead] Cree braves and their companions of other tribes”¹²⁰ demanded “atonement from the people whom they alleged were responsible for the calamity by coming from afar to live on the buffalo and by encouraging the Indians to risk their lives in the enemies’ country to procure pemmican

¹¹⁷ Butler, *The Great Lone Land*, 316-317.

¹¹⁸ Butler, *The Great Lone Land*,

¹¹⁹ William Francis Butler, *The Wild North Land: Being the Story of a Winter Journey with Dogs Across Northern North America* (1874. Reprint. Edmonton: M. G. Hurtig Ltd., 1968), 60-61. Interestingly, Butler does accuse Indians of destroying the wood buffalo around Peace River, but these buffalo never came under systematic extermination, like their plains relatives. See, Bulter, *The Wild North Land*, 210 & 228 & Steele, *Forty Years in Canada*, 247.

¹²⁰ Cowie describes a camp pitched at Big Sandy Hills composed of “allied Cree and Saulteaux, the semi-Stony and Cree ‘Young Dogs,’ of Qu’Appelle and Touchwood Hills, a few English and French Métis belonging to these places and Fort Pelly, also some Assiniboines from Wood Mountain and a few from North Saskatchewan...” Cowie, *The Company of Adventurers*, 302.

upon which they believed the whole British nation relied for subsistence.”¹²¹ This last sentence gives an idea of the enormity of fur trade demand for pemmican. In 1926, historian R. O. Merriman argued that “the bison was unable to maintain its numbers or its range with Europeans, who not only destroyed large numbers themselves, but also supplied the Indians with the means and with an incentive for still greater destruction.”¹²² According to Merriman, the fur traders killed “large numbers of these animals for food... [to the point where the] bison herds were seriously depleted, not by settlement, but the slaughter of the animals to provide food for the fur traders.”¹²³

¹²¹ Cowie, *The Company of Adventurers*, 305. In 1913, almost forty years after his time on the prairies, Cowie described “a field of slaughter” he had witnessed in 1868: “the bones of the buffalo, off which the hides and flesh had been stripped by the hunters, were scattered over the undulating plain. Mixed with these were the bloated and blown-out carcasses of hundreds of noble animals wantonly slain in the sheer love of slaughter, and left untouched by the young bucks to provide a festering feast for the flocks of villainous vultures, which, slimy with filthy gore, hovered over the field and disputed with the ravening wolves for the disgusting prey. For miles, the air stank with the foul odors of this willful waste, so soon to be followed by woeful want involving the innocent and the guilty. Neither warning nor entreaty of their elders could restrain the young men from the senseless massacre of the innocent herds of the universal purveyor of the prairie Indians.” In this instance, Cowie attributes the “sheer love of slaughter” and “willful waste” of the “noble” and “innocent” animals to the “young bucks” who could not be restrained by their elders and thereby brought suffering to their own people. Cowie’s lyrical and vivid description of this episode elevates the buffalo above the young men who “senseless[ly] massacred” them. His use of the narrative trope that elders could not control their young men resembles indigenous leaders’ warnings to white officials that the young men of their bands were angered by the broken treaty promises that led to their peoples’ suffering and hunger. In the case of Big Bear’s band at Frog Lake, “his people were growing impatient...as they needed to feed their children.” At his trial for the murders of nine white men at Frog Lake in spring of 1885, in which he had no hand, Big Bear told the court that “the young men and the troublemakers were beyond my control. They would not listen to my council.” I suggest that Cowie retroactively situates what is essentially a narrative of protest onto a description of the destruction of the buffalo which blames young Indians not only for the destruction of innocent animals but also for the suffering of their people. See, Dodge, *The Plains of the Great West*, 434; Big Bear quoted in McLeod, “Rethinking Treaty Six in the Spirit of Mistahi Maskwa,” 84; See also Big Bear’s courtroom speech in Blair Stonechild and Bill Waiser, *Loyal Till Death*, 207-08.

¹²² R. O. Merriman, “The Bison and the Fur Trade,” *Bulletin of the Departments of History and Political and Economic Science in Queen’s University* 53 (September, 1926), 3 & 17. For Roe critique of Merriman, see Roe, *The North American Buffalo*, 473.

¹²³ Merriman, “The Bison and the Fur Trade,” 17.

Contrary to the prevailing idea in American historiography,¹²⁴ as the above evidence indicates, white traders and hunters had devastating effects on the Canadian buffalo herds. According to historian Arthur J. Ray, after the 1860s the hide trade replaced the robe trade and “the different character of this trade... meant that Indians faced increasingly severe competition from white hunters. Whereas formerly the robes had to be taken during the winter season and took considerable amount of know-how to prepare, hides secured in the summer required less skill to make them ready for trade. As a result, large numbers of non-Indian groups became involved.”¹²⁵ According to “Red River trader” and buffalo hunter Norbert Welsh, who was born in 1845, in the winter of 1865-66, “the Yankees shot more buffalo for their hides than all the Indian and half-breed hunters put together... Parties of Yankees used to come up to the North-West to shoot for sport. They would sit on a hill and shoot. One Buffalo Bill came on a shooting trip, and shot five hundred buffalo just for fun.”¹²⁶ In his book *Forty Years in Canada* (1915) former NWMP officer, Samuel Steele recalled that “many buffalo were killed and the robes bartered for by the Company and the free traders.”¹²⁷ Steele argued that “White hunters were few in number, but when they went to hunt for the purpose of obtaining a fresh supply of meat, they committed the most wanton destruction, killing enough for a whole settlement or a regiment of soldiers.” Engaging in what Hornaday called “the deadly still hunt,” Steele described how these white hunters concealed themselves “on a bluff of timber, or behind a snow drift, they [white hunters] would shoot down hundreds without the poor animals having a chance to see the direction from which the shots

¹²⁴ For instance, this includes William Hornaday and all the historians who rely on his narrative including Canadian Ernest Thompson Seton and C. Gordon Hewitt. The reader may recall that Hornaday argues that “the half-breeds of Manitoba, the Plains Cree of Qu’Appelle, and the Blackfeet of Southern Saskatchewan country swept bare a great deal of the country stretching east and west between the Rocky Mountains and Manitoba... had there not been a white hunter in the whole Northwest the buffalo would have been exterminated there just as surely, though not so quickly by perhaps ten years, as actually occurred.” More recently, Flores claims that on “the Canadian prairies... [the] bison disappeared without the advent of white hide hunting.” In his introduction to the new edition of Branch’s 1929 classic *The Hunting of the Buffalo*, Isenberg, following a tradition cemented by Hornaday, arguing that “Indians hunters to the north” along with Euro-American hide hunters to the south and a various environmental factors “pushed the bison to the brink of extinction.” Hornaday, “The Extermination of the American Bison,” 504-506; Flores, “Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy,” 483-484; Isenberg, “Introduction,” to E. Douglas Branch, *The Hunting of the Buffalo*, ix-xvi.

¹²⁵ Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, 212

¹²⁶ Welsh, *The Last Buffalo Hunter*, 84-85.

¹²⁷ Free traders were men who had completed a term of service with the HBC and then went trading on their own account. Steele, *Forty Years in Canada*, 87.

came.”¹²⁸ In his memoirs, another former NWMP officer Cecil Denny confirmed that “many white hunters...brought in robes and wolf skins” to Fort Macleod.¹²⁹ In the unpublished version of his book, Denny plainly stated that Indians alone would never have destroyed the buffalo.¹³⁰ In contrast to current historiography, clearly white hunters preyed on the northern herds.

In 1879, when Blackfoot chief Three Bulls and Sarcee chief The Drummer waited upon the Lieutenant-Governor, “They complained of the great extent to which poison was used in their hunting grounds by Americans and Half-breeds for instance, and of the large number of other Indians and of Half-breeds who flock to their country during the hunting season.”¹³¹ The press report of the “Blackfoot Deputation” situates American hunters preying on the Canadian herds as well as their detrimental use of poison.¹³² In 1882, the *Edmonton Bulletin* recalled that before the destruction of the buffalo “an army of traders” were stationed near Winnipeg and their “train after train of carts...[were] loaded down with robes,” which undoubtedly demonstrates the presence of outside traders on the Canadian prairies.¹³³ The contemporary record is unequivocal about the presence of outsiders on the Canadian plains.

Civilized man as savage, wasteful and greedy hunter

¹²⁸ Steele, *Forty Years in Canada*, 87; Hornaday, “The Extermination of the American Bison,” 466.

¹²⁹ Denny, *The Law Marches West*, 60.

¹³⁰ Roe, *The North American Buffalo*, 453.

¹³¹ Editorial, “Blackfoot Deputation,” *Saskatchewan Herald*, 5 May 1879, 2.

¹³² The dispersal of poison by white hunters on the prairies was a major issue for indigenous leaders on the Canadian side of the border. In October of 1875, Rev. George McDougall wrote to the Lieutenant-Governor, Alexander Morris, informing him of the discussions at a recent Indian council which called for “the prohibition of the free use of poison (strychnine).” According to George McDougall, Indians argued that “It has almost exterminated the animals of our country, and often makes us bad friends with our white neighbors.” This is an important point, for several reasons. One, it defies the idea that white hunters and their practices were absent or of no consequence on the Canadian side of the plains border. Secondly, the dispersal of poison also brings into focus the destructive techniques employed by white hunters which had ruinous implications for both human and wild life. Interestingly enough, John McDougall, George’s son, admitted to using strychnine despite “native prejudice against using it.” Cheadle and Milton also note setting baits poisoned with strychnine. As early as 1871, there was an enactment against the use of strychnine. See, George McDougall to Alexander Morris, Morleyville, 23 October 1875, in Alexander Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and North-West Territories Including the Negotiations on which they were Based* (Toronto: Belfords, Clarke, 1880), 174; McDougall, *Pathfinding on the Plain and Prairie: Stirring Scenes of Life in the Canadian North-West* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898), 202-3; Milton and Cheadle, *The North-West Passage by Land*, 87 & 110. See, “North-West Territory,” *The Manitoban*, 25 March 1871.

¹³³ Editorial, “Buffalo,” *Edmonton Bulletin*, 18 March 1882, 2.

Contemporary witnesses agreed that the westward march of civilization was pressing the buffalo westward. Both in Canada and the US, white contemporaries consistently recorded that the buffalo were plentiful in Indian territories, the lands where Indians reigned supreme.¹³⁴ In Canada, writers from the late 1850s onward agreed that buffalo were “plentiful” further west toward the Rocky Mountains.¹³⁵ Blackfoot territory, encompassing present day southern Alberta, in particular was considered to be the last buffalo stronghold.¹³⁶ I read this as evidence that Indians were not responsible for the destruction of the buffalo. It was only in 1955 that ethnographer John C. Ewers argued that “the abundance of buffalo in the Blackfoot country” encouraged “wasteful

¹³⁴ In the US, Allen argued that there were plenty of buffalo in “Indian- infested region,” in this case Western Texas, where the buffalo were “temporarily less exposed to persecution.” Hornaday noted that “white hunters were not allowed to hunt in the Indian Territory, but the southern boundary of the State of Kansas was picketed by them, and a herd no sooner crossed the line going north than it was destroyed.” This was repeated by Richard Irving Dodge in *The Plains of the Great West*. Dodge wrote “the difficulty of getting the hides to market from these remote and Indian-infested regions is some guarantee that the buffalo will not be extinct for a few years.” Further north, “strong, rather hostile nomadic tribes protected the herd from the approach of white hunters from any direction. The Sioux, Assiniboin, Gros Ventre, Blackfoot and Crow held an unbroken ring around the range.” George O. Shields, “Coquina”, traveled west to Montana in 1881 and fulfilled his childhood dream and “highest ambition...to hunt the buffalo on his native prairies.” He was in pursuit of, what he claimed to be, the “only great herd remaining in the Northwest” and was “resolved to kill a buffalo...or get scalped in the attempt...” He needed to be “accompanied to help keep the Indians off” because he was trespassing on the Crow Indian reservation in his hunt. He ended up hunting with members from the Company F of the “famous Seventh Calvary.” See, Allen, *The American Bisons, Living and Extinct*, 153-154; Hornaday, “The Extermination of the American Bison,” 496; Richard Irving Dodge, *The Plains of the Great West*, 134; Haines, *The Buffalo*, 202. & George O. Shields, *Hunting in the Great West (Rustlings in the Rockies): Hunting and Fishing by Mountain and Stream* 5th ed. (Chicago: Donohue Publishers, 1883), 63-65, 126, 129, 145 & 155.

¹³⁵ Henry Youle Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857 and of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition of 1858, Vol. I* (1860. Reprint. Greenwood Press, 1969), 180. Cheadle and Milton’s narrative based on their 1862 trip also places the “vast herds of buffalo...far to the west of Red River.” Cheadle and Milton, *The North-West Passage By Land*, 37.

¹³⁶ In 1873, McDougall wrote “Their [‘Crees and Salteaux’] hereditary foes, the Blackfoot tribes, including the Bloods and Piegans and Sarcees, were more favored by the movements of the wild herds, which swung up from the plains westward into the foothills and mountains of what is now Northern Manitoba and Southern Alberta.” According to Cowie, “the buffalo were ever receding from the eastern to the western plains, and for self-preservation the Crees and Salteaux of the east were obliged to encroach every year farther into the realms of the Blackfeet.” In his reminiscences, former NWMP inspector Cecil Denny cites an 1876 government report which included Blackfoot Chief Crowfoot’s worry that they were “getting shut in. The Crees are coming into our country from the north and the white men from the south and east. They are all destroying our means of living.” See, McDougall, *On Western Trails in the Early Seventies: Frontier Pioneer Life in the Canadian North-West* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1911), 10; Cowie, *The Company of Adventurers*, 305; Cecil E. Denny, *The Law Marches West* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1939), 98-99 & 101-102; Arthur J. Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade: their role as hunters, trappers and middlemen in the lands southwest of Hudson Bay, 1860-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 255. Cowie is Ray’s source.

slaughter” and the “prodigal waste of meat.”¹³⁷ Rather than reading the abundance of buffalo in Blackfoot country as a positive sign of the Blackfoot’s relationship with the buffalo, Ewers’ analysis reads the abundance as the reason for the destruction. I suggest that the discourse that blamed Indians for the destruction was invented only once the herds were gone. In the historical record, it is white hunters who are characterized as wasteful.

As we have seen, white onlookers rarely looked upon Indians as “perfect” or flawless in their dealings with the buffalo. Instead, sometimes white observers argued that it was the buffalo who was noble rather than the savage Indian. As “savages,” Indians were considered wasteful and making no provision for tomorrow. For instance, in 1857 in the Qu’Appelle Valley, Hind noted an instance where his party found “the fresh bones of buffalo very numerous on the ground, and here and there startled a pack of wolves feeding on a carcass which had been deprived of its tongue and hump only by the careless, thriftless Crees.”¹³⁸ Yet, more substantially, texts by white sojourners more often reveal the waste of the white writers themselves. For instance, in 1862, the traveling doctor W.B. Cheadle and his royal companion Viscount Milton divided the remaining food equally between themselves and their Indian guides who proceeded to cook and eat “the few fish there were until afternoon, replying to all his [Cheadle’s] expostulations and suggestions that it would be better to leave some food for the morrow, with the eternal ‘Keyarm’ (It’s all the same).”¹³⁹ Yet in their text, it was Cheadle and Milton who described themselves killing buffalo and leaving most of the meat to the wolves. “When we left one of the dead animals, after cutting off the best meat from the carcass, they [wolves] began to steal towards it, and before we got many hundred yards, a dozen of them were tearing at the body, and generally managed to pick the bones clean before morning.”¹⁴⁰ The wolves’ feasting is followed by the appearance of Cheadle “with a tongue hanging to [sic] his saddle.”¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ John C. Ewers, *The Horse in Blackfoot Indian Culture, with Comparative Material from other Western Tribes* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1955), 169; For a critique of Ewers, see Roe, “Not Guilty!” Appendix A, “Wastefulness.”

¹³⁸ Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Expedition*, Vol. I, 340.

¹³⁹ Cheadle and Milton, *The North-West Passage by Land*, 129.

¹⁴⁰ Cheadle and Milton, *The North-West Passage by Land*, 64.

¹⁴¹ Cheadle and Milton, *The North-West Passage by Land*.

In narrative after narrative, it is white hunters who take only parts of the kill and leave the rest. The artist Paul Kane commented that on his party's way to Fort Edmonton "we saw nothing else but these animals [buffalo] as far as the eye could reach, and so numerous were they, that at times they impeded our progress, filling the air with dust almost to suffocation. We killed one whenever we required a supply of food, selecting the fattest of the cows, taking only the tongues and boss, or hump, for our present meal, and not burdening ourselves unnecessarily with more."¹⁴² In his travels of 1859 and 1860, published as *Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains* in 1875, the English trophy hunter, the Earl of Southesk described his camp being surrounded by dozens of wolves "devouring the remains of the buffaloes."¹⁴³ Like Kane, Southesk's party did not keep much of the meat from the animals they killed, "being obliged by the heat and the flies to use it the day it was killed, or soon after."¹⁴⁴ In his autobiographical narrative *Forest, Lake and Prairie*, Rev. McDougall noted that after killing a buffalo bull, "taking some of the meat, we pushed on."¹⁴⁵ In contrast to much current historiography which scrutinizes Indian waste or (mis)use of buffalo, in their published historical narratives white men inscribed a narrative of their own waste.

For white writers publishing in the 1870s, it was civilized man who was the destroyer of wild animals.¹⁴⁶ As Colonel Butler wrote in *The Great Lone Land*, "It is the

¹⁴² Kane, *Wanderings of an Artist*, 89

¹⁴³ Earl of Southesk, *Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains: A Dairy and Narrative of Travel, Sport, and Adventure, During A Journey Through the Hudson's Bay Company's Territories, in 1859-1860* (1875 rpt., Edmonton: M. G. Hurtig, 1969), 101. They killed one buffalo for his head and such fine horns as "were very seldom met with. The head weighed heavily, as we found on lifting it into the cart after its separation from the carcase [sic]: we left that to the wolves and ravens, for it was too coarse for human food.... Altogether we killed six buffaloes in the course of the day... It would have been easy to kill a far larger number had there been any object in doing so." See, Southesk, *Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains*, 98.

¹⁴⁴ Southesk, *Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains*, 123.

¹⁴⁵ McDougall, *Forest, Lake and Prairie: Twenty Years of Frontier Life in Western Canada, 1842-1862* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1895), 183.

¹⁴⁶ An article reprinted from *The North American Review* in *Scientific American* presented the destruction of the buffalo for their hides in the 1870s in the following way: "This might seem cruelty and wasteful extravagance [the removal of the buffalo hide, the sprinkling of the carcass with strychnine and the subsequent destruction of wolves who ate from the carcass], but the buffalo, like the Indian, stood in the way of civilization and the path of progress, and the decree had gone forth that they must give way. It was impossible to herd domestic stock in a country where they were constantly liable to be stampeded by the moving herds of wild animals. The same territory which a quarter of a century ago was supporting those vast herds of wild game is now sustaining millions of domestic animals which afford the food supply to hundreds of millions of people in civilized countries." In his 1909 publication, the Canadian naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton concurred with this analysis. He writes, "The buffalo ranged the Plains that were

same story from the Atlantic to the Pacific. First the white man was the welcomed guest, the honoured visitor; then *the greedy hunter*, the death-dealing vender of fire-water and poison; then the settler and exterminator – everywhere it has been the same story.”¹⁴⁷ In an 1872 article on “The Former Range of the Buffalo” in *The American Naturalist*, author John Henderson argued that “as civilized man advances...members of the wilderness or prairie fauna, must give way to domesticated animals...[The] existence [of wild animals] is incompatible with the presence of civilized man.”¹⁴⁸ This analysis was affirmed by J. A. Allen in his 1876 report for the Kentucky Geological Society, *The American Bisons, Living and Extinct*. Writing in the wake of the destruction of the southern herd, Allen explained that “Since Europeans first came to this continent all the larger ruminants and carnivores have become greatly reduced in number throughout its vast extent, and many species have already become extinct over extensive areas.” The history of the buffalo was no different. According to Allen, “The bison, at once the largest and the most important animal to the aboriginal tribes of this continent... has become so circumscribed in its habitat, and is so constantly persecuted by professional hunters, that its total extermination seems to be fast approaching.”¹⁴⁹ For Allen, it was Europeans who were destroyers of animals: the destruction of the buffalo was laid at the feet of “professional hunters” - who were white, not Indian. According to Allen, “Wherever civilized man has met with the larger mammalia in abundance...the temptation to slaughter for the mere sake of killing seems rarely to be resisted.”¹⁵⁰ Despite all his civility, civilized man slaughtered animals for “the mere sake of killing.”

As Colonel Butler argued in *The Wild North Land*,¹⁵¹ other writers who published in the 1870s coupled two important ideas: Indian hunting was improvident but it was nothing compared to that of white hunters. Allen was clear about the waste of white hunters. He argued that “thousands” of buffalo

needed by the overcrowded [sic] human swarms of Europe. Producing Buffalo was not the best use to which those Plains could be put. The Buffalo...was incompatible with any degree of possession by white men and with the higher productivity of the soil.” See, “Extermination of the Buffalo,” *Scientific American* LXXIII, no. 21 (23 November 1895), 330; Seton, *Life-Histories of Northern Animals*, 301-302.

¹⁴⁷ Butler, *The Great Lone Land*, 242.

¹⁴⁸ John G. Henderson, “The Former Range of the Buffalo,” *American Naturalist* VI, no. 2 (Feb., 1872), 79.

¹⁴⁹ Allen, *The American Bisons*, 71.

¹⁵⁰ Allen, *The American Bisons*, 181.

¹⁵¹ Butler, *The Wild North Land*, 60-61.

are still killed annually merely for so-called 'sport,' no use whatever being made of them; thousands of others of which only the tongue or other slight morsel is saved; hundreds of thousands of others for their hides, which yield the hunter but little more than enough to pay him for the trouble of taking and selling them; while many more, though escaping from their would-be captors, die of their wounds and yield no return whatever to their murderers. Of the hundreds of thousands that for the last few years have been annually killed, probably less than one fourth have been to any great extent utilized.¹⁵²

Allen did not attribute this waste and destruction to Indians. Instead, according to Allen, "this wanton and careless waste has ever characterized the contact of the white race with the sluggish and inoffensive bison of our plains and prairies." In Allen's 1876 assessment, "the most active participators" were civilized men.

It is not that Allen thought the Indians were conservationists. Instead, he argued that "Indians have likewise been improvident in their slaughter of this animal, often killing hundreds or even thousands more during their grand annual hunts than they could possibly use, or from which they saved merely the tongues."¹⁵³ At the same time, like historians writing in the mid-twentieth century, Allen argued that despite all their waste, "Indians, prior to the discovery of the continent by Europeans, appear not to have seriously affected the number of buffaloes, their natural increase equaling the number destroyed both by the Indians and by the wolves."¹⁵⁴

In the 1870s, waste by white hide hunters was undisputed. Writing from the US plains, Colonel Dodge described this wanton waste and slaughter.¹⁵⁵ According to Dodge, in the early 1870s, "though hundreds of skins were sent to market, they scarcely

¹⁵² Allen, *The American Bisons*, 181.

¹⁵³ Allen, *The American Bisons*, 181-82.

¹⁵⁴ Allen, *The American Bisons*.

¹⁵⁵ Dodge, *The Hunting Grounds of the Great West: A Description of the plains, game, Indians of the Great North American Desert* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1877), 134. Dodge described the outset "of the hide business, [when] the hunting parties organized themselves on any haphazard basis. Every man wanted to shoot; no man wanted to do the other work. Buffalo were slaughtered without sense or discretion, and oftentimes left to rot with their hides on." Frank H. Mayer confirms Dodge's analysis in his reminiscences, *The Buffalo Harvest*. According to Mayer, "What happens whenever the law of diminishing returns sets to work, increased efficiency, happened on the buffalo ranges. I know when I started in we were wasteful. We shot only the cows. Their fur was softer; their skins were thinner; they were more in demand. If we killed a bull or two and we killed more than one and two just for the devil of it, we didn't bother to skin him; just left him lay for the wolves and coyotes to come along and do our job for us. Later on, we were glad to kill bulls, calves, anything. We were wasteful of hides, too, and I have figures showing how we got that and increased our efficiency in handling. In 1872, for instance, every hide that reached market represented three or four buffalo killed." See, Frank H. Mayer & Charles B. Roth, *The Buffalo Harvest* (Denver, Colorado: Sage Books, 1958), 89.

indicated the slaughter. From want of skill in shooting, and want of knowledge in preserving the hides of those slain, on the part of these green hunters, one hide sent to market represented three, four, or even five dead buffalo."¹⁵⁶ The "waste" by white hunters was "incalculable."¹⁵⁷ For the years 1872-73-74, Dodge calculated 405, 000 buffalo died each year at the hands of Indians, from the south to northern Indians of the Upper Missouri, and over 3 million dead buffalo in those same years, at the hands of white hunters.¹⁵⁸ Hornaday confirmed Dodge's analysis in his assessment of "the two great periods of slaughter": the destruction of the southern herd between 1870-1875 and the destruction of the northern herd between 1880-1884. In those years, Hornaday described "the business-like, wholesale slaughter, wherein one hunter would openly kill five thousand buffaloes and market perhaps two thousand hides."¹⁵⁹ According to Hornaday, "it was these wholesale hunters, both in the North and the South, who exterminated the species." Ultimately the destruction of the buffalo was "committed by one class of the American people and permitted by another with a prodigality and wastefulness which even in the lowest savages would be inexcusable."¹⁶⁰ In these contemporary narratives, it is white hunters who are wasteful, so wasteful that Indian-hater Hornaday conceded that "even in the lowest savages [it] would be inexcusable." Indeed, as we have seen, the white written record does demonstrate indigenous protest to civilized man's hunting of the buffalo.

Eastern newspaper reports confirmed the negative impact of white hunting on the buffalo. In 1884, the year's total catch in robes was four in comparison to the previous year's ten thousand and 1881's one hundred thousand. According to a *Toronto Globe* report, the destruction of the buffalo had been anticipated for years. Although "protective laws...could not have been enforced against the Indians...but they might have been against the white hide hunters or the rich sportsmen, who were the most wanton death dealers of the lot."¹⁶¹ The *Montreal Daily Witness* editorial on the last four robes

¹⁵⁶ Dodge, *The Hunting Grounds of the Great West*, 131-132 & 141.

¹⁵⁷ Dodge, *The Hunting Grounds of the Great West*, 132.

¹⁵⁸ Dodge, *The Hunting Grounds of the Great West*, 143.

¹⁵⁹ Hornaday, "The Extermination of the American Bison," 520-521.

¹⁶⁰ Hornaday, "The Extermination of the American Bison."

¹⁶¹ "The Last of the Buffalo," *Toronto Globe*, 1 October 1884. The number of robes is no indication of the actual slaughter: "Thousands upon thousands were killed whose hides were never removed; and of these

suggested that “Indians used to kill such buffalo as they could use, and did what they could to protect the herds”; now “buffalo and buffalo robes” are a thing of the past.¹⁶² In his 1889 report on “The Bison’s Extinction” Dr. Carver confirmed both reports. He argued: “As the Indians hunted them, the race of bison would probably have lasted forever but about 1866 the white man turned their attention to the shaggy monsters of the plains...At the close of that winter (1871) a man could go along the banks of the Frenchman or fifty miles by simply jumping from the carcass of one bison to another.”¹⁶³ From these reports, it is clear that destruction of the buffalo occurred when “the white man turned their attention to the shaggy monsters of the plains.” In sharp contrast to bison revisionists, contemporaries believed that it was white rather than Indian hunting that was detrimental to the buffalo herds.

In his article, “The Crime of a Century,” Prof. Chas. Holder agreed that the bison were “swept from the face of the earth by the civilized people of the nineteenth century.” According to Holder, Indians “slaughtered” the buffalo “by the thousand for their skins, bone and for food; they killed one hundred oftentimes to secure five, and waste and prodigality were the rule.” Despite Indian waste, the numbers of buffalo were “so vast...that doubtless the Indian inroads upon them had little effect so far as extermination is concerned.” “But”, according to Holder, “with the white man it was different. Some wished to make records, and killed for sport; some killed for their hides and heads; some became professional buffalo butchers to provide the gangs of railroad men with meat, slaughtering a magnificent animal for its tongue alone. It has been estimated that previous to 1870 nearly three-quarters of a million buffaloes could have been killed yearly and the herds kept intact.”¹⁶⁴ In Holder’s narrative, Indians do not protect the buffalo, they waste the buffalo in incredible proportions (100 slain to secure 5).

thousands a large majority furnished only a few pounds of tenderloin to the rapacious riflemen.” Emphasis added.

¹⁶² Editorial, *Montreal Daily Witness*, 11 October 1884, 2.

¹⁶³ “The Bison’s Extinction,” *Montreal Star*, 9 April 1889, 2. Skinners tied the animal to a stake, hitched a team of horses to the hide and jerked it off. By “a system of fires” the hide hunters “kept the bison from the streams until many of them perished and thousands of others were easily killed.”

¹⁶⁴ Chas. Fredk. Holder, “The Crime of a Century,” *Scientific American* LXXXXXI, no. 24 (December 9 1899), 378-379. “The Red River half-breeds” are held responsible for the extermination of the buffalo north of the Missouri and the “demands of trade...aided and abetted by sportsmen, Indians, and others” are also mentioned. But ultimately it is “a pitiful story of the greed of the white man and the extirpation of a mighty race within three decades.”

Nonetheless, Indians are not held responsible for the destruction of the buffalo. "With the white man it was different."

The fact that white civilized man destroyed the buffalo was not easy for contemporaries to accept. In his 1891 article on the buffalo, Charles Mair argued that "there is perhaps no fact in the natural history of America which brings such reproach on civilized man as the reckless and almost total destruction of the bison."¹⁶⁵ In his support of the preservation of the buffalo, Mair argued that the extinction of the buffalo "would be a disgrace to civilized man."¹⁶⁶ The reproach was based on the racist assumption that because white men were superior to and hence more humane than Indians, they should not have destroyed the buffalo and instead should have done something to protect the animal from destruction. The big game hunter George Shields made a similar point when he argued that "it is a burning shame and a disgrace to every citizen of this portion of the country that they should allow this infamous and damnable traffic to be carried on under their very noses."¹⁶⁷ Hornaday too was horrified that white men cruelly and "remorselessly slaughtered" the southern herds. He argued that "a continuation of the record we have lately made as wholesale game butchers will justify posterity in dating us back with the mound-builders and cave-dwellers, when man's only known function was to slay and eat."¹⁶⁸

For Hornaday, the destruction of the buffalo by civilized man indicated a regression in historical time or degeneration from civilization to barbarism and savagery. Hornaday lamented "the period of systematic slaughter, from 1830-1888." It was

a history which I [Hornaday] would gladly leave unwritten. Its record is a disgrace to the American people in general, and the Territorial, State, and General Government in particular. It will cause succeeding generations to *regard us as being possessed of the leading characteristics of the savage and the beast of prey* – cruelty and greed. We will be likened to the blood-thirsty tiger of the Indian jungle, who slaughters a dozen bullocks at once when he knows he can eat only one. In one respect, at least, the white men who engaged in the systematic slaughter of the bison were savages just as much as the Piegan Indians, who would drive a whole herd over a precipice to secure a week's rations of meat for a single village. The men who killed buffaloes for their tongues and those who shot them from railway trains for sport were murderers. In no way does civilized man

¹⁶⁵ Mair, "The American Bison," 93.

¹⁶⁶ Mair, "The American Bison," 107.

¹⁶⁷ Shields, *Hunting in the Great West*, 55.

¹⁶⁸ Hornaday, "The Extermination of the American Bison," 464 & 484..

so quickly revert to his former state as when he is alone with the beasts in the field. Give him a gun and something which he may kill without getting himself in trouble, and presto! he is instantly a savage again, finding exquisite delight in bloodshed, slaughter, and death, if not for gain, then solely for the joy and happiness of it.¹⁶⁹

From this logic, the savage embodied the primal destroyer of animals (an earlier state of evolution to which the white hunter reverted when he engaged in the mass extermination of the bison). The savage is dehumanized, likened to a wild animal, because he is said to share his “leading characteristics” of “cruelty and greed” with “the beast of prey”. Equating the destruction of the buffalo with savagery challenged the civility of white men who destroyed the buffalo. It also challenged white men’s right to usurp the land because it overturned the basis on which imperialism justified civilization’s supremacy over savagery and thereby over indigenous land. Ascribing the inherent characteristic of destruction of animals to the savage, restored civilized man to a higher state. It was lamentable that some white men “reverted” to an earlier stage of evolution and destroyed the buffalo, but these “leading characteristics” were inherent in savages. Therefore, despite the “disgrace” of being “wholesale game butchers,” the instinct to destroy animals was not inherent in civilized man as it was in savages. By creating a narrative which at one level acknowledged white man’s responsibility for the destruction of the buffalo, while at the same time blaming Indians, Hornaday’s narrative reconfirmed white men’s right to power over the land.

As we have seen from the evidence presented above, the new bison revisionist historiography modernizes the idea of Indians as improvident and projects onto Indians a wasteful relationship to the buffalo that more accurately describes white men’s encounter with the noble beast. In his memoirs, the Red River trader and buffalo hunter Norbert Welsh argued that “The Indians knew better [than to kill as many buffalo as white

¹⁶⁹ Hornaday continues, “There is no kind of warfare against game animals too unfair, too disreputable, or too mean for white men to engage in if they can only do so with safety to their own precious carcasses. They will shoot buffalo and antelope from running railway trains, drive deer into water with hounds and cut their throats in cold blood, kill does [sic] with fawns a week old, kill fawns by the score for their spotted skins, slaughter deer, moose, and caribou in the snow at a pitiful disadvantage, just as the wolves do; exterminate the wild ducks on the whole Atlantic seaboard with punt guns for the metropolitan markets; kill off the Rocky Mountain goats for hides worth only 50 cents apiece, destroy wagon loads of trout with dynamite, and so on to the end of the chapter. Perhaps the most gigantic task ever undertaken on this continent in the line of game-slaughter was the extermination of the bison in the great pasture region by the hide-hunters.” Hornaday, *Extermination of the Bison*, 486-87. Emphasis added.

hunters]. They did not want to see the buffalo gone forever.”¹⁷⁰ Writing when the southern herd had just been decimated, J. A. Allen argued that “the most active participators in their [buffalo’s] destruction, [are] the professional buffalo-hunters themselves - many of whom are candid enough to admit that, through the almost utter extermination of the buffalo, their present occupation will soon pass away.”¹⁷¹ It was the white hunter who had no interest in the longevity of the buffalo. Historian Frank Roe also argued that rather than the Indian buffalo hunter, it was the white hunter who “killed indiscriminately and without thought for the future, for it was the short-term economic gain that was this man’s overwhelming obsession.”¹⁷² As dominion botanist John Macoun argued, in his 1882 survey of the west to promote settlement, the negative attributes assigned to Indians actually belong to “the majority of Whites [who] hav[e] dealings with the Indians.”¹⁷³ Contemporary historiography appears to be displacing and projecting onto Indian buffalo hunters a narrative of waste that was assigned primarily to white hunters by contemporary white observers.

Roe also argued that in the 1870s, when the buffalo herds were under extreme pressure, some writers described white hunters’ wastefulness uncritically while other writers became “conscience-stricken” about their involvement in the wanton slaughter of the buffalo. Their writing, Roe suggested, reflects the fact that they were “written for the public who had been startled by the buffalo massacres.”¹⁷⁴ For instance, after a buffalo hunt from which he returned with six buffalo tongues hanging from his saddle, Colonel W. F. Butler wrote that “never since that hour, though often but two days’ ride from buffalo, have I [Butler] sought to take the life of one of these noble animals. Too soon will the last of them have vanished from the great central prairie land...over which the herds roamed at will in times before the white man came.”¹⁷⁵ The presence and hunting of “the white man” proved to be highly destructive of the herds.

In 1875, the Earl of Southesk defended his buffalo hunting expedition of fifteen years earlier. He told readers of his *Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains* that he “was

¹⁷⁰ Welsh, *The Last Buffalo Hunter*, 84-85.

¹⁷¹ Welsh, *The Last Buffalo Hunter*, 182.

¹⁷² Alexander, “An Examination of the Works of Frank Gilbert Roe,” 44.

¹⁷³ Macoun, *Manitoba and the Great North-West*, 532.

¹⁷⁴ Roe, “Not Guilty!” 267. Roe cites Colonel Dodge and William Butler.

¹⁷⁵ Butler, *The Great Lone Land*, 320.

well pleased with our sport among the buffalo.” Southesk argued that “Had slaughter been the chief object, we might have slain hundreds of bulls and lean cows – nothing could have been more easily done; but such cruelty would have weighed heavily on my conscience.” Clearly he wanted his readers to know that he and his men “showed no inclination for mere wanton slaughter. Not counting two or three bulls shot after a fine run and allowed every chance for their lives, or slain under some sudden excitement, I could safely say that no buffalo had been killed by myself or my men except for good, or at all events definite and sufficient reasons.”¹⁷⁶ Similarly, George O. Shields, who traveled to the northern US prairies in the fall of 1881 to fulfill his childhood dream of buffalo hunting, deplored the fact that white “butchers, not hunters”¹⁷⁷ were involved in the decimation of the buffalo.¹⁷⁸ Near the end of his buffalo hunting expedition, in which many animals were killed and many more were wounded and escaped to die later,¹⁷⁹ Shields defended himself from “some of my readers [who] may accuse us of slaughtering an undue number of buffaloes.” He reminded them “that we saved nearly all the meat, and took it into camp, where the troops made ready use of it.”¹⁸⁰ He told his readers that his party “had ample opportunities to have killed at least three times the number we did kill, but stopped as soon as we had all we could take care of.” He hoped his “dear reader” would “withdraw the charge” of wanton slaughter. Shields agreed that it could

¹⁷⁶ Southesk, *Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains*, 126. He was not as successful in convincing himself otherwise in his ram trophy hunting. He wrote: “I did not look back on the previous’ days shooting with unmingled pleasure. There was too much slaughter, and conscience rather reproached me...[Yet, as he recorded in his journal] ‘a man who travels thousands of miles for such trophies may be excused for taking part in one day’s rather reckless slaughter. After all, there were not more than twelve killed, and a few wounded, out of a very large herd, which perhaps may never again be alarmed by the sight of man.’ I might have added, that all the meat was required for use, so that nothing was wasted but two or three of the more distant carcasses. Still there is something repugnant to the feelings in carrying death and anguish on so large a scale amongst beautiful inoffensive animals. One thinks too little - too little – of the killing of small game, but in shooting large game the butchery of the act comes more home, one sees with such vividness the wounds, and the fear, and the suffering.” See, Southesk, *Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains*, 216.

¹⁷⁷ Southesk, *Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains*, 55.

¹⁷⁸ Shields, *Hunting in the Great West*, 55.

¹⁷⁹ He wrote, “the reader will justly wonder that we did not kill more of them, that we allowed any of them to escape...it takes, on an average, five to ten bullets to stop one [buffalo] within a reasonable distance, depending on the portion of the body through which the balls pass. Of course, one ball through almost any part of the trunk of the animal will cause death eventually, but the great amount of vitality he possesses will enable him to travel miles ere he succumbs. That we did not kill others dead in their tracks was not owing to bad shooting. We could plainly hear our bullets strike the animals, and see them flinch as they felt the effect of the shot. The soldiers who pursued them said they saw blood streaming from every one of them, when riding within a few feet of them and they had no doubt but every one of them would die before night.” See, Shields, *Hunting in the Great West*, 151.

¹⁸⁰ He was hunting with Company F of deceased Custer’s famous Seventh Cavalry.

have been possible to kill “hundreds [of animals], but there was not a man in the party who did not express himself as opposed to any waste of this noble animal. Would I could say as much for every man who has ever been on the plains. If so, the buffaloes would be almost as plentiful to-day as they ever were.”¹⁸¹ These hunters denied personally participating in the wanton slaughter of the buffalo: to do so would have been cruel and uncivilized. But clearly, “the same could not be said for every man who has ever been on the plains.” Not all civilized men restrained themselves from the wanton killing of these noble animals. By the 1880s, writers began to negotiate the legacy of the destruction of the buffalo by civilized man. History was about to be rewritten.

Canadian colonization of the west & the idea of Indians as destroyers of the buffalo: a metaphysics of imperialism

The destruction of the buffalo made the west ripe for settlement. In the 1870s, writers held civilized man responsible for the destruction of the buffalo. Once the herds disappeared, beginning in the 1880s Indians began to be implicated in the destruction. Both discourses were concurrent and each had its proponents. Although the new Indian blaming discourse more clearly functioned to uphold colonial and settler interests, both sets of narratives contained elements which supported the supremacy of newcomers over the land. Blaming Indians for the destruction of the buffalo facilitated the dispossession of indigenous people from their lands and resources. The Indian-blaming/Indian hating discourse was used to subject indigenous people to hunting and trade regulations which contravened the guarantee of their hunting rights as well as negated all promises of benevolence and just treatment inscribed in the treaties of the decade before. Narratives which blamed Indians for the destruction of the buffalo reversed historical reality and set the stage for casting white men as the protectors and regulators of the hunt. As such, these narratives facilitated the ascendancy of colonial and settler power over Indians, the land and its resources.

In 1886 the *Saskatchewan Herald* joined a growing chorus which blamed Indians for the destruction of the buffalo.¹⁸² In an editorial on the proposed Indian Commission

¹⁸¹ Shields, *Hunting in the Great West*, 169-170.

¹⁸² In 1883, the *Regina Leader* also argued “in his improvidence, the savage sawed off the limb on which he was sitting by slaughtering the buffalo in the most wanton manner. Traders on the American side helped him to exterminate the herds by employing men to shoot the buffalo for the sake of its skin only, leaving

to investigate charges of “wrong-doing” against Indian Affairs officials, the *Saskatchewan Herald* argued that “Such an investigation will also place on record the extent to which the Indian himself is to blame for much that he is said to suffer.” Although “it may to some appear very philanthropic to say that the Indian’s heritage having been taken from him and the buffalo driven from the plains by the march of civilization,” the *Saskatchewan Herald* argued that “the extermination of the buffalo is not so much due to the march of civilization as to the persistence with which the Indian and his Half-breed fellow hunter slaughtered them, in season and out of season, seeming bent on bringing about the very state of things they now profess to deplore.”¹⁸³ The editorial articulated two refrains that were growing in popularity: Indians were to blame for their own suffering because, along with the “Half-breeds”, they had exterminated the buffalo.

This reasoning, in which Indians are blamed for the destruction of the buffalo, for not following the white game ethic of the closed season and instead “slaughter[ing] them, in season and out of season”, became the basis from which some settlers argued that treaty guarantees to hunting and fishing rights should be discarded. In June of 1887, the *Saskatchewan Herald* editorial on the “Food Supply of the West” argued, in sharp contrast to white writers a decade earlier, that “the buffalo were not exterminated from their breeding grounds by the advance of civilization and the construction of railways. They had vanished before any of these agencies had gained a foothold in the regions so pathetically described as the happy home of the poor Indian.” Here, the *Saskatchewan Herald* articulated a discourse which in two years would be at the heart of Hornaday’s text. According to the *Herald*, “The buffalo were exterminated by the Indians themselves through their wanton and persistent slaughter of the females and of the young. They were allowed no rest. When they roamed over the prairies in numbers that seemed to defy even the reckless slaughter of the Indians, it is a matter of history, that thousands were annually slain ‘just for the fun of the thing.’” Not since Paul Kane’s Indian hating editor

the carcass to rot on the prairie. The result is that this year not more than fifty buffalo have been killed in all the North-West Territories.” See, “An Odd Farrago: The Indian Question,” *Regina Leader* 22 November 1883, 1. This article was reprinted from the *Winnipeg Times* and proposed a scheme by “Major Bell, of the Bell Farm” to sell Indian reserves to farmer/settlers, and Indians would become “a charge as it were, upon each farm.”

¹⁸³ Editorial, “An Indian Commission,” *Saskatchewan Herald*, 21 June 1886, 2.

had Indian hunting been attributed to “just for the fun of the thing.”¹⁸⁴ This articulation is quite distinct from the general threads in white analysis of the previous decade. In the 1880s, the “wanton and persistent slaughter” was attributed to Indians rather than to whites. The crux of this narrative’s logic was that “if the strong arm of the law is not laid on them soon, they will have our lakes as destitute of life, as the prairies; for just as they selected the breeding buffalo for the slaughter, so do they now select the spawning season as the one in which they attempt to fish...It is the same with the fowl.”¹⁸⁵ The narrative of the destruction of the buffalo served to support settlers who wanted Indians confined to reserves and subject to game legislation.

Not all contemporaries on the prairies shared the *Saskatchewan Herald’s* analysis. White contemporaries took different positions on the issue. There were those who accused Indians, those who defended them, and others who accused white men. Those who held Indians responsible commonly called for making Indians subject to game laws, in contravention of the treaties of the previous decade. Despite these differences, settlers shared a common underlying logic which advocated the restriction of the trade in products of Indian hunting. For instance, in its analysis of beaver hunting, the *Edmonton Bulletin* argued that the history of the buffalo was being repeated and the beaver was on the verge of annihilation.¹⁸⁶ While the paper acknowledged that the beaver helped to feed hungry Indian families and that the Indian “unlike the white sportsman-does not kill for the mere sake of killing,” ultimately the *Edmonton Bulletin* held Indian beaver hunting responsible for the “present rapid decrease” and advocated the restriction of the trade in Indian hunting products.¹⁸⁷ Effectively, the paper reduced legitimate Indian hunting to subsistence and worked to marginalize indigenous peoples’ access to trade and profit in the larger economy.

The fate of the buffalo was continually raised as a point of comparison and of caution in the debates published in the territorial press about the responsibility of Indians

¹⁸⁴ Ibid; Kane, *Wanderings of an Artist*, 81; Kennedy, *The Book of the West*, 61-62.

¹⁸⁵ Editorial, “Food Supply in the West,” *Saskatchewan Herald*, 4 June 1887, 2.

¹⁸⁶ Editorial, “The Beaver,” *Edmonton Bulletin*, 23 July 1887, 3. The paper advocated for the domestication of the buffalo where “the soil too poor, water and wood too scarce to admit of it ever becoming good agricultural country.” The buffalo were “neither as wild or as vicious as those alleged tame cattle.” See, Editorial, “Buffalo,” *Edmonton Bulletin*, 18 March 1882, 2. See also, Untitled, *Edmonton Bulletin*, 15 September 1888, 2.

¹⁸⁷ Editorial, “The Beaver,” *Edmonton Bulletin*, 23 July 1887, 3

and white men for the destruction of game. For instance, in 1888, the *Calgary Herald* argued “as it was with the buffalo so will it be soon with the feathered game of the country, if steps are not taken to prevent the indiscriminate slaughter now going on.”¹⁸⁸ Another *Calgary Herald* editorial called for the “Re-arrangement of the treaties as will prevent this go-as-you-please business from continuing...The indiscriminate killing of game out of season and the invasion of cattle ranges in armed bands would not be tolerated in the case of whites and should not be permitted in the case of Indians.”¹⁸⁹ A published letter to the editor from a member of the Calgary Rod and Gun Club sought “the united support of the whole Territories in demanding that the Indians [and settlers] be put under the proper restrictions in respect of game and river fishing...as will insure such protection to game, wild fowl and migratory fish, as will thoroughly prevent their decimation, far less extermination.”¹⁹⁰

It was in this political climate that Hornaday wrote his classic 1889 report on the extermination of the buffalo which blamed Indians for the destruction of the northern herd. Like these local writers, Hornaday hoped his Indian-blaming narrative would serve as a morality tale and as a warning against the destruction of other animals. In his prefatory note, Hornaday explained that it was his hope that his “historical account...may serve to cause the public to fully realize the folly of allowing all our most valuable and interesting American mammals to be wantonly destroyed in the same manner.”¹⁹¹ It is important to note that Hornaday’s text was written to shape future conduct, policy and use of animals. It is also noteworthy that he became active in the bison preservation movement.¹⁹² As part of his work in the animal preservation movement, Hornaday wrote

¹⁸⁸ “Stop the Pot-Hunters,” *Calgary Herald*, 10 October 1888, 4. See also, Letter to the Editor, “Preserve the Game,” *Calgary Herald*, 11 October 1888, 1; “Game Preservation,” *Calgary Herald*, 19 December 1889, 4; Editorial, “The Massacre of Game,” *Calgary Herald*, 16 January 1890, 2.

¹⁸⁹ Editorial, “The Indian Question,” *Calgary Herald*, 22 January 1890, 2. “No one wishes to extend to the Indians treatment less generous than what whites receive, but at least the Indians should not be fed at the expense of the whites and at the same time enjoy privileges white are denied to whites.”

¹⁹⁰ Letter to the Editor, “The Destruction of Game,” *Calgary Herald*, 19 February 1890, 7.

¹⁹¹ Hornaday, “The Extermination of the American Bison,” 371. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁹² Andrew C. Isenberg, “The Returns of the Bison: Nostalgia, Profit and Preservation,” *Environmental History* vol. 2, no.2 (April 1997), 179-196.

to authorities in British Columbia urging them to restrict Indian hunting which he believed was most destructive.¹⁹³

Officials in the west writing about conditions on the prairies reported that game was disappearing. The ongoing concern continued to be about the cost of feeding Indians who depended on those disappearing animals for survival. Superintendent General of Indian Affairs Edgar Dewdney tied the cost of the "maintenance of Indians" directly to the scarcity of game.¹⁹⁴ Indian Commissioner Hayter Reed acknowledged that "although the terms of the treaty prevent the Indians being brought under the operations of the game laws, every effort is made to exact compliance with their spirit."¹⁹⁵ By the late 1880s and into the 1890s game protection became one more reason to confine Indians to reserves.¹⁹⁶ The archival record supports Stoney Elder John Snow's contention that the Canadian public demanded "that the Indians be strictly confined to their reserves and that the government revise the game regulations and employ wardens to enforce the law." By 1893, there was "straightforward breaking of the treaty" through the "policy of restricting the hunting of game."¹⁹⁷

Rewriting how we remember

Beginning in the 1880s, narratives emerged about the disappearance of the buffalo in which the role of the advance of civilization and white encroachment was downplayed, denied or became one aspect of a larger explanation that also implicated Indians in the destruction of the buffalo. This shift in narratives reflected the ascendancy of settler power over the west. Popular writer Ralph Julian's 1889 short travel narrative blamed

¹⁹³ George Colpitts, *Game in the Garden: A Human History of Wildlife in Western Canada to 1940* (Vancouver and Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2002), 128-129.

¹⁹⁴ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 51, no. 15 (1888), Edgar Dewdney, "Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs," 191 and *Sessional Papers*, 52, no 17 (1889), L.W. Herchmer, "Annual Report of the North West Mounted Police," 51-52.

¹⁹⁵ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 53, no.12 (1890), Hayter Reed, "Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs," 173.

¹⁹⁶ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 53, no 13 (1890), 91 See also *Sessional Papers*, 54, no. 19 (1891), "Annual Report of the North West Mounted Police," which states "I have again to suggest that Indians should not be granted passes to leave their reserve during the closed season." 96. See also, Simon Evans, "The Origins of Ranching in Western Canada: American Diffusion or Victorian Transplant?" in *Essays in the Historical Geography of the Canadian West: Regional Perspectives on the Settlement Process* ed. by L. A. Rosenvall and S. M. Evans (Alberta: University of Calgary Press, 1987), 104.

¹⁹⁷ Chief John Snow, *These Mountains Are Our Sacred Places: The Story of the Stoney Indians* (Toronto: Samuel Stevens, 1977): 46. John Tobias gives 1890 as the date when the Indian Act was amended to make Indians in Manitoba and the North-West subject to game laws. See, Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation," 136.

Indians for their own suffering. “En route from Montreal to Vancouver across the continent on the Canadian railway” Julian mused about the buffalo and the Indians who were now in a “helpless state.” He told readers, “As grave was the matter to him: he [the Indian] did almost as much as the white man toward the unnecessary and brutal extermination of the bison.”¹⁹⁸ It was a story that gained credibility through frequent repetition. According to Julian, “When the white pot hunters began their ravages, those who saw the tragedy during its progress say that the Indians became frenzied and in Canada at least acted like demented huntsmen...slaughtering bison for mere devilry.”¹⁹⁹ In Julian’s narrative, white hide hunters began the destruction and Indians later joined the slaughter; his theory reverses the current revisionist bison historiography which posits that white hide hunters finished what the Indians had begun.²⁰⁰ Julian added “whether they are to be condemned for failing to hoard wood and to provide themselves with food who shall say? They do neither.” He predicted that Indians would follow the fate of the buffalo and be extinct in fifteen years.²⁰¹ Julian inscribed an imperialist fantasy: with Indians following the fate of the buffalo the west would be cleared of all impediments to settlement.

The missionary Rev. Egerton Ryerson Young, in his 1893 publication *Stories from Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires*, explained that “Every year, since the waves of the Anglo-Saxon civilization crossed the Mississippi, these Métis hunters had to go farther west in order to find game.”²⁰² He argued that “civilization with attendant blessings, and alas! on account of its imperfection with some of its evils, has driven back the game and the picturesque hunters.” According to the Rev. Young, the buffalo was

¹⁹⁸ McGill University Library, Ralph Julian, “The Trail of the Bison,” *Outing* XV no 1 (October 1889).

¹⁹⁹ Julian, “The Trail of the Bison,” 5. This resembles Calvin Martin’s thesis in *Keepers of the Game*. See, Calvin Martin, *Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978).

²⁰⁰ The reader may recall that Flores argues that “the more familiar events of the 1870s [the destruction of the buffalo by white hide hunters] only delivered the *coup de grace*...” Isenberg also argues that “white hide hunters wallowed in a blood bath first drawn by the Indian hunter.” See, Flores, “Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy,” 485. Emphasis added; Jon T. Coleman, review of *The Destruction of the Buffalo: An Environmental History, 1750-1920*, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/ethnohistory/v049/49.2_coleman.html

²⁰¹ See also, John Maclean, *The Warden of the Plains: And Other Stories of Life in the Canadian North-West* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1896), 296. For an analysis of extinction discourse within its wider cultural and imperial context, see, Patrick Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings: Discourse on the Extinction of Primitive Races, 1800-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2003).

²⁰² Egerton R. Young, *Stories from Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires* (1893. Reprint. Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1974), 64.

“Hunted and slaughtered incessantly by Indian, Métis, and white man, they [the buffalo] were driven backward and westward until in the shadow of the Rocky Mountains the last herds of these noble and valuable animals have been ruthlessly destroyed.”²⁰³ Young’s narrative combines a number of elements to explain the destruction of the buffalo: He confirms the view of the 1870s writers who emphasized the destructive encounter between Anglo-Saxon civilization and the buffalo which drove the herds westward, making Blackfoot territory the buffalo’s last stronghold. He also used the language these writers employed to describe how white hide hunters “hunted and slaughtered [the buffalo] incessantly.” But what distinguished Young’s 1893 publication from 1870s writers was that he included Indians among those who “ruthless destroyed” “these noble and valuable animals.”

The way writers inscribed narratives in the late 1880s was substantially different from the way others had written their narratives a decade before. In 1866, the Methodist missionary George McDougall removed a sacred stone²⁰⁴ venerated by the Cree, Blackfeet, and the Sarcees.²⁰⁵ According to McDougall, “The piece weighs 300 lbs. It is so soft you can cut it with a knife.”²⁰⁶ In 1872, when Colonel Butler wrote about the removal of the sacred stone, he argued that “the old medicine-men declared that its removal would lead to great misfortunes, and that war, disease, and dearth in the buffalo would afflict the tribes of the Saskatchewan”²⁰⁷ According to Butler, “a few months later brought all three of these evils upon the Indians; and probably, since the trader had reached the country had so many afflictions of war, famine, and plague fallen upon the Crees and the Blackfeet as during the year which succeeded the useless removal of their Manito-stone.”²⁰⁸ Although he considered the removal of the stone as “useless,” Butler

²⁰³ Young, *Stories from Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires*.

²⁰⁴ According to McLean, originally brought to the mission house in Victoria, Saskatchewan, the stone was sent to Winnipeg, then Toronto. It has since been returned to the west. See, McLean, *The Indians of Canada*, 202. On the buffalo stone, see, Neal McLeod, “Rethinking Treaty Six in the Spirit of Mistahi Maskwa,” 75; Hugh A. Dempsey, *Big Bear: The End of Freedom*, 37-38; Cynthia Chambers, “The Things I Carry With Me,” *Educational Insights* 8, no. 2 (December 2003): <http://www.ccfi.educ.ubc.ca/publication/insights/v08n02/contextualexplorations/curriculum/chambers.html>

²⁰⁵ McLean, *The Indians of Canada*, 202.

²⁰⁶ This section of biography is drawn from Rev. George McDougall’s journal notes. See, John McDougall, *George Millward McDougall, The Pioneer, Patriot and Missionary* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1888), 141-142.

²⁰⁷ Butler, *The Great Lone Land*, 304-305.

²⁰⁸ Butler, *The Great Lone Land*.

did not deny the calamities that followed its removal, in contrast to two missionary accounts published less than twenty years later.

In the late 1880s, both missionaries John McDougall and John McLean included narratives on the removal of sacred stone in their publications. McDougall noted that the removal of the stone “roused the ire of the conjurors. They declared that sickness and war and the decrease of the buffalo would follow the sacrilege.”²⁰⁹ In his biography of his father, published in 1888, John McDougall denied the truth of the prophecies. He wrote instead that “Thanks to a kind Providence, these soothsayers have been confounded and last summer thousands of wild cattle grazed the sacred plain.”²¹⁰ In his account of the removal of the stone, in *The Indians of Canada* (1889), the missionary John McLean also confirmed that “when the Indians learned that their prairie idol had been removed, they were filled with surprise and fear, and the prophets and conjurers predicted the departure of the buffalo, and serious calamities of various kinds to fall upon the tribes.”²¹¹ Like McDougall, McLean denied the truth of the prophecies. He wrote, “The prediction failed entirely, as the buffalo returned and the people had abundance.”²¹² In fact, by the late 1880s when these two books were published, the buffalo had disappeared and the people had been hungry for over a decade.

At one level, the removal of the stone exemplified the newcomers’ arrogant usurpation, their lack of respect for the land, the animals, and indigenous people or for their spiritual beliefs. As McLean told his readers, “Indians in their lodges still speak of the sacrilegious doings of the white men.”²¹³ It was the white man who had transgressed the spiritual laws who was responsible for the disappearance of the buffalo. But for McLean, ultimately, “the evident conclusion in the matter is, that the red man’s idol [the buffalo stone] must pass through the crucible, in order that they may minister to the advancement of the nobler civilization of the white race.”²¹⁴ On the other hand, John McDougall “saw the hand of divine providence acting in the extinction of the buffalo.”²¹⁵

²⁰⁹ McDougall, *George Millward McDougall*, 141-142.

²¹⁰ McDougall, *George Millward McDougall*, 142.

²¹¹ John McLean, *The Indians of Canada: Their Manners and Customs* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1889), 202-203.

²¹² McLean, *The Indians of Canada*, 203.

²¹³ McLean, *The Indians of Canada*.

²¹⁴ McLean, *The Indians of Canada*.

²¹⁵ Carter, “The Missionaries’ Indian,” 33.

He wrote, "The great herds of buffalo abused by man were hurtful to himself, and therefore in the fullness of time the Great Father, in the interests of his children, wiped them from the face of the earth."²¹⁶ While McLean used the language of white supremacy and McDougall saw the hand of God, both inscribed the inevitability of settler supremacy over the land in their stories about the disappearance of the buffalo. McDougall and McLean's narratives erased the links between newcomers' responsibility, colonialism, and the calamities facing indigenous people. Their texts exemplify newcomers' power to rewrite the past in ways that support settler supremacy over the land, its people and animals.

Conclusion

While the destruction of the buffalo was ongoing on both sides of the border, white writers were clear that although Indians were improvident, white civilization and encroachment were responsible for the destruction of the herds. Writers grappled with the apparent contradiction that for all his civility, civilized man was the destroyer of animals. Once the herds disappeared, some writers reframed the history of the destruction of the buffalo in ways that erased newcomers' responsibility for the demise of the herds. That they were able to do so is indicative of the power they held over the land and its narratives. When historians returned to the buffalo saga in the mid-twentieth century, they drew on primary documents which described narratives of white waste of the buffalo. These narratives provided a chronicle of how the west was won, with the white buffalo hunter as the advance guard. More recently, new bison revisionists have recast the plot of the demise of the buffalo and situated Indian hunting as detrimental to the herds. The primary historical evidence suggests that this revision tells us more about the colonial mentality of historians and the ongoing colonial project than it does about the destruction of the buffalo.

In many ways, the colonial project in the west was only just beginning in the 1870s. As we will see in the next chapter, using humanitarian language, colonial officials negotiated Canadian ascendancy over indigenous lands and people. Apprehension about their future brought some First Nations leaders to treaty in 1876 and 1877 when there

²¹⁶ McDougall, *Pathfinding on Plain and Prairie: Stirring Scenes of Life in the Canadian North-West* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898), 70.

were only remnants left of the once plentiful buffalo. Once these remnants too were gone, the Canadian state policy of “no treaty, no food” and the threat of starvation brought the last of the resisters to treaty by 1882. The public record is clear that there was hardship and hunger on the plains. In the last chapter of this history of humanitarianism in Canada, I explore Canadian responses to reports of starvation on the plains. It is the saddest part of this history.

Chapter Five

"To account as a nation for our fulfillment of our trust as our brothers' keeper"¹: Canadian responses to 'starving Indians' following the destruction of the buffalo

In the nineteenth century, white expansionists foretold the destruction of the buffalo. This story had many trajectories. Although this extinction would make way for civilization, it also made settlers and expansionists (as well as indigenous people) very anxious. Provision would have to be made, expansionists argued, for the Indians who depended on the buffalo as their mainstay, otherwise it was imagined that these Indians would pose a threat to settlers and settlement. Humanitarian writers, some missionaries for example, crafted stories which contained the promise of just treatment and benevolence to the plains Indians.² This promise was tempered and mitigated by a number of beliefs that these writers had about Indians and about poverty. There were other writers, like buffalo historian William Hornaday, who blamed Indians for their own suffering. Almost a century later, even the defender of Indians, Frank Gilbert Roe perpetuated the idea of "the almost universal Indian capacity for starving,"³ an inherited belief that starvation was a normal part of being a savage.⁴ This fact serves to demonstrate that even the so-called Indian's friend harbored ideas which were detrimental to the well-being of indigenous people. These sentiments and ideas severely limited readers' capacity to respond with sympathy to stories of starvation, in order to end hunger or for the attainment of justice for First Nations people. Stories have a powerful effect on the imagination; they have the power to shape what people see, how some people live and how others die.

When the buffalo disappeared in 1879, reports of "starving Indians" were coupled with fears of an armed Indian uprising. This fear of a local threat was also fueled, in part,

¹ Editorial, "Wiping Out a People," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 15 April 1873, 3.

² Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-Train Among the Cree and Saulteaux Indians* (1892. Reprint. London: Charles H. Kelly, 1898), 246; John McDougall, *Forest, Lake and Prairie: Twenty Years of Frontier Life in Western Canada, 1842-1862* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1895), 195.

³ Frank Gilbert Roe, *The North American Buffalo: A Critical Study of the Species in its Wild State*, 2nd ed (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 8.

⁴ For instance see, George M. Grant, *Ocean to Ocean: Sandford Fleming's Expedition through Canada in 1872* (1873 rpt., Toronto, Coles Publishing Co., 1970), 49. Historian Olive Patricia Dickason argues "when Indians objected to the mismanagement (by misguided bureaucratic paternalism, compounded by ineptitude), as in the case of Big Bear, they were blamed for the problems." See Olive Patricia Dickason, *Canada's First Nations A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times*, 3rd ed. (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2002), 280.

by reports in the Canadian press of the ongoing “Indian War” as the American Army attempted to subjugate the Indians of the western plains.⁵ I suggest that reports of American Indian wars helped to shape how Canadians imagined the west and the centrality of the specter of an Indian war. Feeling threatened and vulnerable, settlers in the Canadian west called for defense and state protection. Evidence suggests that, in defense against the threat of starving Indians, the press of the day reported on the military mobilization and reveals that when the buffalo initially failed to return to the prairies, Canadians responded to reports of starvation by taking up arms and organizing militarily against “starving Indians.” From that point onward, there were a number of recorded episodes in which sacks of flour were used as barricades against hungry people. The primary concern in reports of starving Indians was their potential as a threat and danger to settlers and settlement. I argue that these fears about “starving Indians” and the call for arms and protection culminated in 1885, when the state sent three military columns to pacify the “Indian rising.” This fear helps to explain why the residents of Battleford sought the protection of the town’s fort. My work shows that fear of such an uprising by starving Indians had long been imagined and circulated, beginning with expansionists who anticipated the destruction of the buffalo.

After the disappearance of the buffalo, there was widespread hunger on the plains. According to the general Canadian survey text, *History of the Canadian Peoples: 1867 to the Present*, “Between 1880 and 1885, an estimated 3000 Natives in the Northwest died of starvation.”⁶ According to the text *Loyal Till Death*, “Blair Stonechild has calculated an annual 10 percent decline in the Indian population for the period of 1880-1885.”⁷ According to Hugh Dempsey in his biography of *Crowfoot: Chief of the Blackfeet*, “no one knows exactly how many people from the Blackfoot tribe died during those

⁵ “The Indian War,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 2 October 1879, 1; “Indian War,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 4 October 1879, 1; “American Indian Atrocities and the Causes of the Indian Outbreak,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 4 October 1879, 2; Editorial, “The Ute War,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 6 October 1879, 4.

⁶ Alvin Finkel & Margaret Conrad, *History of the Canadian Peoples: 1867 to the present* Vol. II 3rd ed. (Toronto: Addison, Wesley Longman, 2002), 45

⁷ Blair Stonechild and Bill Waiser, *Loyal Till Death*, 273 n27. See also John Tobias, “Canada’s Subjugation of the Plains Cree”; Olive Patricia Dickason, *Canada’s First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times*, 3rd ed. (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2002), 277-282. See also, Deanna Christensen, Chapter 29, “Three Deaths for Every Birth, 1887-1888), *Ahtahkakoop: The Epic Account of a Plains Cree Head Chief, His People, and Their Struggle for Survival, 1816-1896* (Shell Lake: Saskatchewan: Ahtahkakoop Publishing, 2000), 587-601.

starvation years, but from 1879 to 1881 at least one thousand members of the [Blackfoot] nation in Canada perished."⁸ The traditional explanation offered by Canadian historians, beginning with George F. G. Stanley, has been that the government was unprepared to meet the crisis when the buffalo did not return to the plains.⁹ In her book, *Lost Harvests*, historian Sarah Carter explains

It was in the interest of the government to deny that there was starvation in the North-West; such reports could damage the reputation of the West, which the Department of the Interior promoted as a land of prosperity and plenty. Hungry Indians were presented as the authors of their own misfortune...starving Indians in the North-West did not have the means to improve their condition, and yet the legitimacy of their need was questioned. Relief was viewed as demoralizing and dangerous. Poverty was attributed to individual human conduct, not to its systemic causes.¹⁰

More recently, Hugh Shewell's history of Canadian Indian policy makes it clear that the limited assistance that kept prairie First Nations on the verge of starvation was not particular to that region but reflected the general Canadian policy of providing only '*Enough to Keep them Alive*.'¹¹ On the prairies, this cruel policy failed and there were many deaths by starvation, including, many children.

This chapter examines official and eastern Canadian responses to reports of starvation on the plains in order to explore the quality of mercy.¹² It is not an attempt to write a history of the starvation of the plains Indians,¹³ rather it focuses on how dominant white protestant Canadians articulated, imagined and responded to reports of "starving

⁸ Hugh A. Dempsey, *Crowfoot: Chief of the Blackfeet* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1972), 134.

⁹ George F.G. Stanley, *The Birth of Western Canada: A History of the Riel Rebellion* (1936. Reprint. Toronto; University of Toronto Press, 1992).

¹⁰ Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairies Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 72.

¹¹ Hugh Shewell, '*Enough to Keep them Alive*': *Indian Welfare in Canada, 1873-1965* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

¹² I explore these responses through the Montreal English daily press, the *Toronto Globe* for 1884, and other public and published sources including House of Commons *Debates* and the *Sessional Papers* of the Canadian Parliament. I also examine unpublished correspondence between officials. The local responses by settlers and the local press require a separate study. Remoteness and proximity shaped responses. Preliminary evidence suggests that local whites did not think that the state was providing enough for starving Indians.

¹³ Historians writing on the 1880s do write about the hunger of those years. Essays dealing specifically with incidents of starvation include Hugh A. Dempsey, "The Bull Elk Affair," *Alberta History* 40, 1 (Winter 1992), 2-9; Valerie Jobson, "The Blackfoot and the Rationing System," *Alberta History* 33-34, 4 (Autumn 1985), 13-17; Isabel Andrew, "Indian Protest Against Starvation: The Yellow Calf Incident of 1884," *Saskatchewan History* XXVIII, 2 (Spring 1975), 41-51.

Indians.” According to Paul F. Sharp in his book, *Whoop-Up Country: The Canadian American West, 1865-1885*, “humanitarian sentiments in eastern North America were roused by the fate of the plains Indians. Safely remote from the frontier in time and distance, easterners could afford a more objective viewpoint than pioneers who daily faced the problems of living with armed savages.”¹⁴ Sharp suggests that these “sentimentalists” also ignored “the realities facing government officials.”¹⁵ Or as the *Saskatchewan Herald* editorial on “Indian Starvation” argued, “the sympathies of eastern philanthropists...might with advantage be extended to suffering nearer home.”¹⁶ All these observations contain some truth, and they make it even more interesting to explore eastern responses to conditions in the west. Indeed, we will see many similarities between eastern and western responses, both in the commitment to the colonization of the west as well as in philanthropic strategies of succor.

The ways in which Canadian officials responded to starvation on the prairies was similar to charitable efforts on behalf of the poor in eastern cities, despite the major differences between the poor in Montreal and the Indians on the prairies: Indians were neither subjects nor citizens but allies who signed nation-to-nation treaties with the Canadian state and the British crown.¹⁷ Nonetheless, the idea of teaching Indians “habits of industry,” and how to survive by their own efforts (both arrogant assertions) was the same rhetoric used to organize charity for the poor in the cities. Contemporary logic held that men would not work if they could receive sustenance without labour; therefore men had to labour for assistance to ensure they did not evade work. Such rhetoric was espoused in the east and in the west. This suggests that despite the negotiation of nation-to-nation treaties, once indigenous people entered into treaty (often driven by hunger because the state withheld any and all aid to non-treaty Indians), an inherited set of

¹⁴ Paul F. Sharp, *Whoop-Up Country: The Canadian-American West, 1865-1885* (1955. Reprint. University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 134.

¹⁵ Sharp, *Whoop-Up Country*, 135.

¹⁶ Editorial, “Indian Starvation,” *Saskatchewan Herald* 20 September 1884, 2.

¹⁷ See, “Our Indian Allies: Hon. William Macdougall [sic] Considers that the Indians Tried for Treason in the North-West were Illegally tried,” *Montreal Star*, 15 October 1885. William McDougall, a key player in the 1868 negotiations for the transfer of Rupert’s Land to Canadian title and the failed first governor of the newly acquired North-West Territories, made an appeal on behalf of Indians on a legal basis. He argued that “a treaty Indian in the North-West Territories is not a subject, within the meaning of the acts respecting treason, and that as he is not a citizen or a subject in the technical sense he cannot be convicted of the technical crime of treason...Indians were always treated as allies and not as subjects...the North-West Indians tried for treason-felony were illegally tried.”

Anglo-Saxon Protestant ideas about the nature of poverty and how it should be alleviated was imposed on conditions of need and hunger on the prairies.

Another important commonality between the treatment of the poor in the east and “starving Indians” on the prairies is that both groups became vulnerable to having their children taken away. Work for rations policies, although aimed at adult able-bodied breadwinners, had consequences for their children. Children were hungry and suffered as a result.¹⁸ The advocacy and establishment of industrial and residential schools was articulated by the schools’ supporters in relation to parental poverty. No doubt, the residential school solution (early residential schools in the west were called industrial schools) was meant to assimilate and civilize Indians into disappearance, together with the financial and moral duty resulting from the usurpation of the land. At the same time, local starvation conditions made the promise of food one more way to get children into industrial schools.¹⁹ In the east and in the west, parents were also considered to be “undesirable influences” from which children needed to be weaned.²⁰ In the context of a new and rising discourse of society’s duties to children, the young were to be removed from their families and then remolded, away from what were considered the dangerous influences of their homes and families. Advocates understood this to be a humane solution to the colonial problem rather than a punitive one. Despite this belief, successive

¹⁸ In his *Reminiscences* (1927), the Catholic missionary and schoolteacher on the Poundmaker reserve, Louis Cochin explained that “The severe winter of 1883 to 1884 brought misery. Famine was felt amongst the Indians, in spite of their allowances which were distributed weekly by their farm-instructors. After the disappearance of the buffalo, the bacon and cakes made with some bad flour did not satisfy the appetite of the Indians. I saw the gaunt children, dying of hunger, come to my place to be instructed. Although it was thirty to forty degrees below zero their bodies were scarcely covered with torn rags. These poor children came to catechism and to school. It was a pity to see them. The hope of having a little morsel of good dry cake was the incentive which drove them to this cruel exposure each day, more, no doubt, than the desire of educating themselves. The privation made many die.” Louis Cochin, “Reminiscences of Louis Cochin, O.M.I.,” *Canadian North-West Historical Society Publications*, 1, no. 2 (1927), 26. See also, FNUC, RG 10, v, 3726, f. 24811, Inspector Kittson, MD to Colonel Macleod 1 July 1880, 2-4.

¹⁹ As the *Saskatchewan Herald* editorial argued, “If young waifs amongst the Indian tribes could be made to realize how comfortable they would be in school, and how well and regularly they would be fed – and this is all in all with the Indian – they would eagerly press for admission.” See, Editorial, “The Industrial School,” *Saskatchewan Herald* 11 October 1886, 2. See also, Editorial, “The Industrial School,” *Saskatchewan Herald* 18 August 1883, 2; “Concerning Indians,” *Saskatchewan Herald* 1 February 1886, 1.

²⁰ Patricia T. Rooke and R. L. Schnell, “From Binding to Boarding Out in Britain and English-Canada: A Transformation of Childhood Sentiment and Practice,” *Paedagogica Historica* 24, no. 2 (1984), 466; John S. Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 1999); Editorial, “Can the Indians Be Civilized,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 24 November 1879, 4.

Canadian governments failed to do their duty to Indians, as allies or as wards, and especially to Indian children.²¹

The ways in which central Canadians responded to the conditions in the west were influenced not only by eastern approaches to succor but in part by eastern views of the west as the east's inheritance. Primarily, easterners were committed to the colonization of the west. The west was presented as a solution to unemployment and poverty in the east. As Sam Steele wrote "in the Great Lone Land [the west]...it is man's own fault if he fails while he has health and strength."²² It is important to note firstly, that many newcomers did not succeed on the prairies.²³ Secondly, First Nations successes were deliberately undermined by state policies that privileged settlers and impoverished indigenous people.²⁴ Nonetheless, due in part to these ideas of the self-made man, which implicitly blamed the poor for their poverty, there was a hardening of attitudes toward the poor and these attitudes influenced contemporary solutions to starvation on the prairies. Imperialism and colonization were conceived as solutions to poverty²⁵ rather than a source of it but imperialism and colonization impoverished the First Nations.

In part, it was compensation for this dispossession and impoverishment that led humanitarian expansionists to argue that "the just and humane treatment of the Aborigines is one of the most sacred duties devolving on a Government that annexes their territory and deprives them of their customary mode of living."²⁶ The chief Canadian and Royal representative, Alexander Morris framed his chronicle of *The Treaties of Canada* as fulfilling this duty. In it, Morris took on the mantle of being his brother's keeper and he hoped his book would serve the fulfillment of the treaty terms. In many ways,

²¹ Milloy, *A National Crime*; Harold Cardinal, *The Unjust Society* (1969; rpt., Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1999).

²² Samuel B. Steele, *Forty Years in Canada: Reminiscences of the Great North-West with some Account of his Service in Africa* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1914), 52-53.

²³ John G. Donkin, *Trooper and Redskin in the Far North-West: Recollections of life in the North-West Mounted Police, Canada, 1884-1888* (Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington: 1889). Donkin was discharged in March of 1888. "Penniless and broken in health, Donkin died in the workhouse at Alnwick in the North of England in 1890."

²⁴ Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990).

²⁵ On newspaper article urging people to go west as a remedy to poverty, for instance, see: Editorial, "The Poor of the US," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 7 March 1879, 4; "Our Agricultural Lectures and Our Letters from Manitoba," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 12 April 1879, 4.

²⁶ Editorial, "A Broken Promise," *Montreal Herald* 18 January 1887.

humanitarianism facilitated colonial expansion. Work for rations and the removal of children into industrial schools were seen as humane solutions to the “moral difficulty” of taking the land. It was the duty of civilized man to be just and deal humanely with those over whom he had power.

The nation took on the mantle of justice and it did so largely by distancing its Indian policy from the Indian wars that plagued its US neighbor. In the 1870s and 1880s, white middle-class protestant Canadians represented themselves to each other and to outsiders as “benevolent,” in contrast to their southern counterparts.²⁷ Ironically, the British investor and financier, William Blackmore in his introduction to American Colonel Richard Irving Dodge’s 1876 *Hunting on the Great Plains*, recounted a conversation he had with “some of the leading settlers” in the American west, in which a “speaker stated that his remedy and settlement to the Indian question would be to place all Indians on reservations, and then, strictly confining them to their reserves, feed them with rusty bacon and condemned flour, adding that he believed that in less than a year they would all die off like rotten sheep.”²⁸ Ten years later, in 1886, these were the precise charges that Malcolm Cameron, Member of Parliament for Huron, raised in the House of Commons against Edgar Dewdney, “frontier capitalist”, Indian Commissioner beginning in 1879, and Lieutenant Governor of the North-West from 1881. In 1881, in the midst of starvation, Dewdney acknowledged that hunger was so widespread on the

²⁷ Numerous historians have investigated this claim. See, Carol Higham and Robert Thacker, eds., *One West, Two Myths* (Calgary: Alberta: University of Calgary Press, 2004); Jill St. Germain, *Indian Treaty-Making Policy in the United States and Canada, 1867-1877* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001); C.L. Higham, *Noble, Wretched and Redeemable: Protestant Missionaries to the Indians in Canada and the United States, 1820-1900* (Alberta: University of Calgary Press, 2000); Rebecca B. Bateman, “Talking with the Plow: Agricultural Policy and Indian Farming in the Canadian and U.S. Prairies,” *The Journal of Canadian Native Studies* XVI, 2 (1996), 211-228; Seymour Martin Lipset, *Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Barry M. Gough, “The Indian Policies of Great Britain and the United States in the Pacific Northwest in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* II, 2 (1982), 321-337; Robin Fisher, “Indian Warfare and the Two Frontiers: A Comparison of British Columbia and Washington Territory during the Early Years of Settlement,” *Pacific Historical Review* 50, 1 (1981), 31-51; Robin Winks, *The Relevance of Canadian History: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada* (Toronto: McMillan of Canada, 1979). With the exception of Winks and Lipset, most scholars are in agreement that the two frontiers shared similarities.

²⁸ William Blackmore, “Introduction” to Richard Irving Dodge, *Hunting Grounds of the Great West: A Description of the Plains, Game, and Indians of the Great North American Desert* (London: Chatto & Windus, Picadilly, 1877), liv. The book was later republished as *The Plains of the Great West and Their Inhabitants, Being the Description of the Plains, Game, Indians, &c. of the Great Northern Desert*, New York: Archer House, 1959).

prairies that the Indians needed to be fed “or they will die like rotten sheep on the prairie.”²⁹ The metaphysics of imperialism on both sides of the border demonstrate the similarities between the two nations that divided the continent between them. The metaphor of “rotten sheep” indicates that little worth was placed on some animal and human life.

Although the American military solution to their colonial problem was condemned by Canadians who embraced a humanitarian solution to the moral difficulty of colonial expansion, Canadians also used military maneuvers to “overawe” the Indians into submission. The North West Mounted Police (NWMP) had vast powers on the prairies and represented Canadian ascendancy on the ground. In rhetoric at least, the protection of Indians (after the Cypress Hills Massacre) became part of the NWMP’s founding mythology. The protection of settlers and their property central were also central organizing principles of the force. For late nineteenth-century man, militarism and humanitarianism were not incompatible. This helps to explain Alexander Morris’ claim that the “presence of troops” at the Treaty Three negotiations “exercised a moral influence.”³⁰

This chapter opens with a selection of oral histories, mainly from the Treaty Six and Treaty Seven areas – present-day Alberta and Saskatchewan – to give space to indigenous voices. These stories are yardsticks by which to measure mainstream narratives about starvation, which is the primary concern of the dissertation. These stories are points of reference from which to consider the ideas that were circulated among colonial expansionists. The stories also humanize and personalize that which is masked in reports of “starving Indians.” From here we turn our gaze to Canadian writers and officials to explore their national and self-representations. I show the centrality of humanitarian language and promises in the Canadian acquisition of the west. This language disappeared along with the buffalo and in its place were matter-of-fact descriptions of destitution, with the occasional sympathetic protest by white officials. The evidence suggests that Canadian officials could be found at both extremes of humanitarianism’s ideological spectrum, from those who upheld its rhetoric and those

²⁹ Canada. *Sessional Papers*, 1881, n. 14, Edgar Dewdney, “Report of the Department of Indian Affairs,” 94.

³⁰ Morris, *The Treaties of Canada*, 51-52.

who doled out starvation rations because people could not be allowed to die outright. There is evidence that some white contemporaries did protest government policy. This reveals that among contemporaries there were those who wanted to translate a humanitarian Christian benevolent sentiment into practice, but were unable to change inhumane government policies. At the same time, some of these critics believed that to be humane was to Christianize, assimilate, remove children and make men labour for succor, even as they challenged the small amount of food that was given in exchange for labour. Contemporary critics argued that rather than seeking to “rescue” the Indians, the treaties had been made as a way to acquire the land. Yet these critics of government policies were also constrained by ideas of social Darwinism³¹ and their commitment to the colonization of Indian lands. Government critics were not opposed to Indian dispossession – they wanted it done in a way that would not brutalize Canadian people.

Oral History

Interviews from the 1970s with Treaty Six and Treaty Seven First Nations document the hunger and suffering experienced by their people following the destruction of the buffalo. These narratives are principally about families, communities and survival strategies. They provide important counterpoints from which to consider how white Canadians wrote and thought about the starvation on the prairies. As we will see, these narratives are confirmed in the white written record. Born in 1888, Antoine Lonesinger, Cree, explains how people survived during the “starvation period”:

The white man used to put poison out on the hills and there were lots of coyotes that died of poisoning. Our grandfather used to go and shovel the coyotes from the snow. We used to have this wild root and we used to boil this meat with this medicine. We would throw the soup away and we would add more water and boil

³¹ I use the term social Darwinism to refer to contemporary ideas which considered Indians as an inferior race, and considered Anglo-Saxons at the apex of evolution. These ideas justified Anglo-Saxon usurpation of Indian lands as an inevitable result of Anglo-Saxon biological and political superiority. On the history of ideas on race and social Darwinism, see Patrick Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings: Discourse on the Extinction of Primitive Races, 1800-1930* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2003), 45-93, 164-199; Nancy Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain 1800-1960* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1982), 20-110; George W. Stocking, Jr., *Race, Culture, and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (New York: The Free Press, 1968), 69-132; Philip D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), 58-105; Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought*, rev. ed. (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1959), 170-204.

it over again. The soup was clean and clear. The meat was good and the fat was real white. Then we would eat the meat, we survived on poisoned animals.³²

According to Lonesinger, people “even ate their belts, and they would burn it till it was crisp. They would also cook their drums, feathers and cook them the same way and eat them like that. That’s how hard it was, without food. Some people would eat horses and dogs.”³³ Dick Straightlight, Sarcee Elder, confirms Lonesinger’s narrative. He states that after the destruction of the buffalo “they had a famine here. A lot of people died. Some of them were just eating anything they could find. Say like their horses, or their dog you know. I don’t know how many people died during that time.”³⁴

Poisoned and substandard food was distributed by Indian agents. Useless Good Runner, Blood, recounts how David Laird, treaty Commissioner for Treaty Seven, promised that “you will not be in want as long as the Queen will be caring for you.” But the rations that were distributed “deteriorated gradually. The food was treated with a kind of chemical. The Indians believed it to be a poisonous substance. The meat discolored with the use of this substance. This substance was mixed with flour, with this the people began to have stomach troubles, they called this ‘belly sickness’. The people who died from this food poisoning were all buried at the Belly Butte site.”³⁵

Phillip Lightning, Cree, states that following the disappearance of the buffalo “many died of starvation including children and some older people. The children survived for a longer period because the older men and women would pass their share of food to them, this way the older people would die first.”³⁶ The death of children is

³² Antoine Lonesinger, Cree, Interview. IH-062. Part of the *Indian Film History Project* which is housed at the First Nations University of Canada library. Interviewer: Archie Baptiste. Interview location: Sweet Grass Reserve, Saskatchewan. Interview date: January 23 1974, 10-11.

³³ Antoine Lonesinger, Cree, Interview, 11.

³⁴ Dick Straightlight, Sarcee, Interview, Sarcee Elders Group. IH-247-247A. Part of the *Indian Film History Project* which is housed at the First Nations University of Canada library. Interviewer: John Smith, field researcher for Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research Indian Association. Interview location: Sarcee Reserve, Alberta. Interview date: March 17 1975, 6.

³⁵ Useless Good Runner (Bill Heavy Runner), Blood, Interview. IH-243-243A. . Part of Part of the *Indian Film History Project* which is housed at the First Nations University of Canada library. Interviewer: Dila Provost & Albert Yellowhorn, Office of Specific Claims and Research of the Indian Association of Alberta. Interview location: Blood Reserve, Cardston, Alberta. Interview date: December 1973, 5.

³⁶ Phillip Lightning, Cree, Interview. IH-191. Part of the *Indian Film History Project* which is housed at First Nations University of Canada library. Interviewer: Richard Lightning. Interview location: Pigeon Lake, Alberta. Interview date: April 11 1975, 7.

especially important in the context of the advent of discourses of society's duty toward and the protection of children. Tom Yellowhorn, Peigan, states that

people were always very hungry. Anyone who could work...used to go out and work at farm harvest and whatever money they earned, they really hung [on]to and spent sparingly as they knew there would be no more. Even though they spared this money in every way, it did barely keep them from total starvation. The three pound ration of beef was for a single person, older and disabled, as well as for a married couple with children. Two scoops of flour per week was issued on the same basis. People would assemble together to share what little they had. Come weekend there was no food left. The able-bodied ones were apt to survive and manage. The people who owned horses always got along best, as horses were always prized and valuable. But those without were extremely poor and had just no way of making a living and providing for themselves. As a result many babies died from malnutrition; they starved to death. These times I saw myself.³⁷

This testimony clearly demonstrates how hard the people had to work once the buffalo had disappeared and how even then they struggled against starvation and many children died. From these narratives, the hardships and struggle for survival are apparent. These are not stories of people who were unwilling to work, or of people living on handouts, but stories of hunger and suffering, of starvation, of death, and also of survival.

It would be fair to say that until the 1970s whites held a monopoly over public and historical published discourses and it was difficult for indigenous people to intervene in either discourse. In the 1970s, a number of First Nations narratives were published and this brought their perspectives to the larger reading public.³⁸ In his posthumously published *My Tribe, the Crees* Joseph F. Dion, born in 1888, a Cree political activist and teacher from Kehiwin Reserve in north-eastern Alberta, contextualizes the signing of Treaty Six as occurring "a few years after a great famine in the west." The buffalo was almost extinct and consequently everyone felt the "pangs of hunger." The Queen's representative promised to help the Indians; they were told "you will never suffer from want of food again."³⁹ Dion writes:

Little did we suspect at the time that this poor paleface, whom we were inclined to ridicule and for whom we coined various nicknames as 'Foolish Foreigners,'

³⁷ Tom Yellowhorn 2, Peigan, Interview. IH-245,245A, 245B. Part of Part of the *Indian Film History Project* which is housed at the First Nations University of Canada library. Interviewer: Albert Yellowhorn. Interview location: Brocket, Alberta. Interview date: February 2 1973, 2-3.

³⁸ See also, Dan Kennedy (Ochankugahe), *Recollections of an Assiniboine Chief* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1972).

³⁹ Joseph F. Dion, *My Tribe, The Crees*, (Calgary: Glenbow Museum, 1979), 76-77.

'Inside Outers,' etc., was a man with a very stubborn mind and a strong superiority complex who regarded us as wild savages who had to be subdued and tamed. We were therefore kept on the verge of starvation, for nothing will drive a man to begging quicker than an empty stomach. There came a time when many of our people were compelled to call on the humble gopher for sustenance, a poor substitute for the buffalo.⁴⁰

They resented "having to chop a cord of wood for a pound of bacon... The promise 'you will never again suffer for want of food,' so recently given to them, was still ringing in their ears."⁴¹

Dion also provides us with a first-hand account of the experience of work for rations, as told by his mother:

Soup made by the interpreter's wife was given us three times a day. Later on my mother made soup with whatever the ration issuer gave her. She also baked bannock for the lot of us. No one other than the very old & crippled ever got free rations. The men all had to chop rails and cord wood. It was the only occupation that was available during the winter months. I remember going out sometimes to help my old dad to cord his wood. He was then almost blind. My mother could always get something to do for one or the other of the white people. This helped to feed us.⁴²

Dion's narrative clearly demonstrates how difficult it was for the people to survive, how hard they had to work and that their survival hinged on their own continual and strenuous efforts.

In *John Tootoosis: Biography of a Cree Leader*, 1877 marked the beginning of "the decade of death".⁴³ Tootoosis, a Cree political organizer and activist who was instrumental in founding the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, offers a critical analysis of government policy: "With people dead and dying" rations were repeatedly reduced.⁴⁴ "Were the politicians of the era deliberately risking an armed uprising?"⁴⁵ In *Tootoosis*, starvation and hunger are about the peoples' suffering and officials'

⁴⁰ Dion, *My Tribe, The Crees*, 81.

⁴¹ Dion, *My Tribe, The Crees*, 89.

⁴² Dion, *My Tribe, The Crees*, 92.

⁴³ Norma Sluman & Jean Goodwill, *John Tootoosis: Biography of a Cree Leader* (Ottawa: Golden Dog Press, 1982), 22-38.

⁴⁴ Sluman & Goodwill, *John Tootoosis*, 34.

⁴⁵ Sluman & Goodwill, *John Tootoosis*, 45.

exploitation of their hardship. The Crees' deep humiliation stands in sharp contrast to Canadian officials' "posture of benevolence".⁴⁶

In the oral history of Treaty Six, as reconstructed by Neal McLeod in his essay "Rethinking Treaty Six in the Spirit of Mistahi Maskwa (Big Bear)," Morris is not recalled as a kind and benevolent man but rather as "a wicked man that was sent here representing the government."⁴⁷ According to Phillip Lightning, Cree, "the commissioner came and cheated the Indians of all the land, it is plain to see that he came with cheating on his mind."⁴⁸ Treaty Six First Nations were successful in getting Morris to promise assistance and succor in case of famine in what became known as the "famine clause."⁴⁹ The clause would not be honored by the state. Indeed, as John Tobias has persuasively demonstrated, the state used food to subjugate the Plains Cree.⁵⁰ Non-treaty Indians were denied rations as a way to force them to accept treaty. As Neal McLeod argues, the people were "starved into submission" and their subordination "raises questions about the moral foundations of this country."⁵¹ This chapter takes up McLeod's challenge to examine the moral foundations of the nation as they are revealed in the years following the destruction of the buffalo and the Canadian state's promise to be its brother's keeper.

⁴⁶ Sluman & Goodwill, *John Tootoosis*, 24.

⁴⁷ James Bull, Cree, as quoted in Neal McLeod, "Rethinking Treaty Six in the Spirit of Mistahi Maskwa (Big Bear)" *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* XIX no. 1 (1999), 80-81.

⁴⁸ First Nations University of Canada formerly known as Saskatchewan Federated Indian College, Canadian Plains Research, Indian History Film Project, Phillip Lightning, Cree, IH-191, 2.

⁴⁹ During the negotiations, Morris stated "I told you yesterday that if any great sickness or general famine overtook you, that on the Queen being informed of it by her Indian agent, she in her goodness would give as much help as she thought the Indian needed." Morris, *The Treaties of Canada*, 216. The treaty text reads, "That in the event hereafter of the Indians comprised, within this treaty being overtaken by any pestilence, or by a general famine, the Queen, on being satisfied and certified thereof by her Indian Agent or Agents, will grant to the Indians assistance of such a character and to such an extent as her Chief Superintendent of Indian Affairs shall deem necessary and sufficient to relieve the Indians from the calamity that shall have befallen them." See Appendix One: Treaty Six in Blair Stonechild and Bill Waiser, *Loyal Till Death: Indians and the North-West Rebellion* (Calgary: Fifth House Ltd., 1997), 246.

⁵⁰ John Tobias, Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree," *Canadian Historical Review* LXIV, 4 (1983), 519-548. Tobias maps Canada's dispossession of the plains Cree once the buffalo disappeared. His work demonstrates the incremental breaking of treaty promises, like Dewdney's refusal of contiguous reserves and his policy of "sheer compulsion." My work is concerned with the language of humanitarianism, about what people said when they wrote about starving Indians. I use historical evidence to map a history of humanitarianism. My work dovetails nicely with his and my inclusion of the 1888 evidence also challenges his periodization. 1885 was an important turning point and starvation continued.

⁵¹ McLeod, "Rethinking the Spirit of Treaty Six in the Spirit of Mistahi Maskwa (Big Bear)," 84 & 85.

Ethical colonization

The duty of civilization was integral to the language of benevolence and both were central to the Canadian acquisition of the west. The image and ideal of nation and self at once explained and justified Anglo-Saxon Protestant hegemony. In 1869, the two-year-old Canadian nation expanded into the west, with the transfer of Rupert's Land to the Dominion of Canada. In 1871, Canada began the negotiation and signing of the "Numbered Treaties" with the First Nations on the prairies, the land mass covering large parts of present day Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. In his 1880 text, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories*, Lieutenant-Governor Alexander Morris described his work as treaty commissioner as a benevolent mission, a "moral duty", and making treaty as an act of kindness.⁵² Morris orated at the Treaty Six negotiations:

I have come seven hundred miles to see you. Why should I take all this trouble? For two reasons, first the duty was put upon me as one of the Queen's Councillors....The other reason is a personal one, because since I was a young man my heart was warm to the Indians, and I have taken a great interest in them; for more than twenty-five years I have studied their condition in the present and in the future. I have been many years in public life, but the first words I spoke in public were for the Indians, and in that vision of the day I saw the Queen's white men understanding their duty; I saw them understanding that they had no right to wrap themselves up in a cold mantle of selfishness, that they had no right to turn away and say, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' On the contrary, I saw them saying,

⁵² Alexander Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, Including the Negotiations on which they were based and other information relating thereto*, (1880. Reprint. Saskatoon, SK: Fifth House, 1991), 232-233. At the Treaty Four negotiations, Morris explained that he "was afraid of the journey; but when a Chief has a duty to do he tries to do it, and I felt that if I could do you any good, as I believed I could, I ought to be here. I tell you this, trust my words, they come from the heart of one who loves the Indian people, and who is charged by his Queen to tell them the words of truth." Morris, *The Treaties of Canada*, 115. Morris concluded his text by stating: "Let us have Christianity and civilization to leaven the mass of heathenism and paganism among the Indian tribes; let us have a wise and paternal Government faithfully carrying out the provisions of our treaties, and doing its utmost to help and elevate the Indian population, who have been cast upon our care, and we will have peace, progress, and concord among them in the North-West; and instead of the Indian melting away, as one of them in older Canada, tersely put it, 'as snow before the sun,' we will see our Indian population, loyal subjects of the Crown, happy, prosperous and self-sustaining, and Canada will be enabled to feel, that in a truly patriotic spirit, our country has done its duty by the red men of the North-West, and thereby to herself. So may it be." Morris, *The Treaties of Canada*, 297. See also, Arthur J. Ray, Jim Miller & Frank J. Tough, *Bounty and Benevolence: A History of the Saskatchewan Treaties* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000); Treaty 7 Elders and Tribal Council with Walter Hildebrandt, Sarah Carter and Dorothy First Rider, *The True Spirit and Original Intent of Treaty 7* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996); Richard Price, ed., *The Spirit of the Alberta Indian Treaties* (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1987). See also, David T. McNab, "Treaties and An Official Use of History," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 13, no. 1 (1993), 139-143.

the Indians are our brothers, we must try to help them to make a living for themselves and their children. I tell you, you must think of those who will come after you. As I came here I saw tracks leading to the lakes and water-courses, once well beaten, now grown over with grass; I saw bones bleaching by the wayside; I saw the places where the buffalo had been, and I thought what will become of the Indian. I said to myself, we must teach the children to prepare for the future; if we do not, but a few suns will pass and they will melt away like snow before the spring-time. You know my words are true; you see for yourselves and know that your numbers are lessening every year. Now the whole burden of my message from the Queen is that we wish to help you in the days that are to come.⁵³

Morris plainly stated that the treaties were “means whereby the Indian population of the fertile belt...can be rescued from the hard fate which otherwise awaits them owing to the speedy destruction of the buffalo.”⁵⁴ In his account of the negotiations of Treaty Six, Morris wrote that “if a general famine came upon the Indians the charity of the Government would come into exercise.”⁵⁵

This “posture of benevolence”⁵⁶ was not particular to Morris but was indicative of a national approach to colonization. Chief Thunderchild resisted signing Treaty Six in 1876 and continued to pursue the buffalo until 1879 when the buffalo failed to return to the Canadian prairies and the people faced starvation. In 1879, Chief Thunderchild met with the newly appointed Indian Commissioner Edgar Dewdney at Sounding Lake to negotiate the terms for Chief Thunderchild to sign an adhesion to Treaty Six. Dewdney, who was responsible for the enforcement of state policy during the starvation years, promised “What I can do, I will do humbly. *You will not starve under me.* Before I took this work, I looked at this paper (the treaty) and saw that it was just. I show it now before God, believing that it is true. This is Victoria’s word.”⁵⁷ Clearly, there was a difference between what Canadian officials knew to be just and the state policies they implemented and administered. Morris hoped his book would assist in the fulfillment of the terms of the treaties. In some way he represents the ideal of civilized man’s humanity to man. Yet the manner in which Morris framed those negotiations and his inscription of the

⁵³ Morris, *The Treaties of Canada*, 232-233.

⁵⁴ Morris, *The Treaties of Canada*, preface.

⁵⁵ Morris, *The Treaties of Canada*, 188.

⁵⁶ Sluman and Goodwill, *John Tootoosis*, 24.

⁵⁷ In 1923 Chief Thunderchild told Edward Ahenakew of his meeting with Dewdney, see Edward Ahenakew, *Voices of the Plains Cree*, ed. Ruth M. Buck (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1995), 11. Emphasis added.

treaties as land surrenders led to the dispossession of the First Nations with whom he entered into treaty. Like Morris before him, Dewdney also used the mantle of humanitarianism in the project of colonial expansion, this time with deadly results.

Although only Treaty Six contains a “famine clause,” the language of duty and benevolence figures prominently in Morris’ version of the negotiations.⁵⁸

Humanitarianism was presented as an ethical way to take the land. As R. G. MacBeth, in his 1921 history of North West Mounted Police, *Policing the Plains*, wrote:

It is inevitable in the progress of human history that higher civilizations should supercede the lower. Wherever the contrary has been the case and a lower civilization overran the higher the movement of humanity was retrograde. Hence, if the Indian type of civilization in Western Canada was to be superseded by the British type and this effected without injustice and hardship for the original dwellers in the country, the Government of the Dominion must proceed by the process of treaty. By this we mean that the Government had at the same time to conserve the rights of the Indian and secure to them both a place of residence and means of subsistence by a system of reserves and money payments.⁵⁹

It was a duty clearly understood by contemporaries. As the Montreal *Herald* editor explained, “the just and humane treatment of the Aborigines is one of the most sacred duties devolving upon a Government that annexes their territory and deprives them of their customary modes of living.”⁶⁰ The *Montreal Herald* was expansionist, and argued that “the object of every citizen of the dominion should be to promote the settlement of our great North-West.”⁶¹ The righteousness of colonialism rested on the question of method.

In the midst of reports of starvation in 1879, the *Montreal Daily Witness* encapsulated contemporary Christian social Darwinist thinking when it argued that “The future lies in our own hands, and no plea of the manifest destiny of the Anglo-Saxon race,

⁵⁸ For instance, in 1877, David Laird replaced Morris as Lieutenant-Governor, and employed the same rhetoric in his official record of the negotiations of Treaty Seven. In his speech, Laird orated that “It is by the Great Spirit that the Queen rules over this great country and other great countries. The Great Spirit has made the white man and the red man brothers, and we should take each other by the hand. The Great Mother loves all her children, white and red man alike; she wishes to do them all good.” Laird’s speech reprinted in Morris, *The Treaties of Canada*, 267. With the publication of Morris’s text of *The Treaties of Canada*, the *Montreal Gazette* boasted that “in British North America there is comparatively little cause for self-reproach...[but] whether entire justice has been done to them we will not inquire.” Editorial, “Our Indians,” *Montreal Gazette*, 5 June 1880, 2; “New Books,” *Montreal Gazette*, 5 June 1880 Supplement, 1.

⁵⁹ R. G. MacBeth, *Policing the Plains: Being the Real-Life Record of the Famous Royal North-West Mounted Police* (Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1921), 66.

⁶⁰ Editorial, “A Broken Promise,” *Montreal Herald*, 18 January 1887.

⁶¹ Editorial, “Our North-West,” *Montreal Herald*, 1 March 1882, 4.

no indifference nor intolerance should blind us to the fact that a once powerful people [Indians] are at our mercy, that we shall be recreants to a most binding and solemn duty if we fail to reconcile them to civilization.”⁶² This rhetoric of power, mercy and duty was similar to SPCA conceptions of its efforts on behalf of animals. Both animals and Indians were among the lower races in the Victorian taxonomy. Anglo-Saxon Protestants placed themselves at the apex of the scale of civilization. Their supremacy rested on ideals of humanity, mercy and justice. It became their duty to be merciful to those over whom they had power. While the *Montreal Daily Witness* elaborated an ethic of the white man’s mercy and duty to Indians, it was also equally committed to the colonization of Indian lands. As starvation began to take hold, the *Witness* publicized and supported the colonization of the northwest through lectures, colonization schemes and their own correspondent Rusticus, who traveled west and reported on conditions and opportunities for settlement.⁶³ Easterners’ commitment to the colonization and settlement of the west informed how these humanitarians responded in the case of starving Indians.

The disappearance of the buffalo in the winter of 1879

In 1879, three years after the signing of Treaty Six, the buffalo failed to return to the Canadian plains. Reports of “starving Indians” and Indian suffering were circulated and the specter of an Indian War raised concerns about peace, defense and disruption to settlement. By and large, news published by the evangelical and expansionist *Montreal Daily Witness* in these early months, were reprints of western reports. On February 10, 1879 the *Montreal Daily Witness* published the following report on “Indians Starving”:

A *Free Press* Battleford special: The chief of the Eagle Hills Mission band interviewed Lieut. Governor Laird at Battleford on Saturday; they say they have never before been so near starvation; their tone is peaceful, but resolute; they ask for provisions now which they would get next payment. Serious rumors come from Carlton and Duck Lake concerning the action of some Indians, who are becoming threatening.⁶⁴

⁶² “How the Indians are Becoming Civilized,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 1 February 1879, 3; See Lorraine Vander Hoef, “John Dougall (1808-1886): Portrait of an Early Social Reformer and Evangelical Witness in Canada,” *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society* 43, no. 2 (2001), 115-145.

⁶³ Editorial, “North-West Colonization Schemes,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 19 February 1879, 4; “One Way to the North-West,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 12 April 1879, 2; “Our Agricultural Lectures and Our letters from Manitoba,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 12 April 1879, 4; Editorial, “Rusticus in the North West,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 2 July 1879, 4.

⁶⁴ “Winnipeg – Indians Starving,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 10 February 1879, 2.

The report indicated that Indians were not asking for hand-outs but for provisions promised within the Treaty. The following week the "Indians in the North-West" made the front page of the *Montreal Daily Witness*. According to the report,

Mr. Stuart D. Mulkins, of the *Saskatchewan Herald* arrived in the city yesterday from Battleford, North-West Territory. He holds the opinion that there will be trouble with the Indians in that country yet, it only being a question of time. Buffalo are becoming scarce, and as these animals are the principal sources of livelihood for the redmen, the natives feel the pinch of want at times, and when they do they drop into the settlement and demand food. In the States the Indians are placed on reservations and rations served out to them, but the Canadian government lets them fish for themselves, allowing those tribes with whom treaties have been effected, five dollars per head per year. Another cause of complaint by the native Indians is the presence of the Sioux Indians led by Sitting Bull within the border, who are killing off the buffalo by the hundred and driving them further back into the wilds. The Cree and the Blackfeet feel inclined to unite and drive the Sioux back into the States again, feeling that the strangers have no right to come upon their farms.⁶⁵

Observers were preoccupied with "trouble" which they feared would erupt sooner or later. Settlements became vulnerable to hungry Indians demanding food. There was also the fear that Indians would fight among themselves because intruders were impinging on the already diminished food source. In another report on the "The scarcity of the buffalo," calls were made for more North West Mounted Police.⁶⁶

It was no secret that "the condition of these Indians is terrible in the extreme" as the *Montreal Daily Witness* reported in news obtained from the *Battleford Herald*.

The Black Feet and Sacs, who it was supposed had gone home, have returned to Battleford, being unable to cross the South Saskatchewan, owing to the high water. *The condition of these Indians is terrible in the extreme; the rations of tea and flour is but one remove from starvation*, accustomed as they are to animal food. The Indians are quite willing to work, and a farm has been opened up, on which a number have been engaged. *The Indians are living partially on wild turnips and wild rhubarb, without which their sufferings would be intensified.* Meat is not to be had, nor is any being ordered by telegraph, the lines being down. About 1000 Indians are at Battleford, and while everything is pacific now, the *Herald* thinks that serious complications may ensue, owing to the rumors of Sitting Bull's intentions on the boundary.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ "The Indians of the North-West," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 17 February 1879, 1.

⁶⁶ *Montreal Daily Witness*, March 5, 1879, 4.

⁶⁷ "Suffering Indians," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 24 July 1879, 2. Emphasis added.

As early as 1879, the rations did not satisfy hunger: they were what the author called “one remove from starvation.” The report specified that Indians were willing to work and that it was their efforts in harvesting and eating wild foods that sustained them through the hungry time. It is interesting to note that it was possible to send out reports about hunger but not orders for meat.

Early August brought another report on “Our Starving Indians”:

News is brought that between three or four hundred Indians are in the vicinity of Fort Ellice [Treaty Four], in a starving condition, have nothing to eat, and additions were made to their numbers daily. It was reported that about three hundred other Indians were within a few days march of Ellice, but were unable to proceed further from sheer weakness caused by lack of food. No deaths from starvation were yet heard of; but it was feared that a rumpus would ensue were not something done to relieve their wants.⁶⁸

From these reports the starving and weak condition of the Indians was revealed to readers. These reports also revealed what preoccupied outside observers: there would be a threat to peace if the Indians were not given assistance. The central concern was that “a rumpus would ensue” rather than “the sheer weakness caused by the lack of food.” The press also reported on the number of Indians present, which was one way of calculating the potential danger to settlers and colonization in general.

In early September, reports continued to be less concerned about suffering and more focused on whether violence was erupting. A telegram reprinted in the *Gazette*, by a Mr. Thomas White from Humboldt N.W.T. declared that

the reports regarding the prospect of difficulties with the Indians have been greatly exaggerated ... It appears, indeed, that at the moment they are perfectly quiet, and there are no visible signs of disturbance. This information, which is of course authentic, is exceedingly satisfactory. Such stories cannot but have an effect on immigration and settlement, and the sensation mongers who delight in spreading them deserve the most emphatic condemnation. Persons who intend going to the North-West may regard it as certain that they will incur no danger nor meet with the least discomfort from any of the Indians tribes. There is no ground whatever for uneasiness.⁶⁹

The telegram did not comment on Indian hunger or suffering but emphasized instead that there was no danger to settlers. There was concern as to how these reports about

⁶⁸ “Our Starving Indians,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 7 August 1879, 3.

⁶⁹ “The Indians in the North-West,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 9 September 1879, 4.

“starving Indians” would negatively affect settlement and would damage the colonization of the west. White’s telegram was meant to provide assurance that settlers would meet with no danger. Despite this positive assessment of Canadian approaches to the “Indian problem” in the summer of 1879, by the fall military defenses were being organized to assuage settler fears of the threat posed by “starving Indians.”

Protection and Defense

On August 28 1879, the *Montreal Daily Witness* headline declared that the “Canadian Indians [were] Becoming Desperate.”⁷⁰ According to the report, “The *World’s* special from Winnipeg says that Canadian Indians deprived of buffalo in the North-West are becoming desperate and threaten an outbreak.” Lieutenant-Governor Laird in Battleford was reported to have sent his family to Winnipeg.

A despatch from the police at Force Walsh reports serious trouble anticipated. Col. Smith, in command of the Canadian forces, leaves tomorrow for the scene of the troubles. The Dominion government is hastily organizing six companies of mounted infantry.⁷¹

The Canadian state responded to reports about starvation brought on by the destruction of the buffalo by organizing militarily.

In November, the *Montreal Daily Witness* reported on Indians “suffering from hunger – their restlessness and the precautions by the whites against an outbreak.”⁷² Colonel Osbourne Smith, “Commander of the Dominion forces in Manitoba and the North-West,” had arrived and was “organizing militia corps in the territories and obtaining information on the Indian question.”⁷³ Colonel Smith first visited Fort Carlton and Battleford, but “the white population was too sparse to organize effective companies.” At Prince Albert, “where there is a white population of nearly one thousand five hundred souls, two infantry companies and a company of mounted rifles were organized... Companies were formed at Duck Lake, Humboldt, Stobart, St. Laurent and other settlements in the Saskatchewan region.”⁷⁴ Snider Enfield rifles were on their way west and at least five hundred men “receiving fifty cents a day, seventy-five cents if

⁷⁰ “The Canadian Indians Becoming Desperate,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 28 August 1879, 1.

⁷¹ “The Canadian Indians Becoming Desperate,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 28 August 1879, 1.

⁷² “Indians in Manitoba,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 11 November 1879, 3.

⁷³ “Indians in Manitoba,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 11 November 1879, 3.

⁷⁴ “Indians in Manitoba,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 11 November 1879, 3.

attached to mounted companies...were under drill... This, with the five hundred mounted police⁷⁵ scattered through the country, will bring the fighting strength of the Dominion forces in the territories up to one thousand men.”⁷⁶ White contemporaries responded to the hunger faced by Indians through military deployment. In choosing between feeding them or fighting them,⁷⁷ the Canadian state chose to provide as little as possible. This policy increased the settlers’ anticipation of an Indian war and their insistence on the need for defense.

Reports about the “terrible suffering” of Indians were consistently coupled with the need to prepare for an Indian attack. “Great anxiety was everywhere felt regarding the Indians. It was reported some time ago that vast herds of buffalo were moving north, but this was a mistake. The buffalo was never so scarce...The Indians are suffering terribly, with the prospect of utter starvation this winter.”⁷⁸ The situation was made worse as local Indians were turned back when they attempted to hunt the buffalo south of the border. On October 5, at a public meeting held in Prince Albert, Bishop McLean, the Anglican Bishop of the Saskatchewan Diocese, orated on the need to “consider means of defense.” The Bishop “said he feared that there would be bad work before the winter was over and urged the settlers to be prepared for the worst.”⁷⁹ In his assessment, even the Christian Bishop argued for defense, rather than Christian charity and succor.

In December, the *Montreal Daily Witness* altered its reports based on the Department of Indian Affairs denial. A reprint from the Ottawa *Citizen* reported that “We have been informed from the Department of the Interior that there is no foundation whatever for the sensational reports telegraphed from Winnipeg to western papers in which it is made to appear that the North-West Indians were driven by want to commit overt acts.”⁸⁰ The Department denied both that Indians had committed depredations or that their suffering drove them to such actions. Instead, another report announced that

⁷⁵ The original force of 300 men was in place in 1879 and was increased in early 1882 to 500 men.

⁷⁶ “Indians in Manitoba,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 11 November 1879, 3.

⁷⁷ Stonechild and Waiser, *Loyal Till Death*, “Chapter 2: Feed Them or Fight Them,” 26-45.

⁷⁸ “Indians in Manitoba,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 11 November 1879, 3.

⁷⁹ “Indians in Manitoba,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 11 November 1879, 3.

⁸⁰ “The Indians in the North-West,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 5 December 1879, 1.

other reports were false, all was quiet and there were no disturbances.⁸¹ The focus was on peace, to demonstrate that there was no threat to settlers or settlement.

State Officials at Work

In the *Sessional Papers* of the House of Commons, an official public and published government record, in his report of 1879, John A. Macdonald did not hesitate to name the possibility of a famine. Macdonald wrote that the

first matter which forced itself on my attention as Minister of the Interior, and which has since received earnest consideration from the Government, was the gravity of the situation as regards the Indians of the great plains of the North-West. Their principal means of subsistence – the buffalo – had for years been gradually disappearing...it became imperative at once to devise means for the prevention of the famine which, not immediately, but yet not very remotely, must ensue.⁸²

In order “to deal promptly and satisfactorily with the difficulties...[the] system of administering Indian matters in the North-West” was reorganized.⁸³ Edgar Dewdney was appointed Indian Commissioner on May 30, 1879 at which time he went west with

500 head of beef cattle, 91,000 pounds of bacon, 100,000 pounds of beef, 20,000 pounds of pemmican and 806 bags of flour, in order that the Commissioner might be in a position to relieve all cases of actual distress which came under his observation or be brought to his notice by any of the agents.⁸⁴

According to Macdonald,

...in all cases known to the officials where Indians were in distressed circumstances for want of food, relief was properly extended, the recipients were given to understand that the Government regarded the circumstances as entirely exceptional, and that the assistance extended was not to be construed by them as an indication to look to the Government for future support. It was impressed upon them that such relief was only for the time being, and would not be continued after they might become through the reappearance of the natural food supply or by their individual efforts in farming or otherwise able to procure their own subsistence; and whenever and wherever the labour of the applicants could be turned into account, a system of exacting work from them in return for food distributed to themselves and their families invariably followed.⁸⁵

⁸¹ “The Indians in the North-West,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 5 December 1879, 1.

⁸² Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1880, n. 4, John A. Macdonald, “Report of the Minister of the Interior,” xi-xii.

⁸³ Reports on Indian Affairs from 1868, the first year after confederation and the birth of the nation state, to 1873 were included in the Report of the Secretary of State. From 1874 to 1879, these reports were part of the Department of the Interior.

⁸⁴ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1880, n. 4, John A. Macdonald, “Report of the Minister of the Interior,” xii.

⁸⁵ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1880, n. 4, John A. Macdonald, “Report of the Minister of the Interior,” xii.

Despite Macdonald's declaration concerning the Indians' "distressed circumstances for want of food" and the government's promise of assistance in the case of famine as negotiated in Treaty Six, assistance was to be the exception and even then only in exchange for work. From the outset, the policy of relief required the exchange of labour. State officials responded to the "distressing condition" of the Plains Indians "in consequence of the scarcity of the buffalo" by implementing the policy of "work for rations," in which insufficient rations were provided only in exchange for labour. Irrespective of the work performed, rations were not sufficient and the people were kept on the verge of starvation.⁸⁶

In his published report of 1879, the newly appointed Indian Commissioner Edgar Dewdney explained that when he arrived at Fort Walsh at the end of June,

I found the reports as to the scarcity of buffalo had not been exaggerated, and numbers of Indians of the Cree, Assiniboine and Blackfeet were awaiting the arrival of Col. Macleod, and myself... They were anxious to know what the Government intended to do to assist them, and begged for food to take them to the buffalo, which they expected to find near the Boundary Line.⁸⁷

It is important to point out that these requests for food would have enabled the Indians to hunt for their own provisions. While at Fort Walsh, Dewdney had

several interviews with different bands of Indians there. From those who had taken the treaty I had no complaints; they asked that the Government pity them and give them the assistance promised in Treaty No. 6, which states 'that in the event of any pestilence or famine overtaking them, the Queen would grant such assistance as the Chief Superintendent of Indian Affairs would deem necessary.'⁸⁸

In response to these requests for pity, assistance and the fulfillment of treaty promises, Col. MacLeod explained that

⁸⁶ The report on the Indians in the North-West Territories ended on a positive and highly congratulatory note, with a sprinkling of another Canadian staple with regards to the conditions of the First Nations - denial. "It is satisfactory to be able to state that the efforts of the Department and the Government to relieve the necessities of the Indians of the North-West have been completely successful, and that, notwithstanding *the prevailing scarcity*, so well did the measure of relief afforded meet the requirements of the case, and so judiciously were the supplies distributed, that *only in one or two instances did any serious suffering occur* among the Indians from want of food." The report minimized suffering. According to this report, there were few instances of real hardship, since "notwithstanding the prevailing scarcity... only in one or two instances did any serious suffering occur." Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1880, n. 4, John A. Macdonald, "Report of the Minister of the Interior. Emphasis added.

⁸⁷ Canada. *Sessional Papers*, 1880, n. 4, Edgar Dewdney, Indian Commissioner, "Report of the Department of Indian Affairs," 76.

⁸⁸ Canada. *Sessional Papers*, 1880, n. 4, Edgar Dewdney, Indian Commissioner, "Report of the Department of Indian Affairs," 76.

the Government had heard with great sorrow [of] the hardships they had suffered, and had sent me [Dewdney] to their country to devote my whole time to their interests. *He [MacLeod] told them they must not misinterpret that clause in the treaty to which they referred, that every time they were hungry they must not think they were starving, that the Government expected they would work and earn their living and that I [Dewdney] was sent to show them how to live.*⁸⁹

From Dewdney's record of the interviews, it is apparent that indigenous leaders attempted to get the state to honour its treaty promises. State officials interpreted the clause with neither pity, nor the original promise of benevolence.⁹⁰ Dewdney made it clear that he was most concerned about the cost of food, his desire to "economize," and his use of food as a lever to get Indians to disperse and go where he willed them.⁹¹ It was not the "great sorrow of the hardships they had suffered", but the cost of food, control and power which were central to the politics of starvation. Dewdney's letter clearly stated that the Indians of Treaty 7 "were hungry. I am issuing flour and beef as slowly as I can."⁹² Despite the treaty commissioners' humanitarian language, there was no corresponding humanitarian state practice.

Government officials acknowledged destitution, the importance of even meager government supplies as well as the importance of self-reliance to the survival of indigenous people. Officials lauded Indian endurance during their suffering and argued that Indians were better behaved than civilized man when afflicted by deprivation. These

⁸⁹Canada. *Sessional Papers*, 1880, n. 4, Edgar Dewdney, Indian Commissioner, "Report of the Department of Indian Affairs," 77. Emphasis added.

⁹⁰Historian Olive Dickason writes that "The famine clause of Treaty Six was interpreted to mean that only a 'general' famine warranted free rations." Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, 280.

⁹¹Dewdney wrote, "My object was to get them away from here (Fort Calgary), where beef was seven cents a pound, and from a place they felt attached to on account of the liberal manner they had been treated." Canada. *Sessional Papers*, 1880, n. 4, Edgar Dewdney, Indian Commissioner, "Report of the Department of Indian Affairs," 81 & 82. Nor was this practice particular to Dewdney. As L.N.F. Crozier, the Superintendent of the North West Mounted Police, explained in April of 1880, Indians who had stayed south in pursuit of the buffalo returned and "in every instance they were starving. Many said they had but little to eat during the greater part of the winter, and would have come to the Fort sooner had they been able; men and teams were kept constantly on the road with provisions to meet and feed the starving camps as they arrived. The number of Indians increased daily, until at one time there were as many as five thousand at the Fort." Like Dewdney, Crozier also used food to move Indians away from the Fort, "it was not until June that any of the camps left for their own agencies, and then they were only induced to do so by sending trains of provisions with the detachments of police in charge, who served out to them a ration from day to day as they traveled along."⁹¹ State agents used this dependency to exert and enact state power and will. Canada. *Sessional Papers*, 1881, n. 3, Superintendent L. N. F. Crozier, "Report of the Department of Interior, Part II - The North-West Mounted Police," 30-31. See also, Tobias, "The Subjugation of the Plains Cree."

⁹²Canada. *Sessional Papers*, 1880, n. 4, Edgar Dewdney, Indian Commissioner, "Report of the Department of Indian Affairs," 13.

matter-of-fact descriptions of destitution should help to remind the reader that starvation was considered normal for Indians, and that at the heart of this history is the dispossession of the first peoples and the usurpation of their lands and resources.

The report by Lawrence Vankoughnet, the deputy superintendent general of Indian Affairs, made clear that, the “scarcity of the buffalo in the Territories reduced the Indians to very great straits, and a number of deaths from actual starvation ensued.” He explained that

the suffering was principally confined to the Indians of the south-western portion of the Territories; although, even as far east as Qu’Appelle, much suffering was endured. The Indians were reduced to such extremities that they eat mice, their dogs and some of them even their buffalo skins, and they greedily devoured meat raw when given to them. Men, women and children are reported to have died at the Blackfoot Crossing from absolute want of food. Reports of starvation were received from Qu’Appelle, Forts Walsh, Macleod, Battleford, Carlton, Fort Pitt, Fort Saskatchewan, Edmonton, Touchwood Hills, Fort Ellice, Mouse Mountain, Fort Calgary and elsewhere; said reports coming from different sources.⁹³

Despite the obvious and severe famine conditions,

strict instructions were given to the agents to require labor from able-bodied Indians for any supplies given to them. The principle was laid down for the sake of *the moral effect* that it would have upon the Indians in shewing [sic] them that they must give something in return for what they receive, and also for the purpose of preventing them from hereafter expecting gratuitous assistance from the Government.⁹⁴

Omitted from Vankoughnet’s report were the treaty obligations and the promise of succor following the destruction of the buffalo made in exchange for First Nations’ willingness to share the land with newcomers.

Government supplies were essential. Vankoughnet argued that “there is little doubt that had the supplies not been sent many more of these creatures would have perished, or they would have been driven by desperation to help themselves at the expense of the white settlers of the country. The only wonder is that they did not do so

⁹³ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1880, n. 4, L. Vankoughnet, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Report of the Department of the Interior, 12.

⁹⁴ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1880, n. 4, L. Vankoughnet, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Report of the Department of the Interior.

before the relief reached them.”⁹⁵ Yet Indians continued largely to provide for themselves. Had they not, government supplies would have proved to be inadequate and the result disastrous. As Vankoughnet explained, “The Indians are at the present date for the most part still following the buffalo and it is a subject for thankfulness that such is the case; as the Commissioner reports that were it found necessary to feed three-fourths of the Indians in the North-West, the supplies of provisions sent to the Territories would not last more than a month.”⁹⁶

In unpublished government correspondence, David Laird wrote to Macdonald, as the Minister of the Interior, “that scarcely a buffalo can be found north of the Red Deer and South Saskatchewan Rivers...in all settlements along the Saskatchewan there are Indians begging for food.”⁹⁷ His letter confirmed that “upon the whole...the Indians are undoubtedly making laudable efforts not to be a burden upon the government”; Indians were providing for themselves wherever possible. Yet despite their efforts, Mr. Dickieson, the Acting Indian Superintendent, “has had to give considerable assistance to the destitute.” The only food available was flour, which may have mitigated the pangs of hunger but provided little nutrition.⁹⁸ Officials aimed to stretch this flour until the next crop was available. The policy was also meant to teach “the Indians self-reliance” through provisions that were entirely insufficient. Laird wrote, “Notwithstanding the assistance the Indians receive from the Government stores, they are continually begging around among the settlers. Their craving for animal food is so great that they hope to procure morsels by going from house to house.”⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1880, n. 4, L. Vankoughnet, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Report of the Department of the Interior.

⁹⁶ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1880, n. 4, L. Vankoughnet, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Report of the Department of the Interior, 14.

⁹⁷ Saskatchewan Indian Federated College/ now First Nations University of Canada (FNUC), Department of Indian Affairs Correspondence, RG 10, v. 3698, f. 16142, David Laird, Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Territories, Battleford, to the Minister of the Interior, 30 June 1879, 1 & 2.

⁹⁸ Deanna Christensen writes, “The flour would help ward off hunger pangs but would do little towards meeting the nutritional needs of people accustomed to a diet dependent largely on meat.” Deanna Christensen, *Ahtakakoop: The Epic Account of a Plains Cree Head Chief, His People, and Their Struggle for Survival, 1816-1896* (Shell Lake: Saskatchewan: Ahtakakoop Publishing, 2000), 382.

⁹⁹ FNUC, Department of Indian Affairs Correspondence, RG 10, v. 3698, f. 16142, David Laird, Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Territories, Battleford, to the Minister of the Interior, 30 June 1879, 4.

Laird admitted that “Greater economy, however, it would not have been safe to exercise.”¹⁰⁰ A balance had to be maintained between economy and peace, between a lack of food and a danger to settlers and settlement. Laird’s comment demonstrates that he recognized what little food was given. Others shared his opinion. According to Laird, “Quite possibly many of the Settlers on the Saskatchewan think that he [Mr. Dickieson] has not been sufficiently liberal in his distributions.”¹⁰¹ Clearly, some contemporary observers were critical of government parsimony, possibly in part because they felt personally endangered or called upon to make up the difference. Perhaps, too, there were those who were sympathetic to the plight of these hungry people.

Both Vankougnet and Laird commended the Indians as they struggled against starvation. In his report, Vankoughnet wrote that

the patience and endurance displayed by the Indians of the North-West Territories, under the trying circumstances at which they were placed, are beyond all praise, and their refraining from helping themselves at the expense of the white inhabitants of the country, even when pressed with hunger, and pained by the sight of some of their friends dying around them, and others greatly reduced in strength, entitles them to every consideration at the hands of the public.¹⁰²

Laird also wrote that “Altogether their [Indian] conduct, considering their destitute condition is more creditable than would be displayed by most men in civilized communities suffering want to a like extent.”¹⁰³ According to Vankoughnet and Laird, in a comparison between the suffering between Indians and the eastern poor, the Indians were consistently reported as being better behaved.¹⁰⁴

There were similarities between the eastern poor and the “starving Indians”, and important differences. The work for rations policy was implemented in the cities and on the plains to teach those in need the habit of “self-reliance” and to ensure that no able-

¹⁰⁰ FNUC, Department of Indian Affairs Correspondence, RG 10, v. 3698, f. 16142, David Laird, Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Territories, Battleford, to the Minister of the Interior, 30 June 1879, 3-4.

¹⁰¹ FNUC, Department of Indian Affairs Correspondence, RG 10, v. 3698, f. 16142, David Laird, Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Territories, Battleford, to the Minister of the Interior, 30 June 1879, 3.

¹⁰² Canada. *Sessional Papers*, 1880, n. 4, L. Vankoughnet, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Report of the Department of the Interior, 13.

¹⁰³ FNUC, RG 10, v. 3698, f. 16142, David Laird, Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Territories, Battleford, to the Minister of the Interior, 30 June 1879, 5.

¹⁰⁴ Canada. *Sessional Papers*, 1880, n. 4, L. Vankoughnet, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Report of the Department of the Interior, 13; FNUC, RG 10, v. 3698, f. 16142, David Laird, Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Territories, Battleford, to the Minister of the Interior, 30 June 1879, 5.

bodied men were able to receive sustenance without work. In 1880, John A. Macdonald, Prime Minister and Superintendent General of Indian Affairs explained that “the system pursued in affording relief to the Indians is calculated to accustom them to habits of industry; and at the same time to teach them to depend on their own efforts for subsistence. Under that system all able-bodied Indians are required to work for the food given themselves and families.”¹⁰⁵ Yet, the poor in eastern cities were seldom described to be suffering from the kind of weakness experienced by indigenous people on the plains. For instance, in July of 1879, Edgar Dewdney went to Blackfoot Crossing. In his description of his visit, Dewdney wrote, “I found the camp numbering about thirteen hundred in a very destitute condition and many on the verge of starvation; young men who were known to be stout hearty fellows some months ago, were quite emaciated and so weak they could hardly walk.”¹⁰⁶ Indians “pawed a good many of their rifles...and have eaten nearly all their dogs. They have also been brought so low as to eat gophers and mice.”¹⁰⁷ The people were eating whatever they could. The poor in eastern cities were rarely described as being in such dire straits. Dewdney reported that he ordered some sacks of “Indian flour”¹⁰⁸ (flour that would later be condemned as “wholly unfit for human food”).¹⁰⁹ Even then, in common with charitable efforts for those living in Montreal, supplies were for those who would work, and agents were to get what work

¹⁰⁵ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1881, no. 14, John A. Macdonald, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, “Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs, 2.

¹⁰⁶ FNUC, RG 10, v. 3696, f. 5266, Edgar Dewdney, Indian Commissioner of the North-West Territories to Col. Dennis, Deputy Minister of the Interior, 22 July 1879, 1.

¹⁰⁷ FNUC, RG 10, v. 3696, f. 5266, Edgar Dewdney, Indian Commissioner of the North-West Territories to Col. Dennis, Deputy Minister of the Interior, 22 July 1879, 2.

¹⁰⁸ FNUC, RG 10, v. 3696, f. 5266, Edgar Dewdney, Indian Commissioner of the North-West Territories to Col. Dennis, Deputy Minister of the Interior, 22 July 1879, 3. Food adulteration, especially for merchants to increase their profit was very much in vogue in the city markets where the poor shopped. “Indian flour” suggests that this was a lesser quality than simple flour. In his book *Crowfoot*, Dempsey writes that “the flour often was spoiled and even the regular issue was an inferior grade which could find a market only at the Indian agency.” Dempsey, *Crowfoot*, 135. According to Dewdney, traders profited from the prevailing misery. On the prairies, traders bought Indian horses for “a mere song,” and intended to take these same horses north to the treaty payments and “trade them off to the Indians there.” For information on food adulteration in the Montreal, see, Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993), 163. On the adulteration of milk specifically, see, Terry Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty: The Condition of the Montreal Working Class in Montreal, 1897-1929* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), 96-100.

¹⁰⁹ Canada. *House of Commons Debates* (27 April 1886), 734 (Mr. Paterson).

they could out of the Indians.¹¹⁰ These are some of the ways that officials responded to starvation on the prairies.

Not all officials had iron hearts,¹¹¹ or were without pity. In July 1880, Inspector Kittson M.D. wrote to Col. Macleod about the necessity of increasing rations. Working from the assumption “that an Indian adult requires as much food as a white man,” Kittson compared the rations doled out in prisons, asylums, infirmaries, and for American and European armies with the rations Indians were given and argued they were

totally insufficient...Gaunt men and women with hungry eyes were seen everywhere seeking or begging for a mouthful of food, little children were ever on the look out for the swill barrels to dredge out the solid parts and fight over the ‘tit-bits’; Morning and evening many of them would come to me and beg the very bones left by the dogs in my yard.¹¹²

He told his superiors not to expect much work on this ration as “it will keep body and soul together but nothing more.”¹¹³ Kittson’s description of the prevailing need and the hunger was sympathetic. The rations were so minimal that they brought suffering even to children. The same era that espoused a duty to children brought them to starvation. While Kittson recommended that rations be increased, his recommendation did not change government policy.

James Stewart, the Indian agent in Edmonton, was also a sympathetic government employee. His report on the winter of 1880 explained that

the unusual destitution of the Indians, all over this Agency, obliged us to assist them to a large extent; indeed, large as it may appear, it was by no means what it looks like at first sight. If you divide the amount distributed by the number of recipients, you will find it but a small portion to each sufferer. I may well call them sufferers, for I have never seen anything like it since my long residence in

¹¹⁰ FNUC, RG 10, v. 3696, f. 5266, Edgar Dewdney, Indian Commissioner of the North-West Territories to Col. Dennis, Deputy Minister of the Interior, 22 July 1879, 9 & 11.

¹¹¹ It was his strict adherence to government policy that Hayter Reed, working out of the Indian Office in Battleford, earned himself the name “Iron Heart.” In the outline of his policy on dealing with the hunger of the Indians who turned to him for assistance in Battleford, Reed explained that “they received no provisions unless a fair amount of work was performed notwithstanding several days of parleying. I have but little doubt sir that your ears will be greeted with sorrowful tales as to my hardheartedness as it is I am now called “Iron Heart.” FNUC, RG 10, v. 3755, f. 30 961, reel C-10133, Hayter Reed, 18 June 1881. See also Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests*, 144.

¹¹² FNUC, RG 10, v. 3726, f. 24811, Inspector Kittson, M.D. to Col. Macleod 1 July 1880, 2-4.

¹¹³ FNUC, RG 10, v. 3726, f. 24811, Inspector Kittson, M.D. to Col. Macleod July 1 1880

this country. It was not only the want of buffalo, but everything else seemed to have deserted the country, even fish were scarce.¹¹⁴

In his description of them as “sufferers”, Stewart’s compassionate account depicted the Indians as suffering personified. There was very little provision for each individual, even though the total amount appeared to be great. Indian agent McDonald from Qu’Appelle (Treaty Four) wrote that “A good deal of distress existed last winter...At Touchwood Hills, Bird Trail Creek, and Pelly, very little was given to the Indians without getting something in return, either on the reserves or on the agency farm.”¹¹⁵ In the face of “a good deal of distress” work continued to be central to succor for the “small portion” allotted “to each sufferer.”

In the official published Report of the Department of Indians Affairs for 1880, Dewdney confirmed these reports of “the scanty fare” Indians “received from the government” and “to some extent” accounted for what he called “greater mortality” among the Indians. Dewdney’s report continued in the tradition of Canadian expansionists when he argued that, because the buffalo were gone, “the Government will be compelled to make provision to meet the starvation, or I fear trouble might arise.”¹¹⁶ His fear was less about suffering or deaths from starvation than about “trouble.” Yet, Indians were not threatening or dangerous. Dewdney made it clear that although Indians made demands, they were well-behaved and were quieted by the promise of just treatment.¹¹⁷ Despite these promises, supplies were “insufficient” and “food had to be purchased from merchants in the interior at the current rates. It was, however, fortunate that so many of our Indians were within reach of the buffalo, or great distress and actual starvation must have ensued.”¹¹⁸ Again, it was through their own exertions that Indians avoided starvation, rather than through government officials’ just treatment.

¹¹⁴ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1881, n. 14, James G. Stewart, Edmonton Indian Agent, “Report for the Department of Indian Affairs,” 102-104.

¹¹⁵ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1881, n. 14, A. McDonald, Qu’Appelle Indian Agent, “Report for the Department of Indian Affairs,” 104-105.

¹¹⁶ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1881, n. 14, Edgar Dewdney, Indian Commissioner, “Report of the Department of Indian Affairs,” 94.

¹¹⁷ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1881, n. 14, Edgar Dewdney, Indian Commissioner, “Report of the Department of Indian Affairs,” 92.

¹¹⁸ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1881, n. 14, Edgar Dewdney, Indian Commissioner, “Report of the Department of Indian Affairs,” 94.

Despite the “scanty fare” provided by the government, it was the issue of expenditure, the “enormous” amount being paid to Indians in the west, which led to a discussion on “starving Indians” in the House of Commons in April of 1882. According to “Dewdney’s own calculations for 1881-82, the government was feeding an estimated eighteen thousand Indians in Treaties Four, Six, and Seven for less than eight cents a day per person.”¹¹⁹ The language of duty, of humanity and benevolence was absent from the discussion. Mr. Mills (“the gentleman from Bothwell”) charged in the House of Commons that the Indians had “become pensioners upon the Public Treasury, that we are called upon to feed them, to clothe them, and that they are doing little or nothing for themselves. Now, I believe a barbarous population like the Indians may very easily be made wholly dependent on the government.”¹²⁰ Macdonald defended the budget. The colonization of Indian lands was a cornerstone of his National Policy and he was not a man who was sympathetic to Indian suffering. In response to the question of controlling the expenditure and the Indian agents’ power of discretion, Macdonald stated that

In the case of apprehended famine the matter is to be dealt with on the spot; but the whole matter is dealt with by Mr. Dewdney, who has the charge of the whole reserves. When the Indians are starving they have been helped, but they have been reduced to one-half and one-quarter rations; but when they fall into a state of destitution we cannot allow them to die for want of food. It is true that Indians so long as they are fed will not work. I have reason to believe that the agents as a whole, and I am sure it is the case with the Commissioner, are doing all they can, *by refusing food until the Indians are on the verge of starvation, to reduce the expense.* The buffalo has disappeared during the past few years.¹²¹

From Macdonald’s statement it is clear that there was a moral and political imperative against letting Indians die outright from starvation. He stated, “we cannot allow them to die for want of food.” Christianity and social Darwinism both provided a rationale for stewardship; the former based on the golden rule, the latter on the premise that those at the apex of the hierarchy of races warranted their supremacy and demonstrated their superior humanity in part through the humane treatment of those over whom they had power. Successful colonization of the west was supported by these religious and scientific worldviews, and required peaceful settlement of the land. Macdonald

¹¹⁹ Stonechild and Waiser, *Loyal Till Death*, 53.

¹²⁰ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, (27 April 1882), 1186 (Mills).

¹²¹ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, (27 April 1882). (Macdonald). Emphasis added.

concluded with the “hope that the Indians will settle down; but the Indians are Indians, and we must submit to frequent disappointments in the way of civilizing them.”¹²² This formulation blamed Indians for any shortcomings.

In the House, Mills articulated the widespread idea that if Indians were fed they would not work. He stated that “no doubt the Indians will bear a great degree of starvation before they will work, and so long as they are certain the government will come to their aid they will not do much for themselves.”¹²³ Mr. Trow agreed with Mr. Mills against “indulging” the Indians. Trow said, “It would be wrong, of course, to allow them to suffer,” although he did not take issue with Macdonald’s statement of bringing the Indians to the verge of starvation to reduce the expense, which must have entailed much suffering. Instead, Trow argued that Indians “should be thrown on their resources as far as possible. I have known bands of Indians to be lounging about when they might have been providing for themselves. Last fall we saw them in large numbers begging at points in Montana, when we counted in one day more than one hundred carcasses of buffalo on the prairie.” Mr. Bannerman interjected that those were American Indians and “there is nothing in which the Canadians compare more favorably with the people of the United States than in the treatment of Indians.”¹²⁴ The discussion provided another opportunity to debase Indians and Americans and to praise Canadian practice.

Yet, each in their own way, both Americans and Canadians regulated the west through armed law enforcement, although the Canadian approach cost less. This House of Commons discussion ended with Macdonald’s comparison of the cost of maintaining one mounted policeman on the prairies to that of a US infantry soldier: In 1879, it cost Canada \$1000 to maintain one mounted policeman but it was estimated that would be reduced for the year 1882-83 to \$820. In contrast, the maintenance of a US infantry soldier was \$1000 a year and a cavalry soldier \$1600 to \$2000. The Mounted Police were to be increased from 300 to 500 men.¹²⁵ In terms of the price for order in the west, it was cheaper to police Indians than to feed them.

¹²² Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, (27 April 1882). (Mills)

¹²³ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, (27 April 1882).

¹²⁴ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, (27 April 1882). (Bannerman)

¹²⁵ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, (27 April 1882), (Macdonald).

As starvation continued and deepened on the prairies, officials called for more police, not food. Commissioner Irvine's report for 1881 contained an extract from that of the previous year report reinforcing the call for an increase in the North West Mounted Police Force by 200 men. He argued that "Since the disappearance of the buffalo the Indian situation has assumed quite a different aspect." Indians who continued to pursue the buffalo after it was considerably diminished were described as a militant and threatening population that would require management. "This [Indian] population, too, will, irrespective of the aid received from Government, be a starving one, a dangerous class requiring power, as well as care, in handling."¹²⁶ It was precisely because government aid was meant to keep them on the verge of starvation that Indians would continue to starve irrespective of the small rations they received. It was this hunger that made them a "dangerous class," a danger to the colonization and settlement of their lands. According to Irvine, "an increase of the Force is necessary [due to] the advancement of civilization."¹²⁷ Policing, not succor, was central for the maintenance of the advancing Canadian civilization.

Military maneuvers had their place in the Canadian management of the west. For instance, consider Canadian officials' reception of Big Bear and his people at Fort Walsh in 1882. According to Neal McLeod, Mistahi Maskwa (Big Bear) "tried to resist the new order: Christianity, farming and the destruction of Nehiyawak [Cree] independence; and instead tried to maintain Nehiyawak autonomy and tried to get better terms of treaty."¹²⁸ Following the disappearance of the buffalo from the Canadian plains, Big Bear and his people had continue to pursue the buffalo south of the border but by 1882, his people were starving. State policy excluded non-treaty Indians from receiving any assistance, as a way to force them into treaty. According to the NWMP report, Big Bear ("then a non-treaty chief") and his followers came to Fort Walsh and made

exorbitant demands for provisions, and in case of their being refused, to help themselves. I [Irvine] considered it advisable, thereupon to move all the Indian Supplies inside the Fort...*I confined all the men to barracks, had the seven*

¹²⁶ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1882, n. 18, A. G. Irvine, Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, "Report of the North-West Mounted Police," 10.

¹²⁷ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1882, n. 18, A. G. Irvine, Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, "Report of the North-West Mounted Police," 10.

¹²⁸ Neal McLeod, "Rethinking Treaty Six in the Spirit of Mistahi Maskwa," 81-2; See also, Hugh A. Dempsey, *Big Bear: The End of Freedom* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1984).

pounder mountain guns placed in position in the bastions, and made all arrangements to have the force ready for any emergency. On the 14th [May], Big Bear with 150 bucks, all armed arrived at the Fort... The Indians accompanying him conducted themselves in an orderly manner and made most civil speeches. I held a council with Big Bear, and his people inside the Fort, allowing no man to come in armed, and distinctly impressed on them, that as non-treaty Indians they had no claims whatever on the consideration of the Government... as a non-treaty Indian he could not obtain assistance from the government.¹²⁹

To ensure that Big Bear's people could not access provisions, guns were positioned and the entire police force was prepared to protect this food from the hungry people. In 1882, forced by starvation, Big Bear signed an adhesion to Treaty Six. The annual report for the Department of Indian Affairs stated that Big Bear and his followers were still encamped at Cypress Hills "and will likely remain all winter, though exposed to much privation and suffering, as only what will be barely sufficient to keep them from starving will be given them by the Government."¹³⁰ Entering treaty did not end the hunger, but only somewhat mitigated it.

Despite the fact that the Blackfoot entered treaty in 1877, in 1882 they, too, were starving. In November 1882, defenses were mounted by the police and food was used for barricades against the hungry people. C.E. Denny wrote from Fort Macleod that "A great deal of trouble had been given by the Blackfeet during the previous winter" in what became known as the Bull Elk case.¹³¹ There was great anxiety over food. "Flour on some occasions during the winter had run out, and remembering the starving condition... they [the Blackfoot] were afraid of a recurrence and were therefore very dissatisfied."¹³² Indians had been able to buy offal and heads from beef contractors. Bull Elk bought a head which was then sold to someone else, and this led to his firing a shot. When the police went to arrest him they met with resistance. According to Denny:

Major Crozier informed Crowfoot, the head chief, that if the man was not given up by the next day we would take him by force, and at the same time *a temporary fort was made out of one of the buildings, flour sacks being used as a barricade.* A very good fortification was made in a very short time and every precaution

¹²⁹ Canada. *Sessional Papers*, 1883, n. 23, A. G. Irvine, Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, "Report of the North-West Mounted Police," 8.

¹³⁰ Canada. *Sessional Papers*, 1883, n. 5, John A. Macdonald, "Report for the Department of Indian Affairs," xi.

¹³¹ Canada. *Sessional Papers*, 1883, n. 5, C. E. Denny, "Report for the Department of Indian Affairs," 168. Hugh A. Dempsey, "The Bull Elk Affair," *Alberta History* 40, 1 (Winter 1992): 2-9.

¹³² Canada. *Sessional Papers*, 1883, n. 5, C. E. Denny, "Report for the Department of Indian Affairs," 168.

taken in the event of Indians showing fight. This prompt measure overawed the Indians.¹³³

Sacks of flour were used as barricades and the state's military power was used to "overawe" the Indians. This approach to "overawe" the Indians was used to subdue the Indians during and in the immediate aftermath of "the troubles" of 1885; there had been considerable precedent in the years following the destruction of the buffalo.

As military maneuvers attempted to overawe the Indians, deaths by starvation continued on the plains. When Denny visited the Indians at Blackfoot Crossing, he found them to be "really very badly off[f]." He "made arrangements with the beef contractors to take over the heads and offal at \$1 per animal and gave instructions to have these issued as rations."¹³⁴ He also "promised the Indians I would see that they did not run out of food."¹³⁵ Starvation had caused deaths. Denny explained, "The payments show me that the Blackfeet and Bloods are on the decrease. A good many children died during the summer. This is also the case with the Sarcees. But if anything the Piegans and Stoneys have held their own and even increased."¹³⁶ Despite deaths by starvation, rations were continually reduced. On April 24th the *Montreal Daily Witness* announced that "Indians Rations [were] Reduced," and that C.E. Denny had quit over the reduction. He refused to cut the already meager rations and resigned.¹³⁷ Denny was persuaded by the government to return to his post during the troubles of 1885.

Views from the East

The eastern press was less sympathetic than Denny. In 1883, when the buffalo failed to return to its last remaining haunts on the northern US plains, the *Montreal Star* reported that the St. Anne's Treaty Six Indians were starving. There was "great

¹³³ Canada. *Sessional Papers*, 1883, n. 5, C. E. Denny, "Report for the Department of Indian Affairs," 169. Emphasis added.

¹³⁴ Canada. *Sessional Papers*, 1883, n. 5, C. E. Denny, "Report for the Department of Indian Affairs," 168.

¹³⁵ Canada. *Sessional Papers*, 1883, n. 5, C. E. Denny, "Report for the Department of Indian Affairs."

¹³⁶ Canada. *Sessional Papers*, 1883, n. 5, C. E. Denny, "Report for the Department of Indian Affairs," 176. Clothing too was desperately needed. Denny asked the government to "send some clothing and bales of cotton print for the women to make dresses, it would help them greatly as the women suffer most, being literally in rags. The women fight over the old cotton flour sacks, of which they make dresses."

¹³⁷ "Indian Rations Reduced," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 24 April 1884, 3. See also, C. E. Denny, *The Law Marches West*, edited and arranged by W. B. Cameron (London: J. M Dent and Ltd., 1939). In Denny's account, the storekeeper and clerk were also to be dismissed, in an effort to save money, and he was to take on their work as well as his own post. On the question of reducing rations, Denny wrote, "I cannot see my way to cut down the Indian rations as ordered, as to do so would without a doubt bring on trouble." Denny, *The Law Marches West*, 205.

prostration from sickness which confined nearly all the Indians to their tents” and prevented them from hunting and fishing. A call was made for medicines and provisions.¹³⁸ The *Star*'s editorial proclaimed that the North-West Indians were “a degenerate race” and were “rapidly disappearing.”¹³⁹ Heavily influenced by social Darwinism, white contemporaries expected, and perhaps hoped, that Indians would follow the fate of the buffalo.¹⁴⁰ The *Star* reported that “Mortality is so great that if it continues at such a pace they [the Indians] will be extinct in forty years.”¹⁴¹ There was a sense of inevitability in this assessment and Indians were blamed for their own misfortunes. The editorial cited their “irregular style of living” and the climate as reasons for their decline. “Instead of hunting for the buffalo, they have become so dependent on the government for support that they are content to exist on starvation rations doled out to them that are not sufficient to maintain their vitality.”¹⁴² In the public, published and circulated record, it was plainly stated that the government issued “starvation rations” which were “not sufficient to maintain their vitality.” Yet the analysis that surrounded these facts worked to blame Indians for their own suffering. The editorial blamed the “degenerated morality of the women” as “a chief cause of poverty.” The formulation masked how officials and settlers used their extreme poverty, which was the result of the colonization of their lands, to gain power and sexual favours in exchange for food to feed their hungry families.¹⁴³ Foundational practices surrounding the colonization of the west were veiled and mystified and the Indians were blamed for their own suffering.

¹³⁸ “The Indians,” *Montreal Star*, 4 May 1883, 1.

¹³⁹ “A Degenerate Race: The North-Western Indians Rapidly Disappearing,” *Montreal Star*, 16 May 1883, 2; See also, Patrick Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings: Discourse on the Extinction of Primitive Races, 1800-1930* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 2003).

¹⁴⁰ See, William Cronon writes this is “among the classic imperialist myths of the frontier, wherein a ‘vanishing race’ ‘melts away’ before the advancing forces of ‘civilization.’” William Cronon, “A Place for Stories: Nature, History and Narrative,” *The Journal of American History* 78 (March 1992), 1366n36.

¹⁴¹ “A Degenerate Race,” *Montreal Star*, 16 May 1883, 2.

¹⁴² “A Degenerate Race,” *Montreal Star*, 16 May 1883, 2.

¹⁴³ According to *John Tootoosis: Biography of a Cree Leader*, the Frog Lake murders may have been linked to “private incidents” which “could have involved exploitation of some of the Indian girls and women by the townsmen. Given the helpless and famished state of the Crees as that deadly winter wore on, gifts of food for favours rendered would have been irresistible and truly in keeping with the frontier morality of the time, often only thinly veiled by the surface Victorian postures of virtue.” In her book *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West*, historian Sarah Carter confirms that Indian agents and farm instructors “demanded sexual favours [from young girls and women]...in return for rations.” Neal McLeod makes it clear that the stories of those closest to Big Bear in 1885 have not been available to the public. McLeod agrees with Tootoosis and suggests that a “direct explanation for the events [of 1885, the North-West Rebellion] would be hunger as the people were

The *Montreal Daily Witness* took a different view of the situation, although it too relied on notions of civility and savagery. Some of the white residents in the west believed that the “great destitution” among Indians was a “disgrace to the country.”¹⁴⁴ As a nation that prided itself on its civilization and its humanity, it had brought those who were at their mercy to “great destitution... These poor unfortunate beings [were] reduced to a state of starvation.” Action was needed, otherwise “people” and “property” would “suffer” but the “Government hasn’t taken any action.”¹⁴⁵ In this articulation, Indians were reduced to “poor unfortunate beings” who were apparently separate from the “people” and their property who would suffer if the state took no action to mitigate the Indians’ “state of starvation.”

Despite the publicized poverty and great mortality that resulted from it, further attempts to curb spending were enforced by the government. In 1884, the *Montreal Daily Witness* reported the “shortness of rations as a cause of the... Indian Outbreak” at Crooked Lakes.¹⁴⁶ When Yellow Calf (Treaty Four) sent word to Dewdney that the Indians on his reserve were starving, Dewdney decided that conditions were not that bad and that they had wasted their food supplies. He had been too busy to meet with them. Indians at File Hills also said “they have been starved, and will fight until government promises to give them increased rations.”¹⁴⁷ According to the *Montreal Daily Witness*, “settlers are fearful and are fleeing from their farms.”¹⁴⁸ In March the *Witness* reported that “since the beginning of the year” there were reports of the “death of 20 red men” and

starving. Quinn, Indian Agent at Frog Lake, refused at gun point to give Wandering Spirit and others food.” McLeod explains the murders of Thomas Quinn, Father Fafard and others at Frog Lake in 1885 as “part of the inner logic of the violation of the treaty. They were the last registrations of protest against the new order and the loss of freedom for the Nēhiyawak [the Cree].” See, Sluman & Goodwill, *John Tootoosis*, 55; Sarah Carter, *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada’s Prairie West* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), 182 & Sarah Carter, “Categories and Terrains of Exclusion: Constructing the ‘Indian Woman’ in the Early Settlement Era in Western Canada,” in *Gender and History in Canada* edited by Joy Parr and Mark Rosenfeld (Toronto: Copp Clark Ltd., 1996), 30-49; Neal McLeod, review of *A Tortured People: The Politics of Colonization*, by Howard Adams, *Native Studies Review* 11, no.2 (1996), 179; McLeod, “Rethinking Treaty Six in the Spirit of Mistahi Maskwa, (Big Bear),” 84. McLeod, “Rethinking Treaty Six in the Spirit of Mistahi Maskwa,” 84.

¹⁴⁴ “Starving Indians,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 29 March 1884, 1.

¹⁴⁵ “Starving Indians,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 29 March 1884, 1.

¹⁴⁶ “The Indian Outbreak,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 25 February 1884, 1. See, Isabel Andrews, “Indian Protest Against Starvation.”

¹⁴⁷ “The Indian Outbreak,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 25 February 1884, 1.

¹⁴⁸ “The Indian Outbreak,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 25 February 1884, 1.

an “uprising” was “feared.”¹⁴⁹ By April, the number of deaths was reported to have risen to “about seventy Indians” who were said “to have died on the reserve south of Indian Head, chiefly of scrofula and pulmonary diseases”¹⁵⁰ The specter of an Indian rising was contradicted by reports that the Indians were “perfectly quiet and contented” and there was “not the slightest danger of any difficulty arising from the Indians.”¹⁵¹ Nevertheless, the idea or threat of an Indian war hovered over the east and the west.

In late June, when Indians gathered for a thirst dance, John Craig, the farm instructor at Little Pine’s reserve, “gave orders that no more rations would be given out,”¹⁵² “hoping thus to starve the visitors into leaving.”¹⁵³ A scuffle ensued when Craig refused food for a sick Indian child.¹⁵⁴ In its report of the events, the *Montreal Daily Witness* informed its readers that the people of Battleford were armed.¹⁵⁵ In July, the *Toronto Globe* reported that Saskatoon was ready to be armed and white families were in the barracks.¹⁵⁶ This historical context of starvation and its association by settlers and officials with an armed Indian uprising helps to explain and situate events in the spring of 1885 on a continuum, rather than as an exception to Canadian thinking and practice. When the settlers of Battleford “took fright and fled into the fort”¹⁵⁷ in 1885, in what became known as “the siege of Battleford” and part of the Northwest Rebellion, they

¹⁴⁹ “The Indian Outbreak,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 25 February 1884, 1. .

¹⁵⁰ “Indian Mortality,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 18 April 1884, 3.

¹⁵¹ Letter to the Editor, “The North-West Indians,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 31 May 1884, 2.

¹⁵² Walter Hildebrandt, *Views from Fort Battleford: Constructed Visions of an Anglo-Canadian West* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1994), 46. For a dramatization, see Norma Sluman, *Poundmaker* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1967).

¹⁵³ Robert Jefferson, *Fifty Years on the Saskatchewan* (Battleford, Saskatchewan: Canadian North-West Historical Society, 1929), 108.

¹⁵⁴ Hildebrandt, *Views From Fort Battleford*, 46. According to Stonechild and Waiser, “two of Lucky Man’s sons assaulted John Craig, the Little Pine farm instructor, in a heated scuffle on 18 June over the sudden withdrawal of rations.” Stonechild and Waiser, *Loyal Till Death*, 56. The farm instructor on the Poundmaker reserve, Robert Jefferson wrote, “according to Craig’s story, they [two of Big Bear’s young men] had come while he was in the storehouse and demanded food; which demand he refused with appropriate gestures. He could speak no Cree; they, no English. Craig seems to have lost his head, since the controversy culminated in his pushing the men out. One of the intruders then took an axe-handle that was near the door and struck Craig on the arm with it. This was an unpleasantness which at such a juncture, should have been avoided. Craig’s arm was not injured, but his feelings were, so he took his case to the police.” Jefferson, “Fifty Years on the Saskatchewan,” 109.

¹⁵⁵ Editorial, “The North-West Indians,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 31 May 1884, 2.

¹⁵⁶ “The Indian Rising: Serious Trouble Threatened in the North-West,” *Toronto Globe*, 11 July 1884.

¹⁵⁷ Dickason, *Canada’s First Nations*, 288. Gerald Friesen argues that “terror among the white settlers” helped to shape the events of 1885. See, Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 153.

were responding to the specter of an Indian uprising that had been predicted, circulated and imagined since the anticipation of the destruction of the buffalo.

In the spring of 1885, the Canadian state sent out three columns of military expeditions to subordinate the indigenous people on the prairies. The traditional story as told by Canadian historians is that due to government mistreatment of its Indians, there was an armed rising.¹⁵⁸ An early exception to this historiography is Howard Adams in his classic book *Prison of Grass*, where he argued that "Ottawa had been recruiting soldiers and policemen a full year before March 1885...Throughout the entire year a build-up of troops and police took place. By the spring of 1885 western Canada looked like a military camp."¹⁵⁹ The findings in this chapter support Adams' contention that the military mobilization has a longer history than is generally supposed by Canadian historians. The Indian rising that loomed large in the Canadian imagination linked the destruction of the buffalo with the threat that starving Indians to settlers and settlement.

When Lieutenant Colonel William Otter's column arrived to "relieve" Battleford, they found no action and a town abandoned by its white inhabitants who had taken refuge in the NWMP fort. As this chapter has illustrated, settlers had anticipated an Indian rising ever since the destruction of the buffalo. This was not the first time that settlers had abandoned their homes and asked to be armed against local Indians. Major General Frederick Middleton, the commander of the Canadian militia, instructed Otter to stay put but Dewdney encouraged him: Otter and his men went to attack the sleeping Indian men, women and children camped at Cut Knife Hill on Poundmaker's reserve. Fine Day led the warriors in protecting the camp, defeating Otter, and forcing him to withdraw. The fate of Otter's column would have mirrored the decimation of Custer's regiment at the

¹⁵⁸ This narrative has been challenged by Blair Stonechild and Bill Waiser's important book, *Loyal Till Death* which argues that Indians had their own strategies for dealing with the state that did not include armed rebellion but a pan-Indian diplomatic movement for treaty reform.

¹⁵⁹ Adams, *Prison of Grass*, 90. The increasing police presence in the west is confirmed by Walter Hildebrandt in his history of Fort Battleford. He writes, "The 'Indian problem' required increased manpower. From the twelve men and sixteen horses at Battleford in 1876, the force grew dramatically by the spring of 1885. At that time, 200 men of their total force of 557 were stationed in the Battleford Division; 107 horses from a total of 200 were being used there." Hildebrandt, *Views from Fort Battleford*, 42.

Little Big Horn, but Poundmaker counseled “they have come here to fight us and we have fought them; now let them go.”¹⁶⁰

Before Stonechild and Waiser’s text *Loyal till Death*, historians have represented the Battle of Cut Knife as part of the Riel or Northwest Rebellion of 1885.¹⁶¹ On the whole, historians have not castigated Otter for his actions. One of Otter’s descendants, Desmond Morton in his book *The Last War Drum* argues that “Otter and his men also felt deprived – of the chance to fight.”¹⁶² Thus Otter devised a plan. “Surely it was part of the job of relieving Battleford to give the Indians a practical demonstration of the power of the government?”¹⁶³ Even in the recent *Prairie Fire: The 1885 North-West Rebellion*, Bob Beal and Rod Macleod normalize Otter’s attack on “the enemy.”¹⁶⁴ In this way, there is some continuity between historians and the colonial record from which they inscribe their narratives.

The *Montreal Star* was vitriolic in its anti-Indian reporting on the Indian rising of 1885. On March 23rd the *Star* announced the “Rising of Saskatchewan half-breeds joined by a large number of Indians...[the] queen’s authority defied.” As was the case since the disappearance of the buffalo in 1879, settlers and citizens were arming themselves and “asking for arms to uphold the Queen’s law.”¹⁶⁵ When the *Star* reported on Colonel Otter’s attack on Poundmaker’s sleeping camp, the editorial entitled “Is Colonel Otter to blame?” concluded that “Otterism is what they need.”¹⁶⁶ The newspaper argued that the “circumstances” had to be considered as Otter experienced them. The newspaper

¹⁶⁰ As quoted in Blair Stonechild and Bill Waiser, *Loyal Till Death: Indians and the North-West Rebellion* (Fifth House Publishers, 1997), 142. 126-27. Stonechild and Waiser argue that “in early May, a battle-hungry Canadian officer [Otter] disobeyed orders and launched an ill-advised, surprise attack on the Cut Knife camp...If not for the restraint of the Indians, Canada would have experienced its own Little Big Horn.”

¹⁶¹ More traditional interpretations persist. For instance, in his 2004 textbook, *The Peoples of Canada*, J. M. Bumsted, simply writes “Lieutenant-Colonel Otter relieved Battleford, but was fired upon by Aboriginal warriors at Cut Knife Hill and had to withdraw.” See, J. M. Bumsted, *The Peoples of Canada: A Post-Confederation History* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2004), 44.

¹⁶² Desmond Morton, *The Last War Drum* (Toronto: A. M. Hackert Ltd., 1972) 103.

¹⁶³ Morton, *The Last War Drum* 102.

¹⁶⁴ Bob Beal & Rod Macleod, *Prairie Fire: The 1885 North-West Rebellion* (McClelland & Stewart, 1994), 251. They describe the correspondence between Otter and Middleton as a “game of semantics” “each wanting to put the responsibility for the final decision on the other...”

¹⁶⁵ “Rising in the North-West,” *Montreal Star*, 23 March 1885.

¹⁶⁶ Editorial, “The North-West Trouble,” *Montreal Star*, 16 May 1885.

collapsed the incidents at Frog Lake¹⁶⁷ together with Poundmaker's sleeping camp. Otter was itching for a fight and when he got to Battleford to find that the white people had in fact sieged themselves in the town's fort, his superiors turned a blind eye as he attempted to murder a sleeping camp of Indian men, women and children. It was what the *Star* called "the moral power of the rifle."¹⁶⁸

The Department of Indian Affairs continued to deny that anything was wrong in the northwest. "Disaffection" among the Indians was "greatly exaggerated" and was "entirely confined to a few of those who are always grumbling."¹⁶⁹ On the ground in the west, the response to the Indians' hunger was "to overawe the Indians," with "a military recommendation by General Middleton, in view of the threatened uprising." This was part of a long tradition of policing and military mobilization to subdue the indigenous people in Canada. The *Montreal Daily Witness* reported that "It is now certain that great dissatisfaction exists among the several tribes located along the international border, and a concentration of military forces, it is believed will have more effect in intimidating those Indians who are disposed to go on the warpath than any other measure that might be resorted to."¹⁷⁰ Not just treatment or the provision of food but military deployment was the Canadian state's response.

Canadian State Policy, its Critics and its Defenders

The "cruel treatment" of Indians by the state was raised in the House of Commons in April of 1886. Mr. Cameron (a Liberal MP from Huron) refuted the "First Minister's claim 'that the Indians who revolted had no reason for doing so, in so far as their treatment was concerned, is sufficiently established by the concurrent testimony of all

¹⁶⁷ At Frog Lake, on April 2 1885, the Indian agent Thomas Quinn, who refused to give food, John Delaney the farm instructor, two priests and several others were killed by Wandering Spirit and several other younger warriors. "As elder Fred Horse observed one hundred years later, "It was hunger which brought anger to the Plainsmen... Their children were crying for food. They were hungry and the Indian agent refused to give food." Fred Horse quoted in Stonechild and Waiser, *Loyal Till Death*, 114.

¹⁶⁸ Editorial, "The North-West Trouble," *Montreal Star*, 16 May 1885. The reader may recall that Morris too wrote in his account of Treaty Three that the "presence of troops" at the negotiations "exercised a moral influence." Morris, *The Treaties of Canada*, 51-52. Despite the *Star's* anti-capital punishment position, the paper publicized the "Indian executions." "Indian Participants Meet Their Doom," *Montreal Star*, 27 November 1885.

¹⁶⁹ "North-West Indians: Denial of Sensational Stories," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 18 January 1886, 1.

¹⁷⁰ "To Overawe the Indians," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 28 January 1886, 6.

those concerned with the management of the Indians in the North-West Territories.”¹⁷¹

Cameron charged that

the officials of the Department are by no means reliable witnesses. Those who offended against the Indian; those who sinned against the Indian; those who robbed, cheated and swindled the Indian, as I shall establish before I sit down, and those who permitted the Indian of the North-West Territories to be frozen to death and starved to death, are not very reliable witnesses, are very unlikely to disclose their own misconduct and to admit their own criminality.¹⁷²

Cameron argued that Canadians and their government were “in honor bound to deal fairly and honestly” with the Indians. Instead in 1880, the “policy of starvation” was the official government policy.¹⁷³ Cameron argued, “It is a cruel and atrocious policy, it is a policy that ought not to prevail in any civilized country.”¹⁷⁴

According to Cameron, “We promised, and were under obligations to supply the Indians, just fresh from the plains, from which the buffalo had disappeared, with fresh beef, but instead of fresh beef, we supplied them with salt pork, though we could get fresh beef at from 8 to 15 cents per lb., and had to pay for pork, some of which was rusted at that, from 20 to 25 cents per lb.”¹⁷⁵ As early as 1883, Indian agent Herchmer informed the government that “beef is life to the Indian, while salt pork is disease and death to him.”¹⁷⁶ Cameron further charged that Dewdney argued in response “that a little starvation would do the Indians good.” In fact, Dewdney declared, “that if they did not eat salt pork they might die and be damned with them.”¹⁷⁷

Much sickness and many deaths resulted from bad flour and a lack of fresh meat. Cameron charged that there were deaths from starvation in different places and at different times. In 1883, Treaty Four Indians were also suffering. According to Cameron:

10 per cent. of all the Indians on the Indian Head reserve died through starvation in six months (that is 20 per cent. per annum)... I charge still further: That many of the Indians at the File Hills died of starvation last winter, that seven children of those Indians died within two months last winter; and that those facts were made

¹⁷¹ Canada, *House of Common Debates*, 15 April 1886, 718. (Cameron quoting Macdonald)

¹⁷² Canada, *House of Common Debates*, 15 April 1886. (Cameron).

¹⁷³ Canada, *House of Common Debates*, 15 April 1886.

¹⁷⁴ Canada, *House of Common Debates*, 15 April 1886, 725.

¹⁷⁵ Canada, *House of Common Debates*, 15 April 1886, 722-723.

¹⁷⁶ Canada, *House of Common Debates*, 15 April 1886, 723. (Cameron quoting Herchmer).

¹⁷⁷ Canada, *House of Common Debates*, 15 April 1886, 725. (Cameron).

known to Commissioner Dewdney, and that he instructed the agent to go to the reserve to warn the Indians that if they disclosed to the public their misery, hunger and starvation their rations would be stopped.¹⁷⁸

Disclosure of starvation was met with the threat that rations would be stopped altogether.

Confirming oral history, Cameron charged that in 1883 Treaty Seven Indians were issued poisoned flour: there were "reports that the flour supplied to the Indians there was unwholesome and unfit for human food, and still more, that it was the cause of death of a large number of those Indians."¹⁷⁹ Mr. Ferguson (Leeds) presented himself as a medical man and "eyewitness" who having passed through the country once, attributed the deaths not to bad flour but to the Indians' "specially filthy habits."¹⁸⁰ When children starved it was because their parents ate all their provisions. He stated

Now the buffalo has gone, and the Indian is on his reservation, and he gets his pound of beef and pound of flour a day, for every soul in his family. When the beef is carried to the camp the Indian head of family, in which we will say, there are five persons, sits down to the meal, and the chances are that he eats the whole five pounds before he gets up. He will roll about on the ground for the next four or five hours, like a snake in the grass before he is able to get up. There are hundreds of these men to-day who have charge of families, and who can get these large rations, that are suffering from chronic dyspepsia, the result of over-eating and no exercise, and the children who have nothing to eat are starved by their own parents.¹⁸¹

As we have seen from oral history accounts, the reverse was true. Ferguson's assertions animalized Indian fathers as snakes who gorged themselves and starved their own children. Ferguson's speech functioned to support the state, which according to him provided ample rations that needed to be properly distributed by Indian fathers. As we will see, Ferguson's speech also provided further justification for the removal of Indian children from their families. According to his testimony Indian parents could not be trusted to feed their children.

Sir Hector Langevin spoke in defense of state policy and argued that there had been no "cruel treatment of the Indians."¹⁸² He stated that the government had the

¹⁷⁸ Canada, *House of Common Debates*, 15 April 1886, 725.

¹⁷⁹ Canada, *House of Common Debates*, 15 April 1886, 734.

¹⁸⁰ Canada, *House of Common Debates*, 15 April 1886, 739 (Ferguson). For press support of Ferguson's claims, see Editorial, "Indian Wrongs," *Saskatchewan Herald*, 10 May 1886, 2.

¹⁸¹ Canada, *House of Common Debates*, 15 April 1886, 739 (Ferguson). 740.

¹⁸² Canada, *House of Common Debates*, 15 April 1886, 730 (Hector Langevin).

support of the electorate and would continue to have that support: “when we appeal to the country our conduct will be endorsed by an overwhelming majority in support of the Government.”¹⁸³ In defense of the government policy of using food to force Indians onto reserves, Langevin argued, “if you do not, by means of their rations, compel them to go on their reserves, how will you get them there?”¹⁸⁴ Of starvation, Langevin argued that

If certain Indians have been frozen to death or starved to death, those were accidents such as have occurred in all parts of the world when food has been wanting. They were not the fault of the Government or the officials of the government...The provisions that were sent to those Indians were handed to them; but...know that you may give provisions to Indians to-day sufficient for two days, and within twenty-four hours they will all be gone. We do not propose to expend large sums of money to give them food from the first day of the year to the last. We must give them *enough to keep them alive*; but the Indians must, under the regulations that have been sanctioned by Parliament, go to their reserves and cultivate their land. They must provide partially for their wants. And therefore, *if, by accident an Indian should starve, it is not the fault of the Government nor the wish of the Government.*¹⁸⁵

Langevin’s logic exonerated government policy and government officials, and blamed the Indians for their own suffering.

The previous year when Cameron had raised these concerns, “the First Minister replied in these words: ‘The hon gentleman says there is fraud on the Indians because the food is imperfect. It cannot be considered a fraud on the Indians because they have no right to that food. They are simply living on the benevolence of the Canadian Parliament, and as the old adage says, beggars should not be choosers.’”¹⁸⁶ This formulation collapsed relief for Indians together with the urban poor, but the latter had never signed treaties with the state and crown, or listened to state and crown negotiators who spoke in the language of duty and benevolence and promised provisions to ward off famine and suffering. The lofty language of benevolence and humanitarianism as represented by Alexander Morris, the chief negotiator on behalf of the state, was absent when state policies were explained and defended.

¹⁸³ Canada, *House of Common Debates*, 15 April 1886, 730.

¹⁸⁴ Canada, *House of Common Debates*, 15 April 1886, 730.

¹⁸⁵ Canada, *House of Common Debates*, 15 April 1886, 730.

¹⁸⁶ Canada, *House of Common Debates*, 15 April 1886, 738 (Cameron quoting Macdonald).

Not all Canadians were in agreement with the military approach, but even critics of government policy were entangled in the metaphysics of imperialism and Indian-hating. The military approach was critiqued in the article "Bread vs Bullets" reprinted from the *Ottawa Free Press* by the *Montreal Daily Witness*. The article argued that "instead of the government sending a flying column of bullets to the Indians, it looks as if it should send bread. It is cheap to call Indians a worthless lazy lot; but thoughtful and humane men will hesitate in passing a sweeping condemnation."¹⁸⁷ At the same time, the article argued that it was the hunter's instinct that made tilling the soil difficult and unsuccessful. So while the article appeared to be sympathetic, it was fueled by racist social Darwinist ideas that masked Indian farming successes as well as the material, social and political impediments to sustained success.¹⁸⁸ But the *Ottawa Free Press* and the *Montreal Daily Witness* were willing to name and critique government policy.¹⁸⁹ The "dominion's duty is to supply these people with a reasonable proportion of food and not deliberately murder them by slow starvation."¹⁹⁰ This demonstrates that there were white contemporaries who believed that food in sufficient quantities should be made available and that keeping people on the verge of starvation was a way of killing slowly, if not outright. It also demonstrates that there was a gulf between ideal and practice. In the treaty negotiations, state officials used the language of duty and benevolence but the state failed to translate this language into just treatment.

Even those calling for just and humane treatment viewed justice through a Protestant and Anglo-Saxon lens in which Indians were savages to be converted and trained into European middle-class definitions of self-reliance. In June of 1886, the General Presbyterian Synod, held in Hamilton, initially¹⁹¹ condemned the Canadian government's "administration of the Indian Affairs in the North-West." It reproached the

¹⁸⁷ "Bread Vs Bullets," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 20 March 1886, 3.

¹⁸⁸ Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests*.

¹⁸⁹ On another report which argued that "Indians must be provided for" see, "Parliamentary Notes: The Food Supply in the North-West," *Montreal Herald*, 25 May 1887, 5.

¹⁹⁰ "Bread Vs Bullets," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 20 March 1886, 3.

¹⁹¹ According to the *Saskatchewan Herald* editorial, "Some of the principal members of the Presbyterian General Assembly that recently met in Winnipeg paid a visit to the reserves, and finding that their preconceived notions were all wrong had the courage to acknowledge their error and give credit to the Government for good intentions and happy results." See, Editorial, "The Food Supply," *Saskatchewan Herald*, 9 July 1887, 2.

government for supplying “stinking” flour and “half-rotten” potatoes and barley.¹⁹² The Reverend Principal Cavan stated that

the sight of a great nation, strong as we are, going out to destroy these poor creatures was a sad one, and if a nation which was capable of spending \$5, 000, 000 [the cost of the 1885 mobilization] to do these poor creatures an injury would not do its best to redress their grievances, that nation was not fit to live...I feel that we have been guilty of a national sin, and if we do not repent we will be punished as a nation, and a worse thing will come upon us if we do not mend our doings.

Not only was it a national disgrace, but the methods and practices employed by the administrators of Indian Affairs in the North-West “proved the most serious obstacle in the way of the efforts of missionaries to Christianize the Indians in that territory.”¹⁹³

The lecture by the Superintendent of the Presbyterian churches of Canada, Rev. S. Robertson, published and circulated by the *Montreal Daily Witness* represented recent events in this way. He argued that “the whites killed off the buffalo and the Indians are starving.”¹⁹⁴ Indians viewed “themselves face to face with a race that threatened to exterminate them.” They regarded “the government as untrue to its treaty obligations.”¹⁹⁵ Robertson argued that “Canada waging war against Indians turns its people into barbarians.” Humane principles were necessary in order for Christians to maintain their position at the apex of civilization. Christian people were required to deal with others with “Christian principles.” This same reasoning was used by SPCA advocates to support their cause: men had a duty to the lower animals in part because cruelty to animals brutalizes men and lowers their status in the hierarchical ordering of the Christian moral universe. The supremacy of Protestant Anglo-Saxons required the ethical treatment of those who were at their mercy. Rev. Robertson’s solution was “to Christianize them and teach them self-reliance.” Assimilation was a Christian and humanitarian response to the colonial problem. The idea of teaching Indians “self-reliance” served to mitigate critiques of the state’s failure to fulfill its treaty promises.

¹⁹² Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec a Montreal, “The Administration of Indian Affairs in the North-West,” Mflm B524 no.54185, 1886.

¹⁹³ Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec a Montreal, “The Administration of Indian Affairs in the North-West,” Mflm B524 no.54185, 1886.

¹⁹⁴ “The Indians of the North-West,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 15 February 1886, 5.

¹⁹⁵ “The Indians of the North-West,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 15 February 1886, 5.

Robertson's appeal was made "on the grounds of patriotism, humanity, religion and morality."¹⁹⁶

Other writers echoed Cameron's concern about the lack of justice and humanity. In its editorial "A Broken Promise," the *Montreal Herald* argued

The just and humane treatment of the Aborigines is one of the most sacred duties dwelling upon a Government that annexes their territory and deprives them of their customary mode of living... The Indians of the North-West, accustomed to the gentle rule and honorable dealings of the Hudson's Bay Company, received the promises of the Canadian Government's commissioners with a confidence that time has not justified. The reports of travelers, disinterested residents, missionaries, and others, all point to the fact that the dealings with, and the treatment of, the Indians has not been in accordance with the promises of the Government, or the intentions of the Canadian people.¹⁹⁷

Like other critics of government policies, the *Herald* advocated a kind of ethical colonization, wherein Government promises to do its moral duty by its Indian brother were fulfilled. "Knowing that such a people as the Canadians, who prided themselves on the justice and humanity of their dealings with the Indians, would not be satisfied with a mere denial, Sir John met the charge [that government maladministration had led to the 1885 rebellion] with a promise of a full and impartial inquiry." But Sir John did not keep his word. "To say nothing of justice and humanity; though on these points the people are sensitive for their reputation before the world; the safety of our people in the North-West, and the frightful scenes that follow the outbreak of exasperated Indians."¹⁹⁸ Successful settlement of the west required a peaceful and ethical colonization.

At the same time, the *Montreal Herald* editorial "Our Indians" argued that despite the expenditure, the incidents of 1885 showed that the "system did not result in making the Indians satisfied in their condition or in effectively providing for them. They were found to be hungry, dissatisfied, full of complaint and entirely demoralized; generally speaking, useless inhabitants of the dominion."¹⁹⁹ The editorial reiterated a critique of the treaties that had been expressed since their signing. The *Herald* argued that "the treaties were framed for others... Had there been less desire to obtain an excuse for immediate occupation of the country and a greater desire concerning the future of the

¹⁹⁶ "The Indians of the North-West," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 15 February 1886, 5.

¹⁹⁷ Editorial, "A Broken Promise," *Montreal Herald*, 18 January 1887, 4.

¹⁹⁸ Editorial, "A Broken Promise," *Montreal Herald*, 18 January 1887, 4.

¹⁹⁹ Editorial, "Our Indians," *Montreal Herald*, 6 August 1887, 4.

Indians, the treaties would have been of a different character."²⁰⁰ But the fact of the Canadian colonization of Indian lands and the moral duty and concern for the Indians was evaded: the paper also argued that Indians were "lazy creatures" akin to gamblers and beggars who got money without working. "All this tends to prove that the Indian will not work unless compelled." In step with their contemporaries, the newspaper advocated the establishment of boarding schools for Indian children "to remove them from pernicious influences."²⁰¹ Humanitarians argued that Indians should be compelled to work and their children should be removed: these were the solutions that civilization proposed to deal with poverty and its attendant dangers on the plains and in the cities.

Indeed, the emerging child-saving movement was heralded by some contemporaries as a humane way to solve the colonial problem. On the one hand, the rise of the movement for the protection of children in the 1880s was presented as a precedent for the protection of Indians. William McDougall argued that the "courts protect infants" but "a child of the forest" is "compelled to surrender his birthright for a miserably inadequate compensation."²⁰² But instead of adequate or ample compensation, humanitarians proposed, in the spirit of child-saving, that a remedy to the colonial problem would be the removal of Indian children from their parents. According to the *Montreal Daily Witness*, "The game is coming to an end and the Indians will have to be otherwise provided for, or they will soon become a problem to the State that will scarce be solved without immense injustice and no little bloodshed."²⁰³ Clearly, the *Witness* was concerned about justice. Their conception of justice for Indians was articulated in a way that matched their understanding of poverty on their city streets. The editorial argued that "Subsistence by charity is demoralizing to white men, and we presume it is likewise so for Indians, even when the alms are known by the name of presents and held to be payment for lands considered to have been once corporately owned by their tribes."²⁰⁴ Treaty payments were not taken seriously by critics.²⁰⁵ The editorial

²⁰⁰ Editorial, "Our Indians," *Montreal Herald*, 6 August 1887, 4.

²⁰¹ Editorial, "Our Indians," *Montreal Herald*, 6 August 1887, 4.

²⁰² "Our Indians," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 29 January 1886, 1.

²⁰³ Editorial, "Can the Indians Be Civilized," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 24 November 1879, 4.

²⁰⁴ Editorial, "Can the Indians Be Civilized," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 24 November 1879, 4.

²⁰⁵ See also, Editorial, "Our Indian Policy," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 7 August 1879, 4; Editorial, "Our Indian Brother," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 10 September 1879, 4; Editorial, "Our Indians," *Montreal Gazette*, 5 January 1880, 2.

suggested that hunters be transformed into herdsmen and their children be removed from them and educated. "Taken young enough and kept under proper governance, they need not be offensive to others, and as the object is to wean them from their savage manners."²⁰⁶ The removal and remolding of children was envisioned similarly in the city and on the plains.

Key components of the child-saving movement in the 1880s were the intrusion of the state into family life and the removal of children from their families and communities.²⁰⁷ These practices were not meant to be punitive, but rather were part of the vanguard of contemporary humanitarian thought and practice. In a letter to the editor of the *Montreal Daily Witness* "from someone who understands the subject" the writer argued against those who "say shoot them and be done with them" because "the country can't stand the expense." Instead the letter writer suggested that it would be cheaper to establish industrial schools, to send Indian children to these schools and to prevent them from returning to their people.²⁰⁸ The following month, an article entitled "Do Indians Ever Laugh" reprinted from *American Missionary* in the *Witness*, also focused on children. The author, M.C. Collins asserted Indian humanity. "They are human. They are men and women. As a race they are neither treacherous nor lazy, but there are of course among them some who are both just as there are among us."²⁰⁹ The US school books needed to be revised because "a history that makes a statement that Indians feel no pain is not a history fit for use for boys and girls." Collins argued that "the Indians laugh and cry, they eat and sleep, they walk and run, they talk and think and have hands and feet. There are children among them. They are not born grown up with tomahawk in hand, ready to go on the warpath. Let us *save* the youth, and do help the old men and women."²¹⁰ In Canada, church-run residential schools were made compulsory in 1894. They were meant to civilize, assimilate and Christianize Indian children, they were presented as a humanitarian solution to the colonial problem.

²⁰⁶ Editorial, "Can the Indians Be Civilized," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 24 November 1879, 4.

²⁰⁷ Michael B. Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1986), 114-115.

²⁰⁸ Letter to the Editor, "Our North-West Indians," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 8 June 1886, 6.

²⁰⁹ "Do Indians Ever Laugh?" *Montreal Daily Witness*, 3 July 1886, 3.

²¹⁰ "Do Indians Ever Laugh?" *Montreal Daily Witness*, 3 July 1886, 3. Emphasis added.

1888

It is important to demonstrate that suffering and hunger continued in the post-1885 period and that rhetoric, arguments and practices remained unchanged by the charges of hunger, deaths by starvation and inhumane government practices. In February of 1888, there were again reports on “Starving Indians” and on the “terrible distress among the Indians of the North-West of Canada”. On February 25 1888, chief Alexandre of Lac la Nonne, chief Michel of Sturgeon Lake and the chief of Lake of St. Anne’s, (Alberta bands of Treaty Six) sent the following telegram to Sir John A. Macdonald:

We are starving, we cannot get help from our agency – have killed some of the cattle on reserve to save our lives. So far we don’t want to kill any more but will have to unless we get help at once. We don’t want to break the law but we and our children are dying of hunger, we ask for a commission to investigate the truth of what we say but need food at once.²¹¹

The Toronto press report on the meeting between Hayter Reed, as assistant Indian Commissioner and the chiefs Alexandre and Michel, noted that the chiefs “severely reproached” Reed but the paper did “not reproduce these reproaches.”²¹² Nonetheless, the report does afford access to some of the chiefs’ words. Chief Alexandre was quoted as saying that hunger had driven them to kill their cattle, and “hunger might make us kill each other. It is as if you were pushing us to do evil.”²¹³ Chief Michel said they never received an answer to their telegram. Ma-me-na-wa-ta of the Stony Plain said:

I have been called a coward for not killing cattle. It is true. I am a coward and have killed none. I am glad to see you are here, and am surprised you have come now when everything is scarce. This one and that one is naked. The wives are freezing for lack of clothing. Why is the clothing now lying in the store on the reserve not distributed? When you go those you leave behind will not do as you promise. If your promises are not carried out after you leave I will kill cattle as others do. The only way to get anything out of the agent you sent us is to flatter him. I have always wanted you to look favorably on me. You put an egg –the law- into my hand. I did not break it and neither have the others. We are trying to gain what the Queen promised us.²¹⁴

²¹¹ FNUC, Department of Indian Affairs, RG 10, v. 3794, f. 46 205, Canadian Pacific Railway Company’s Telegraph, 23 February 1888.

²¹² FNUC, Department of Indian Affairs, RG 10, v. 3794, f. 46 205, *Toronto Globe* clipping dated 28-3-88.

²¹³ FNUC, Department of Indian Affairs, RG 10, v. 3794, f. 46 205, *Toronto Globe* clipping dated 28-3-88.

²¹⁴ FNUC, Department of Indian Affairs, RG 10, v. 3794, f. 46 205, *Toronto Globe* clipping dated 28-3-88.

Indigenous leaders continued their attempts to get the state to deliver on its treaty promises while acting within the bounds of Canadian law, although clearly as Tootoosis had argued, it was as though the state was trying through its inhumane policies to provoke trouble and justify its subjugation of indigenous people. Mr. Jim said, “he had been used to working for the whites. This winter he could get no work. There was no game and no fish, and he had nearly starved to death depending on the Indian Department. He did not go to the whites to sell his country. They came to him to buy it, and now they would not pay the price.”²¹⁵

As a result, the children suffered. Another councilor was quoted as saying that he was a coward, “but when I hear my children cry from hunger I kill cattle. I think of you as the cold: you want to kill all on the reserves.”²¹⁶ Chief Alexandre was quoted as stating:

You were sent word last spring about sickness on the reserves. On my reserve many died of sickness and hunger. Medicine is no use without food. Thirty have died on my own reserve, and fifteen besides. Five of my own children have died, most of them grown up. I sent word everyday, and you did nothing for me. You think what I say of sickness is not true. I tell you in your ears you lie when you say you take the part of sick children.²¹⁷

Hunger and deaths from starvation continued. The rhetoric of the duty toward children was exposed as a posture when many children died from privation.

This dire situation was investigated and the official response was denial. The report for the investigation dated 5 April 1888 was in regard to allegation of starvation on a number of reserves (Lake of St. Anne’s or Alexis, Alexandre’s, Enoch’s, Wahsatahnow, Saddle Lake, Whitefish and Goodfish Lake, Lac la Biche and Beaver Lake, all Edmonton and Victoria²¹⁸ agencies of Treaty Six). The investigation found that “any real hardship suffered was confined to one or two bands, and lasted only for a comparatively short time.”²¹⁹ The state absolved itself of any responsibility because any suffering that did occur “could not have been foreseen by the government.”²²⁰ Indians

²¹⁵ FNUC, Department of Indian Affairs, RG 10, v. 3794, f. 46 205, *Toronto Globe* clipping dated 28-3-88.

²¹⁶ FNUC, Department of Indian Affairs, RG 10, v. 3794, f. 46 205, *Toronto Globe* clipping dated 28-3-88.

²¹⁷ FNUC, Department of Indian Affairs, RG 10, v. 3794, f. 46 205, *Toronto Globe* clipping dated 28-3-88.

²¹⁸ Later renamed Pakan, Alberta.

²¹⁹ FNUC, Department of Indian Affairs, Hayter Reed, RG 10, v. 3794, f. 46 205, 5 April 1888, 3.

²²⁰ FNUC, Department of Indian Affairs, Hayter Reed, RG 10, v. 3794, f. 46 205, 5 April 1888, 3.

were blamed for their own suffering: Hayter Reed argued that “such Indians as admittedly ensured a certain amount of hardships was largely due to their failure to exert themselves.”²²¹ He denied that there was any real destitution because men were unwilling to work for \$1 a day, although women did. As critics of poor relief argued in Montreal, if men were truly in need they would be willing to work for \$1 a day; their unwillingness to do so was proof that there was no need.²²²

In late March, the allegations against the government were dropped. It appeared that “the Indians who recently spoke so saucily to Reed now confess that they were prompted to do so by white men, and did not speak their minds and now regret it.”²²³ It is possible that as Cameron had charged in 1886, Indians who dared to publicize the starving conditions on their reserves were threatened to have all rations cut. Exposing the starvation policies of the Department of Indian Affairs presented a greater risk and even more suffering. Most of the men “had taken back their words” but chief Alexandre, who would not, “will have to be carefully watched for some time.”²²⁴ Privation, enforced silence, and surveillance were the tactics that this age of civilization employed to meet the suffering of those to whom it had pledged to be merciful.

Concluding Remarks

What does the evidence presented in this chapter tell us about the moral foundations of the nation? First of all, it is not presentist to ask these questions because contemporaries articulated a vision of ethical colonization. Morris, whose text has been the official interpretation of treaties, (to the detriment of the First Nations because he inscribed the treaties as land surrenders rather than peace treaties), used a language of benevolence and justice. In practice, the state failed to live up to the promise held out by that language. Some contemporary critics also spoke in similar terms and demanded that the government put its model into practice. But government supporters abandoned that language when they defended the Canadian Indian policy of starvation. Like the urban poor, Indians were often blamed for their own suffering. Yet, critics of government

²²¹ FNUC, Department of Indian Affairs, Hayter Reed, RG 10, v. 3794, f. 46 205, 5 April 1888, 11-12.

²²² FNUC, Department of Indian Affairs, Hayter Reed, RG 10, v. 3794, f. 46 205, 5 April 1888, 6 & “The Poor,” *Montreal Daily Witness*, 2 February 1876.

²²³ FNUC, Department of Indian Affairs, RG10, v. 3794, f. 46205, newspaper clipping, *Qu'Appelle Progress* 29 March 1888.

²²⁴ FNUC, Indian Agent in Edmonton to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Regina, April 28 1888.

policy conceived of kindness and humanitarianism as assimilation and civilization, which resulted in policies like work for rations and residential schools both of which were meant to teach industrial work discipline. These strategies worked to support Anglo-Saxon supremacy and political ascendancy over indigenous people and their lands. Cloaked by contemporary visions of justice and benevolence, ultimately, these, too, were strategies of domination.

Conclusion

What does it mean to say that humanitarianism is a discourse of ruling? In the third quarter of the nineteenth century, humanitarians in Canada framed their approach to social and political problems in terms of the fulfillment of an ethical responsibility, embodied in the duty to help a starving stranger. In the 1870s and 1880s, this ethic of protection was advocated and implemented across a wide spectrum of concerns and problems. The language of humanitarianism was employed by both voluntary organizations in the east and by government officials in the west. Humanitarianism was represented by its adherents as ethical, just, kind, and therefore befitting a civilized nation. Humanitarian discourses derived their ability to mobilize and legitimize in part because of the righteousness of humanitarian language, its emotive power and its moral capital. At its core, humanitarianism contained a hierarchical logic regarding the humanitarian's superiority over those in need of protection. This dissertation demonstrates how humanitarianism was an enabling discourse for social intervention, state formation and colonial expansion. In this history, kindness emerges as a strategy for domestication, institutionalization, and subjugation of people and animals.

Even by its own standards, the age that espoused humanitarianism was not very humane. Canada's inhumane Indian policy has been a long acknowledged fact in the protest narratives to the Canadian historical canon, including those by Harold Cardinal in *Unjust Society* (1969), Howard Adams in *Prison of Grass* (1975), and John L. Tobias in "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree, 1879-1885" (1983). Nonetheless, the idea of Canadian Indian policy as humane and benevolent continues to be circulated and remains a popular conception, despite critical intervention by some historians. This is most clearly illustrated in the recent Heritage Minute featuring Sitting Bull.¹ In it, Canada is represented as a haven of honesty and justice in contrast to the United States. The Heritage Minute depicts a meeting on the "Saskatchewan Montana Border 1877," and highlights Sitting Bull telling General Alfred H. Terry that NWMP Commissioner McLeod and Major James Walsh were "the first white men who never lied to us." In the

¹ "Sitting Bull." *Historica Minutes: History by the Minute*.

<http://www.histori.ca/minutes/minute.do?id=10174> For recent popular history, see, Ian Anderson, *Sitting Bull's Boss: Above the Medicine Line with James Morrow Walsh* (Surrey, BC: Heritage House, 2000); For classic accounts, see, Sharon Pollock *Walsh* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1973) & Grant MacEwan, *Sitting Bull: The Years in Canada* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1973).

voiceover at the end, McLeod states that he “didn’t know then” that the Sioux would be “starved out of Canada...and Sitting Bull would be murdered.” Two years later when the buffalo failed to return to the Canadian prairies, Canada still refused to issue rations to Sitting Bull’s people. It was Canada’s cruel policy that starved out the Sioux. The Heritage Minute demonstrates that it is possible to broadcast Canada’s starvation policy and still make Canadians appear benevolent. The persistence of this myth indicates Canadians’ attachment to this story. It makes the narrative recorded on these pages all the more important.

This dissertation set out to explore the content of humanitarianism, how it was historically constituted, defined, and for what it reveals about humanitarian sentiment and practices. This work contributes to our understanding of Canadian history by placing central and eastern Canadian responses to reports of starvation on the plains under scrutiny, within its broader historical context, and in relation to a wider history of humanitarianism in Canada in the 1870s and 1880s. It does so by exploring middle-class Protestant responses to hunger and need among poor urban families in Montreal. This history of humanitarianism also considers the treatment of animals. It explores the rise of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals movement in 1869 in Montreal as well as the disappearance of the buffalo from the Canadian prairies by 1879. I bridge these histories of east and west to present a preliminary history of the moral foundations of the nation.

This narrative began an analysis of the rise of Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (CSPCA) in 1869. Rather than an anomaly or contradiction, the SPCA movement fit into the emerging capitalist and colonial order. Its concerns, representations and solutions were in step with the larger processes of its day. The SPCA movement was cruel to man as it attempted to be kind to beasts.² As writers elevated

² The *Montreal Star* reprinted a story from a London paper which reported that there were 300 applicants for the vacant post of secretary of the RSPCA. Sixty applicants were “invited to give up [their] half-holiday” and waited up to four hours to “undergo a personal inspection” by the committee. The report argued that “it was rather cruel of the Society to prepare this disappointment for the expectant candidates, and the mental pang was not lessened by the physical inconvenience of having to wait in a large cold hall.” The correspondent believed “that more considerate treatment was to be expected from this particular Society ...whose mission it is to teach that a merciful man must be merciful to his beast. Why not then to his correspondence clerk?” According the *Montreal Star* editor, there was a “good moral to be drawn” from the story. Kindness to animals did not necessarily translate to kindness to one’s fellow man. “Editorial,” *Montreal Star*, 18 October 1872, 2.

animals, other human groups were dehumanized, or their humanity was questioned.³ The working-class were seen as “uncivilized” for their inhumane treatment of animals, while the middle-class practices was largely exempt from critique.

In comparisons between humans and animals, animals were heralded as more worthy.⁴ Consider the following “Touching Anecdote of a Spider” printed in the *Montreal Star*’s “Natural history” column”:

Mr. Moggridge in his studies in natural history has been in the habit of immersing, for preservation, his different specimens of spiders and ants in bottles of alcohol. He saw that they struggled for a few minutes; but he thought that the sensation was soon extinguished, and they were soon free from suffering. On one occasion he wished to preserve a large female spider and twenty four of her young ones, that he had captured. He put the mother in a bottle of alcohol, and saw that after a few moments she folded up her legs upon her body, and was at rest. He then put into the bottle the young ones, who, of course, manifested acute pain. What was his surprise to see the mother arouse herself from her lethargy, dart around to, and gather her young ones to her bosom, fold her legs over them, again relapse into insensibility, until at last death came to her relief, and the limbs, no longer controlled by this maternal instinct, released their grasp and became dead. The effect of the exhibition upon him is a lesson to our common humanity. He has never since repeated the experiment, but has applied chloroform before immersion. Judging from the above, the spider is certainly superior to the human animal, in the fact that alcohol does not destroy her natural affection.⁵

Although this cruel experiment was a demonstration of the “common humanity” between man and beast, the spider was also represented as superior to her human counterpart. To cast some animals as more noble than humans, served to malign, and rather than foster sympathy for either human or animal suffering. In Chapter Two, I suggest that it was these kinds of representations that made some mothers vulnerable to losing their children.

In an era when civilized man expanded the boundaries of his sympathy to embrace animals, there was a hardening of attitudes toward the poor. Reformers, critics, writers, and philanthropists did not provide a systemic analysis for poverty. The poor

³ As a western example, the reader may recall Professor Hind’s 1860 argument that “man in his savage, untutored, and heathen state shows both in deed and expression how little he is superior to the noble beasts he so wantonly and cruelly destroys.” Henry Youle Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857 and of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition of 1858, Vol. 1* (1860. Reprint. New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 358-359.

⁴ This evidence supports Kathleen Kete’s *The Beast in the Boudoir: Petkeeping in Nineteenth-Century Paris*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

⁵“Touching Anecdote of a Spider,” *Montreal Star*, 19 February 1874, 1.

themselves were blamed for not making provision. "Beasts in the field know better."⁶ Bruce Bellingham argues that "imagery ascribing a feral or beastly nature to the poor functioned as a technique to pre-empt normal responses such as guilt or compassion."⁷ When editors argued that "vagabondage" was the "waste material of humanity" they reduced and dehumanized people in need.⁸ In sharp contrast to the emerging noble qualities of animals, representations of the poor were informed by distrust, suspicion and disdain for the supplicant. The tramp and the beggar became objects of suspicion and scorn. Harsher penalties for vagrancy and philanthropic policies of "no work, no food", were seen as just rather than punitive policies. In Montreal, the rise of the movement for the protection of children emerged in this time period as a way to help. Through the Industrial Schools Act of 1869, it became possible, for the state to intervene and remove children from their parents. Historical evidence suggests that the reason these children were considered endangered or dangerous was their families' poverty. Evidence demonstrates that the call for the protection of children occurred within the context of the criminalization of poverty, and of poor parents in particular.

It was most unfortunate for the buffalo-hunting peoples of the western plains that when the buffalo disappeared, they faced the dominant culture's limited and severely constrained ideas of succor. Settler cultural notions about the uncertainty and waste of savage life were imagined in contrast to industrial work discipline, thrift and self-denial, and acted against the just treatment of indigenous people. Ideas that Indians either feasted or fasted functioned to normalize starvation conditions in the period following the destruction of the buffalo. The dominant culture's idea of help was not about sharing: relief was never intended to make the supplicant comfortable. Instead, work for rations and child-saving were advocated as humane solutions to the colonial problem.

The "food question" and the destruction of the buffalo was a central topic of discussion at the Treaty Six and Treaty Seven negotiations. In his official document, Morris never claimed that Indians were responsible for the disappearance of the herds. Instead, like other contemporaneous commentators, Morris recorded indigenous peoples'

⁶ Gail Hamilton, "Poor People," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 17 February 1873, 4.

⁷ Bruce Bellingham, "The 'Unspeakable Blessing': Street Children, Reform Rhetoric, and Misery in Early Industrial Capitalism," *Politics and Politics* 12, no. 3 (1983), 308.

⁸ "Vagabondage," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 15 February 1876.

apprehension about the destruction of the herds and their insistence that white officials protect the herds by regulating white hunters. Once the herds disappeared, history was rewritten. In the midst of starvation, Indians were blamed for destroying the buffalo, their own food source. It would take half a century before civilized man was reinstated by historians to his central role in the destruction of the herds and today, there is a resurgence of the century-old tale that implicates Indians in that destruction. I argue that these stories reflect the ongoing colonial project, more than they do primary historical documents.

Crossing Boundaries

My research cast a wide net across various fields of inquiry that are generally considered in isolation by historians. The work is not meant to be comparative; its themes are contemporaneous and contextually related. Attention to and analysis of a number of trajectories in the same time period, reveals similarities in language and ideas across a larger ideological landscape. Lateral analysis illuminates the replication of the underlying motifs of protection, duty, and civilization across diverse issues. In reading across categories of inquiry, it is possible to understand, for instance, how the protection of animals on one hand and the destruction of animals on the other, was not a paradox to late nineteenth century civilized man. (Both of these facts had a place in his understanding of his own ascendancy. Wild animals gave way to civilized man's railroads and ploughs. Civilized man placed himself at the apex of evolution and his hallmark was his sympathy for his domesticated beasts. The humane treatment of animals was a crucial symbol of his merciful rule and justified the colonization of indigenous land as well as middle-class control over uncivilized and brutal working-class men.)

Clearly, these histories are intermeshed. Consider the cultural anxiety surrounding working-class boys and cruelty to animals. As we have seen, kindness to animals was a sign of civilization while cruelty was projected onto savages. Boys, like savages, were considered to be at an earlier, less evolved developmental stage and required training in the habits of civilization, of which kindness to animals was an important principle. In Montreal, the CSPCA presented a two-pronged argument in its campaign against the employment of boys in animal-related industries: it was imagined that boys would be cruel to the animals under their charge or that boys would witness

cruelty in the course of their employment with animals. The CSPCA advocacy against the employment of boys also fit into new notions of childhood as a period of dependence, and a new ideal of civilized manhood which required an education different from that acquired by driving a horse. In the name of the protection of animals, working-class boys' employment opportunities were narrowed, restricted or stigmatized, and helped to reduce them to dependents. These developments were concurrent with the growing importance of the wage economy, and thus made boys vulnerable in new ways. In evoking the protection of children, youth became subject to disempowering restrictions, policing and the regulation of autonomy. I see this history as a cautionary tale which warns us to pay attention to what is called for under the rubric of the protection.⁹

The history inscribed in these pages is a living story. That is, it has not ended. It is a story of the present, of how things have come to be. It is not meant to be teleological since historical actors at every turn made decisions which altered the course of history, as this dissertation plainly demonstrates. My research maps a history of ideas about humanitarianism to animals and people, which continue to be meaningful in our day. Consider the recent anti-fur campaign at the University of Victoria where supporters of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) distributed anti-fur business cards with the words "what millennium are you living in?" written alongside a cartoon of a "caveperson" wearing a modern-day fur coat, holding a club in one hand and in the other, a handbag with "fifth avenue" emblazoned on it. The other side of this card reads, "It's been curtains for cavepeople for a long time now. Today, fur is a social liability that says that the wearer doesn't care about animals." In this instance, we see the continuity of ideas about evolution and ethics in which kindness to animals is presented as incongruent with wearing fur. Fur is stigmatized as a sign of cruelty to animals. Wearing fur is cast as prehistoric/savage, as something belonging to an earlier developmental stage, and presumably, as a fashion that should have become extinct along with the cavepeople who invented it. Arguments which depict the cruelty of the fur trade or link it to the destruction of animals betray their imperialist underpinnings because they draw on long-

⁹ For instance, in the case of present-day moral panics about child pornography, scholars and activists have argued how these discourses work to control youth sexualities. See, Brenda Cossman, Shannon Bell, Lise Gotell and Becki L. Ross, eds., *bad attitude/s on trial: Pornography, Feminism, and the Butler Decision* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1997), 38-42.

standing historical ideas which privilege the dominant culture's version of modernity and the appropriate use of animals.

It is also important to note how easily the anti-fur campaign can be circulated in contrast to PETA's failed attempt to stymie another more powerful animal-related industry. While free to disperse anti-fur propaganda on campus, the local *Monday* magazine reported that PETA had "failed to set up a billboard in the Victoria area criticizing KFC. Local outdoor advertising companies rejected the ad, which shows a blood-splattered Colonel Saunders look-alike holding a terrified chicken in one hand and brandishing a butcher knife in the other."¹⁰ This is reminiscent of the muzzling of late nineteenth-century anti-cruelty critics of the cattle industry. It continues to be harder to critique some animal-related industries, particularly capitalism's major players. Ideas that further dispossess indigenous people are easily circulated. Because animals cannot speak, it is all the more important to critically consider what is spoken and advocated in their name.

Humanitarianism to man, and more particularly to women, continues to be used to justify coercive practices, imperialist policies and the uneven distribution of power on a world-scale. The US and Canada have justified their intervention in Afghanistan at least in part by arguing about the need to rescue Afghan women. Although American reasons for going to war had much more to do with self-interest than humanitarianism, similarly, in Iraq, rescuing the Iraqi people from Saddam Hussein and acting as humanitarian saviours bringing democracy to these victims was a justification for an imperialist war.

Directions for future research

My focus on the west should not eclipse ongoing colonization in the east. My focus was a way to link east and west, to explore the eastern claim on the west (including Anglophone Protestant Montrealers), and to situate the narrative within its larger historical context of the emergence of the state and nation. My research confirms Sarah Carter's analysis which places colonial usurpation of the land and resources in Canada in the 1870s and 1880s as part of imperial and colonial land-grab¹¹, in which major European

¹⁰ "What's all the squawking about?" *Monday Magazine* 18 March 2004, 4.

¹¹ Sarah Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 102.

powers divided the world amongst themselves.¹² During those years, Montrealers did not need to look west to bear witness to the politics of colonization and dispossession. The struggle over the land and resources was ongoing in the east. On Montreal's south shore, the 1870s and 1880s were treacherous years for the Mohawk people in their now centuries-old resistance to colonial usurpation of their land and resources.¹³ In the 1870s, Chief Joseph Onasakenrat and other leaders were imprisoned and the people were terrorized when they challenged the Seminary's claim to their lands. Anti-Catholicism fueled the Protestant English daily coverage of the Seminary's "brutal treatment" of the Indians.¹⁴ But as we have seen in this history, Protestant officials administered savage policies (unfit for a civilized nation) in order to dispossess indigenous people in the west. It would be useful to further explore colonization of the east and the west and to place both within the larger history of European imperialism. Historical inquiry into the similarities between the "two founding nations" in the colonial project, with attention to the role of race and faith, would also serve to further illuminate this Canadian history of civilized man's humanity to man and beast.

In running away from my own past, I ran head-long into someone else's. In the process, my understanding and compassion for my own people was awakened. The Greek Orthodoxy that permeated the home of my childhood was a world full of supernatural wonders and powers, cast as backward and old fashioned by the dominant culture into which I was assimilated. I rejected that part of myself. In reading and studying to write this history, the world of my childhood home found resonance in narratives of the social and spiritual worlds of the Plains Cree.¹⁵ A rather circuitous route to self-understanding, but in the process I learned a lot, too, about the history of this nation I call home.

¹² Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire 1875-1914* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987), 57.

¹³ In our time, this struggle for justice is ongoing. Its most recent manifestation was in "the standoff" in 1990 as "the Oka Crisis." *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance*, Alanis Obomsawin, dir., National Film Board, 1993.

¹⁴ See for instance, Editorial, "The Oka Indians," *Montreal Herald*, 16 December 1875, 2; Editorial, "The Troubles At Oka," *Montreal Star*, 16 June 1877, 2."The Oka Troubles," *Montreal Star*, 18 June 1877, 2.

¹⁵ Neal McLeod came to the University of Victoria and spoke to my Special Topics in Canadian History, "Imperialism on the Canadian Prairies" in the fall term of 2002. We remarked more than once during our visit that in some ways the Nêhiyawak and Tholopotamousi were very much alike.

Sometimes we need to travel old ground to see with new eyes. Maybe we need to be told a story many times before we “get” it, before it makes a difference in how we live in the world. To begin again, we need an open heart and an open mind.

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Appendix A

Arrests for Cruelty to Animals

| Year | Men | Women | Total |
|-------|------|-------|-------|
| 1867 | 26 | 0 | 26 |
| 1868 | 59 | 0 | 59 |
| 1869 | 67 | 0 | 67 |
| 1870 | 69 | 0 | 69 |
| 1871 | 66 | 0 | 66 |
| 1872 | 99 | 0 | 99 |
| 1873 | 67 | 0 | 67 |
| 1874 | 59 | 0 | 59 |
| 1875 | 47 | 0 | 47 |
| 1876 | 63 | 0 | 63 |
| 1877 | 46 | 0 | 46 |
| 1878 | 45 | 0 | 45 |
| 1879 | 35 | 0 | 35 |
| 1880 | 22 | 0 | 22 |
| 1881 | 29 | 0 | 29 |
| 1882 | 42 | 0 | 42 |
| 1883 | 27 | 0 | 27 |
| 1884 | 14 | 0 | 14 |
| 1885 | 20 | 0 | 20 |
| 1886 | 22 | 0 | 22 |
| 1887 | 35 | 0 | 35 |
| 1888 | 51 | 0 | 51 |
| 1889 | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 1890 | 36 | 0 | 36 |
| Total | 1046 | 0 | 1046 |

Source: Annual Police Reports (1867-1890), City of Montreal Archives

Appendix B

Recorder's Court Annual Reports on Industrial School Admissions

- 1881 - 24 females under 14
- 1882 - 40 females under 14
- 1883 - 67 children "without proper guardianship" 21 males & 42 females & 4 protestants
sent to the Ladies Benevolent Society
- 1884 - 110 "children without proper guardianship" 53 males & 57 females
- 1885 - 7 "children without proper guardianship"
- 1886 - 10 "children without proper guardianship"
- 1887 - 35 "uncared for children"
- 1888 - 38 "uncared for children"
- 1889 - 80 "uncared for children"
- 1890 - 83 children, 61 boys and 22 girls,

Source: Recorder's Court Annual Reports, 1881-1890, City of Montreal Archives

Appendix C

Arrests for Cruelty to Children, Wife-Beating and Cruelty to Animals

| Year | Cruelty to Children | | | Wife-beating | | | Cruelty to Animals | | |
|--------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | <i>Men</i> | <i>Women</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Men</i> | <i>Women</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Men</i> | <i>Women</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| 1867 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 78 | 0 | 78 | 26 | 0 | 26 |
| 1868 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 54 | 0 | 54 | 59 | 0 | 59 |
| 1869 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 56 | 0 | 56 | 67 | 0 | 67 |
| 1870 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 79 | 0 | 79 | 69 | 0 | 69 |
| 1871 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 66 | 0 | 66 | 66 | 0 | 66 |
| 1872 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 91 | 0 | 91 | 99 | 0 | 99 |
| 1873 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 82 | 0 | 82 | 67 | 0 | 67 |
| 1874 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 91 | 0 | 91 | 59 | 0 | 59 |
| 1875 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 90 | 0 | 90 | 47 | 0 | 47 |
| 1876 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 82 | 0 | 82 | 63 | 0 | 63 |
| 1877 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 68 | 0 | 68 | 46 | 0 | 46 |
| 1878 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 60 | 0 | 60 | 45 | 0 | 45 |
| 1879 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 13 | 8 | 21 | 35 | 0 | 35 |
| 1880 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 26 | 0 | 26 | 22 | 0 | 22 |
| 1881 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 48 | 0 | 48 | 29 | 0 | 29 |
| 1882 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 45 | 0 | 45 | 42 | 0 | 42 |
| 1883 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 41 | 0 | 41 | 27 | 0 | 27 |
| 1884 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 31 | 0 | 31 | 14 | 0 | 14 |
| 1885 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 49 | 0 | 49 | 20 | 0 | 20 |
| 1886 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 23 | 0 | 23 | 22 | 0 | 22 |
| 1887 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 49 | 0 | 49 | 35 | 0 | 35 |
| 1888 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 57 | 0 | 57 | 51 | 0 | 51 |
| 1889 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 1890 | 0 | 0 | 0 | n/a | n/a | n/a | 36 | 0 | 36 |
| Totals | 4 | 11 | 15 | 1279 | 8 | 1287 | 1046 | 0 | 1046 |

Source: Annual Police Reports (1867-1890), City of Montreal Archives