A Brief History of 19th–20th Century Genocidal Indian Education in British Columbia and Oral History of Gitxsan Resistance and Resurgence

by

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BA, Vancouver Island University, 2015

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Supervisory Committee

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SmAlgyax words:

Guxsen: Hereditary Chief

Gwass Hlaam: Hereditary chief

Niishnolh: Hereditary Chief

Git: Gitxsan knowledge keeper

Umshewa: White person

Aluugigyet: Gitxsan person

Gitsenimx: Gitxsan language

SmAlgyax: Gitxsan language

Li'liget: Feast

Sigidim haanak': Female Chief

Simgigyet: Male Chief

Wilp: House Group

Lax yip: House territory

K'aas': Marrying within your clan

Ayook: Law

Adaawk: Family/Wilp histories

Ama gya'adihl hen: Be careful what you say

Ama gya'adihl win: Be careful what you do

Xsgook dim gukws haldim guutxwin hligook dim hlo'odiit 'niin: You have to pick yourself up before anyone respects you again

Kw'ootxw ga goodiit: Their heart is lost

Wilp siwilaaksa: House of learning

Ts’ins yeedinhl: Pass it on

Halayt: Medicine person

Simo’ogit Lax ha: Creator

k’aats: Inter clan relationships, marriage

Gitsegukla: Gitxsan Village

Gitanmaax: Gitxsan village

Gitanyow: Gitxsan Village

Gitwangak: Gitxsan Village

Acknowledgments

Prayer of Thanks (provided by Jane Smith)

Nigwoodim luu t'aat tsim lax ha gi
T'ooyaxs'y 'Niin
Aahl yajasxw go'ohl spagayt gan
T'ooyaxs'y 'Niin
ahl hl kuba ts'uuts' lim it
T'ooyaxs'y 'Niin
Aahl hon luu loot sim aks
T'ooyaxs'y 'Niin
Aahl ama gan didils sa gi namin loo'y
T'ooyaxs'y 'Niin Simo'ogit Lax ha gi
ahl up ahl ligi agwi
Hlaa wahl ama hluuhlxwin gal si yukw im

Wil ap nit dim gan wilt

T'ooyaxs'y 'Niin (Thank you) to:

The adoption agent who broke the rules to lead my father to his birth family so I could grow up learning what it means to be Gitxsan.

My brave and resilient parents, the best parents I could ever imagine. My extended relatives for making me who I am, a little bit redneck and always having fun.

My maternal grandmother, who I draw so much of my understanding of sacrifice from, who I honour in my life and promise I will heal my pain in ways she couldn't heal her own.

My granny Ligihlaa'm, Vera, who adopted this little Umshewa into her house and gave me a place in our feast system, and so much more.

My extended family in Gitxsan territory, especially my aunts xGwoimtxw, Sadie Harris, Marie Marshall, and Sally Jone and their children for welcoming me and holding space for me to learn, and encouraging me and Morgan to continue on our journeys as Gitxsan women.

My late uncle Garry Marshall, for all his stories, his beautiful and unending love for all his grandchildren. It is Garry who I owe my ability to roast and be roasted (a necessary tool of survival and healing).

My beautiful community of relatives, sisters, brothers, aunties, uncles and kick-ass accomplices here in Victoria, thanks for all the fun while planning the revolution.

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My supervisor, Dr. Vibert, for taking me on as a student last minute and pushing me to better articulate my opinions, Dr. Cook for supporting my ideas, Dr. Beam and Heather for all the support over the last two years.

And last and most importantly, my sister Morgan. She embodies everything I wish to be. And until I can be those things, she stands beside me and offers everything she is and I am not. I would be nothing without you, Morgan and I thank *Simo'ogit La<u>x</u> ha* every day for you.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Suffer the Little Children is not a product of 'scholarly detachment.' It was born of pain, entire lives of it, most immediately my family's and my own. Beyond that, its birth was induced by the suffering of my people as a whole, a suffering shared by each of the peoples indigenous to that portion of North America, our Great Turtle Island, now commonly referred to as 'Canada.' In every instance, the pain and suffering results from genocidal actions taken against us by the Canadian settler state, as a matter of policy and law for well over a century. Indeed, such policy-driven actions continue at present, albeit in somewhat altered form, and the toll continues to mount. - Tamara Starblanket, *Suffer the Children* 2017

My thesis argues that Indian education, in particular Indian Residential School (IRS), was genocidal policy in Canada, one aspect of the ongoing genocide of our people. I address the flaws and the success of this expression of Indian education and its impact in the historiography of Indian education and settler and Indigenous relations. I emphasize the importance of naming Indian education as an act of genocide in order to shed light on the significant harm inflicted on our people by colonial structures and systems. I name genocide in order to be able to also name ongoing colonial policy and actions as genocide today. I emphasize that the intent to destroy is embedded in the settler colonial structures and systems, setting aside the debate about intentions of particular historical actors or individuals as not significant to qualify genocidal acts in Canada. On 3 June 2019, the report on the MMIWG was released. This report named the current crisis of the thousands, and counting, Indigenous women who have been stolen or murdered as a genocide in Canada.[1]

This thesis was inspired by the need for Gitxsan experiences with Indian education to be shared, and the need for Gitxsan knowledge and laws to lead the way for our people into the

[1] National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls volume 1a*. https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1a-1.pdf. accessed July 5, 2019, 50.

future. Healing in our communities and on our land is paramount for healthy strong Gitxsan futures. Therefore, this thesis includes interviews with Gitxsan elders to illustrate the Gitxsan experience with Indian education. The most significant part of these interviews is the vision and pathway forward offered by the interviewees for Gitxsan people to heal and create strong and healthy Gitxsan futures.

Chapter two engages in a dialogue with the current literature on genocide studies and settler colonialism. I also provide an analysis of how Canada has responded to the legacy of Indian education with an inclusion of scholarly perspectives on Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This chapter then includes a critical and in-depth literature review of narratives of Indian education and IRS in the British Columbia historiography. The literature review frames the problems I see with current histories and the failures of non-Indigenous scholarship on settlement and the colonial/missionary history of British Columbia. It also outlines ways in which the field has evolved over time to include more Indigenous perspectives into British Columbia history and to counter settler-centric narratives in IRS history. Here I describe how language and misinformation can create devastating ripple effects for Indigenous people and how critical analysis of settler colonial history is necessary to understand the extent of harm inflicted by Indian education, subsequently allowing space to heal and address those wrongs.

In the third chapter, I rely on archival documents, including Indian Affairs records and church records, to explore the intentional and devastating steps taken in Indian education between the mid 19th and 20th centuries. Here I engage with evidence of the genocidal roots of the IRS system via government reports, including correspondence between government, church and Indian education administrators. I have a short section on the history of local missionaries in

Gitxsan territory and their influence on Indian education. This chapter conceptualizes, through an analysis of primary sources, some of the intentions and the impacts of Indian education.

Finally, I come to the Gitxsan perspectives on Indian education, IRS, resistance and survival. Chapter four centres on interviews with four Gitxsan elders and chiefs over a five-day trip to the Skeena Valley in December 2018. The Gitxsan elders shared stories about how IRS affected them, their families, their communities, and Gitxsan Nationhood. They shared stories of resistance and their current efforts to heal IRS survivors and to revitalize Gitxsan language, legal order, governance, and land-based responsibilities in their communities.

I am Gitxsan, Lax Seel from Gitanmaax from the house of Luutkudziiwus and Xsimwitjinn; my father is Lax Gibuu and my mother is of settler descent. My accountability to my family, community, and Nation (Gitxsan) and all Indigenous people is my commitment. It is my responsibility to tell the truth from an Indigenous person's perspective. In academic institutions that can be challenging. Though Indigenous perspectives are sometimes welcomed, they must be palatable for whiteness and diluted to be comprehensible for white Canadians. Therefore, telling the unrefined truth can make white Canadians feel very uncomfortable. Whiteness is commonly accepted to be synonymous with neutrality.[2] It is sewn into the fabric of our being that whiteness (in particular the white male) is assumed innocent in the creation of Canada and British Columbia. This is reiterated over and over in the Canadian and British Columbian historiography by means of unspoken assumptions and lines of inquiry not followed, intentionally or not, allowing the reader to engage with a history of BC that erases the genocidal intentions of settler colonialism. Settler colonialism as a concept, which is carried out in various

[2] Robin J. DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard For White People to Talk About Racism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018), 2.

ways over time and space is very often void in the historiography.[3] If and when the history and the continuation of colonialism is explored, the focus is most often on Indigenous people themselves, and their pain, suffering, and shortcomings. As explored in this thesis, not *often* in the field of history is the mirror turned on white society to answer for the harm inflicted on Indigenous people. Although there are a few examples of settler focused histories, as I discuss later on, the harm perpetuated by white liberal indifference in the majority of the historical narratives overrides the potential of good work.

Whiteness is not innocent. It is political to be white and in many Indigenous communities (urban and rural) whiteness is associated with sheer and limitless violence. Therefore, my research does not back away from this truth. I am white-skinned, I have all the privileges of being white. My mother's father was of pilgrim descent and migrated over to the west coast of the United States and heard of the "free" land being offered in the areas around Calgary. In the late 1880's Canada was "clearing the plains"[4] with policies of starvation and violent acts of dispossession, a process often synonymous with great loss of Indigenous life. My family benefitted from the death of Indigenous people and that family still owns the ranch and reaps the rewards of genocide. I can acknowledge the atrocities of my ancestors. Any white person has the ability to do so.[5]

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[3] A few examples include the following: Thirkell, Fred and Robert Scullion. *British Columbia 100 Years Ago: Portraits of a Province* (Surrey, B.C: Heritage House Pub. Co, 2002;2000); Jean Barman. *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia*. 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007); Patricia Roy and John Herd Thompson. *British Columbia: Land of Promises*. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2005); Jan Hare and Jean Barman. *Good Intentions Gone Awry: Emma Crosby and the Methodist Mission on the Northwest Coast.* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006)

[4] James W. Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*, New 2019 ed. (Regina, Saskatchewan: University of Regina Press, 2019).

[5] DiAngelo, *White Fragility*, 2.

In this thesis, I use the term genocide to describe the attempts of the Canadian government and all its accomplices to eradicate Indigenous peoples. The conscious effort to eliminate the collective existence of a people, i.e. Indigenous Nations, is genocide. The volume *Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America,* edited by Andrew Woolford, Jeff Benvenuto, and Alexander Laban Hinton re-conceptualizes genocide (from where it had been led astray) and challenges the common notion that there is a hierarchy of genocidal acts, the Holocaust often being at the top.

The following is an excerpt from Woolford, Benvenuto, and Hinton, referring to the colonial genocide in Canada via Indian Residential Schools (IRS): "The intentions and administration of Canada's residential school system, he stated [Justice Murray Sinclair], was an act of genocide. Building on Justice Sinclair's powerful charge, this volume begins with the specific legacy of Canadian residential schools in order to open up a larger discussion of colonial genocides in Indigenous North America." The authors continue,

> Seen through the lens of the Holocaust, the broader public and many academics consider genocide to be the most extreme form of violence imaginable. According to this widespread view, including other forms of destruction beside mass murder risks diluting the meaning of the term. In confronting this definitional challenge in his 2012 address, Justice Sinclair pointed to the 1948 United Nations convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide.
>
> The UN genocide convention, to which most Nations are now signatories, defines genocide as acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such, including the following:
>
> a) killing members of the group;
> b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
> c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
> d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
> e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group
>
> The international legal statute clearly lists several indirectly lethal acts in its definition, including ‘causing serious bodily or mental harm’ and ‘forcibly transferring children,’ all

> under the condition that these acts are committed with 'intent to destroy.' When thus measured against the stated intentions of residential school administrators - such as the Canadian Deputy Superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs, Duncan Campbell Scott, who in 1920 proclaimed, 'our objective is...to get rid of the Indian problem'... - Justice Sinclair's charge of genocide appears justified.[6]

Canada has continuously denied this legacy and has taken every route to evade the burden of addressing the historical and continuous harms to Indigenous peoples and lands.

Legal scholar Tamara Starblanket, Nehiyaw Iskwew, describes the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) project the settler Canadian government has been forced into accepting to the legacy of Indian Residential Schools is called a *Rubric of Denial*.[7] Starblanket states that Canada "conced[ed] that 'in the past' a limited range of 'wrongs,' invariably described as 'tragedies' rather than as criminal acts stemming from an even more criminal policy, were in fact done to numerous Indigenous individuals, most notably children confined in the schools."[8] Starblanket claims that in the 2008 apology by Stephen Harper, "the treatment suffered by those who'd survived the ordeal was minimized as amounting only to 'abuse' and 'neglect'," rather than systemic criminal acts of genocide.[9] Starblanket continues to explain that as part of the IRSSA former students were eligible for reparations of up to $26,000, depending on their disclosure about abuse they suffered (the more severe the student's experience, the larger monetary compensation they received), and that in receiving this money, they were forced to give up the pursuit of "further legal action against the government or any of the various churches paid to run the schools."[10] The settlement agreement also included the establishment of the Truth

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[6] Andrew John Woolford, Jeff Benvenuto, and Alexander Laban Hinton, *Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 2.
[7] Nagy
[8] Tamara Starblanket, *Suffer the Little Children: Genocide, Indigenous Nations and the Canadian State* (Atlanta, Georgia: Clarity Press, 2018), 26.
[9] Starblanket, *Suffer the Little Children,* 26.
[10] Ibid.

and Reconciliation Commission, which was "charged with conducting the research necessary to compile a definitive record of the residential schools, detailing their effects on students confined in them, and recommending steps to be taken by the perpetrator state in order to 'restore a healthy relationship' with its victims—all in a mere five years." Starblanket goes on to argue that the TRC's "framing of the issues has from the outset been consistent with that preferred by the government."[11] In her pursuit to tell the truth, Starblanket "ran head-on into the barriers erected and maintained by Canada's academic gatekeepers to prevent or at least limit exposure of the culpability in attending certain actions of the Canadian state, and those of the colonial society."[12] Her experience with those in academia that fight to uphold the status quo which invariably silences the voices of the oppressed is a common experience of marginalized folks in the academy.

Rosemary Nagy clarifies Canada's intentions with the TRC in her article, "The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Genesis and Design." Nagy explains that the lawsuits leading up to the implementation of the IRSSA (Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement) "was undoubtedly a factor in the government's agreement to settle out of court." [13] Although, as outlined in detail in Nagy's article, the process of the IRSSA and the TRC had multiple guiding factors and stakeholders, and government was initially very reluctant to engage, the public perception and social effects have created a political climate that de-politicalizes IRS and Indian education and allows a narrative that erases ongoing settler colonialism and lack of settler understanding of or concern about crucial questions like land.

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[11] Starblanket, *Suffer the Little Children*, 27.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Rosemary Nagy, "The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Genesis and Design" in *Canadian Journal of Law and Society*, 206.

Both *Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America* and *Suffer the Children* explore the reaction of academics whose personal identity is, often subconsciously, nonetheless, attached to the denial of Indigenous genocide in North America. These examples address academia's stake, in particular, as an inherently western colonial institution, in the denial of North American genocide.

Yet, for some, it is undeniable that the lives of Indigenous and racialized settlers in Canada have been marked as destructible, violable, unworthy, exploitable, and disposable.[14] To know this is to have a responsibility to do work that aims to dismantle the power relations which keep these people vulnerable to violence, unable to represent themselves, and living in fear. It is also important to give these people voice and to honour their experience and their resilience in the face of such forces. In this thesis, I am centering the Gitxsan experience of traditional teaching and learning, and the Gitxsan experiences with Indian education, through interviews with Gitxsan elders drawing from decolonial and Indigenous methods.

There is great value in critiquing histories that perpetuate settler colonial narratives that enable the erasure of *others* and ensure a safe and prosperous future for white settlers. Considering the current historiography of Canada and British Columbia, it is clear that critiquing and deconstructing this body of work is essential to unveiling truths of violence and dispossession in settlement and nation-building narratives. Many current histories of British Columbia are projects of imagining settler occupation as benevolent. This conceptualization and solidification of myth plays an important role in how settlers and Indigenous people understand themselves and each other in relationship today. There is a great collection of histories, old and

[14] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous People*, (London: Zed Books, 2016), 33.

new, that need to be examined, told and retold from an Indigenous perspective. There are stories of resistance and resilience that need to be pulled out from the darkness of settler denial, allowing Indigenous peoples to represent themselves in history and imagined futures.

The violence of colonization may not be so easy for non-Indigenous people to understand at face value, it can be hard for non-Indigenous people who see and relate to the world from a framework which does not include the inherent connection with spirit and all living beings. Indigenous people have strict laws and ancient governance systems that enforce a serious responsibility to each other, to the land, and to past and coming generations and all living things. This is why the impact of colonialism is almost unspeakably devastating to Indigenous peoples—because those sacred relationships have been severed in every way possible by the settler state and its complicit citizens.

Our way of life itself has a heartbeat and to see it slowing down is unbearable. The thought of the next generations not having access to their birthright, which is the healthy land and communities that our laws and governance ensure, is the worst future imaginable. We are currently in a phase of desperately clinging on to our sacred knowledge, living in constant stress and fear that it may one day be lost forever. Indigenous peoples must be given space to tell the history of British Columbia, or any settler-occupied place, because Indigenous people themselves, along with their ancestors and relatives, experience the past in ways that settlers cannot speak to. Most settler historians draw from a western framework and have accountability structures that often unconsciously tie them to their ancestors and their futures, which are inherently synonymous with whiteness and the dispossession and marginalization of others.[15]

[15] Decolonization is for everyone!

Yet, there are some non-Indigenous accomplices whom have done the hard work of decolonizing their white framework and orienting themselves toward Indigenous liberation.[16] Indigenous peoples carry with them a relationship with their ancestors and relatives, along with the responsibility to make the world a better, safer place for the coming generations; this is a fundamental principle of most Indigenous Nations. Furthermore, the intimate and sacred relationship to territory adds another important aspect to Indigenous researchers' work—the reciprocal relationship with the land in which Indigenous academics and writers are intertwined.

Accountability for Indigenous peoples should not lie within the institution of academia or the community of academics, which are undeniably steeped in western values of competition, power, and capitalism, but rather should lie within deeply rooted responsibility to family, community, clan, and land. There is only a certain amount of space allowed for Indigenous people and people of colour in white institutions such as universities, and that space is often hostile. Indigenous scholars are often forced to defend their humanity, their worldview, and their accountability to community.

My research question and my methods of researching and writing will represent my responsibility to respect my relationships to family, clan, community, Nation, and land. I have honoured these relationships by consulting with my *Simgigyet, Sigidimhaanak,* and respected elders' and relatives from my community. I heard the same sentiment during initial conversation about my research with everyone I spoke to: young Gitxsan need to learn the true history of this place, and they need to learn the Gitxsan laws and protocols and know who they are as Gitxsan

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[16] To name a few: Shiri Pasternak, *Grounded Authority: The Algonquins of Barriere Lake Against the State* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017); Emilie Cameron, *Far Off Metal River: Inuit Lands, Settler Stories, and the Makings of the Contemporary Arctic* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015); Keith Smith, *Liberalism, Surveillance, and Resistance: Indigenous Communities in Western Canada*, 1877-1927 (Edmonton: AU Press, 2009)

people. This realization comes in the aftermath of the onslaught of colonial assaults on our lands and our people and specifically as a result of Indian education. The ways which guide our people in our relationships to each other and to territory are being eroded, and some elders and community members fear that this will lead to the extinction of Gitxsan knowledge.

Methodology Overview

My methodology comes from my understanding and application of Gitxsan values and principles. Jane Smith says that "Gitxsan have been researching and teaching since time immemorial and now it has found its place in Indigenous research."[17] To me, this encompasses my approach to research and scholarship. I am doing research as a Gitxsan person, guided by Gitxsan teachings, this is my methodology. The following are a few examples of my understanding of Gitxsan methodology: listening with your heart and spirit, speaking the truth honestly and respectfully, honouring the power of stories shared by elders, honouring the significance of elder's time and what they chose to share, accepting the stories shared with you and continue to learn from them over time, sharing food and gifts with those sharing time and knowledge with you, honouring that all good things take time and patience, and honouring that it is possible to have many perspectives of one story and that is a strength not a weakness.

An important influence on this research stems from a specific project I was asked to contribute to in the fall of 2018. I was invited to work for the Gyets Gitxsan IRS Survivors, which is a group of Gitxsan elders who are either survivors of IRS or are supporting survivors. The group's mission is to create a K-12 curriculum to be taught in the Gitxsan territory to all Gitxsan and non-Gitxsan students. The curriculum will teach students about the IRS era and its legacy that shapes their lives and relationships today. The curriculum will include the history of

[17] Smith, *Returning the Feathers*, 43.

missionaries' and government's attempts to assimilate and eradicate Gitxsan culture and people, but this will not be the only focus of the curriculum. To emphasize the resilience and resistance of our Gitxsan people, historically and currently, the teaching of Gitxsan laws, protocols, and ways of being and knowing, known in Gitxsan as *Adaawk* and *Ayook*, is a crucial aspect of the curriculum.

Therefore, I have committed to answering some of these questions the Gyets Gitxsan seek to address in their curriculum in my research for this thesis. This is my way of contributing to the needs of the community. In meeting with Dr. Jane Smith of Gitanmaax, I was instructed to ensure that my academic work includes something to leave behind, something meaningful, and I hope that this research and my work on the Gyets Gitxsan IRS curriculum will fulfill, in part, this responsibility.

I will also be drawing from Tamara Starblanket's approach in my research as I plan to reiterate the genocidal intent of destruction through IRS and Indian policy and their effects on Gitxsan people. Starblanket explains in her recently published monograph "*Suffer the Little Children": Genocide, Indigenous Nations and the Canadian State* that her work is "not a product of 'scholarly detachment.' It was born of pain, entire lives of it, most immediately my family's and my own. Beyond that, its birth was induced by the suffering of my people as a whole, a suffering shared by each of the peoples indigenous to that portion of North America, our Great Turtle Island, now commonly referred to as "Canada." In every instance, the pain and suffering results from genocidal actions taken against us by the Canadian settler state, as a matter of policy and law for well over a century. Indeed, such policy-driven actions continue at present, albeit in somewhat altered form, and the toll continues to mount.

The IRS and Indian policy created by Canada must be framed as genocidal and the violence and crimes must be named. This is a vital truth-telling, which will come in this thesis from an Indigenous (Gitxsan) perspective, particularly, a displaced, white-passing, name-holding, Gitxsan woman. That is my position, and I have no business indulging in identity politics because I know who I am and I know my privileges and where my responsibilities and accountabilities lie.

For the oral history section of this thesis, I follow the methods of JoAnn Archibald, Margaret Kovach, and others. Kovach explains, "oral stories are born in connection within the world…they tie us with our past and provide a basis for continuity with future generations," thereby emphasizing the importance of including oral stories in Indigenous scholarship. Scholars of Indigenous resurgence have called for *decolonization* in order for Indigenous people to overcome the devastation of colonization, but emphasize the importance of *revitalization* of embodied cultural practices to restore dignity and self-sufficiency in Indigenous communities.[18] Leading Indigenous scholars in land-based research explain that Indigenous resurgence helps "us envision life beyond the state and honour the relationships that foster community health and wellbeing" and it is essential that life is breathed back into Indigenous knowledges and land-based practices for the future health of Indigenous communities.[19] Indigenous feminist scholars are working to define traditional gender roles and relations, but with colonial tools and the English language, this is proving to be a difficult task. Patriarchy and gendered violence exist in communities. Women and non-binary and queer folks know this. I follow Indigenous feminist

[18] Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 26.
[19] Jeff Corntassel, et al. "Introduction" in *Everyday Acts of Resurgence: People, Places, Practices*. (Olympia, Washington: Daykeeper Press, 2018), 17.

methods of exploring these tensions, including the work of Lee Maracle, and also Black Feminist theory; the work of bell hooks and Audre Lorde will also influence the ways I address Indigenous women's experience with colonialism historically and in the stories that are shared in this project.

I take an anti-whiteness and anti-racist approach to the archival records I analyze. Dr. Linda Tuhiwai Smith warns us of the ways in which colonial and imperial ideologies shape how Indigenous people are represented in history, often erasing their experience and authority, and often portraying their lack of humanness.[20] Therefore, I take a strong stance that counters the common historical record of Indigenous people in history, especially in the British Columbia historiography.

I am also conscious of the question: which stories are important to tell? In Emilie Cameron's *Far Off Metal River*, this is the guiding question, while she engages with historical myths of the Arctic and how Indigenous (Inuit and Dene) people have interacted with those stories in the past and present. Cameron emphasizes the damage caused by European stories and myths, and how the telling of settler stories which reflect and invoke the perpetuation of colonialism, conquering, and domination frames Indigenous lands and bodies as extractable, pollutable and disposable.[21] Simultaneously, Cameron elevates the stories of Indigenous peoples' relation with their landscape and history and connection to place and to each other, which deems certain colonial narratives as irrelevant and not useful in the creation of strong Indigenous futures.

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[20] Smith, *Indigenous Research Methodologies*, 60.
[21] Emilie Cameron, *Far Off Metal River: Inuit Lands, Settler Stories, and the Makings of the Contemporary Arctic* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), 71.

Cameron expresses the importance of acknowledging that settler/explorer stories and myths misrepresent Indigenous peoples' lived experiences and knowledge of themselves. More importantly, she explains that the Indigenous peoples' epistemologies instruct storytelling and knowledge transfer that provide positive and prosperous futures for their people and the coming generations. Therefore, stories of violence and settler/explorer exploitation in their territory are deemed unimportant or harmful information. Cameron found that when asking about the settler/explorer stories in the community, elders and community members would often respond with stories of Inuit strength and resilience, disregarding Cameron's question, and guiding her to what they hold as important to the Inuit people. Like Cameron, I will also be acknowledging that the story of colonial violence and dispossession is truly Canada's and all Canadians' story; it is one that they must own and begin to seek answers and remedies for.

Cameron's work in particular has been an inspiration to me as it addresses interpersonal accountability alongside a critique of structures and systems of power. Her work interweaves these two battlegrounds. I use Cameron, and the above-mentioned scholars to help frame my work because they have been the most informative and influential in my own journey in academia. They explore how the personal is political and make space to explore the ways in which we all have a role in anti-colonial, anti-racist, and anti-patriarchy/sexism research and scholarship. That is the energy I chose to bring into this work.

Chapter 2. Critical Thoughts on the Historiography of British Columbia

The settler makes history and is conscious of making it. And because he constantly refers to the history of his mother country, he indicates that he is the extension of that mother country. Thus the history which he writes is not the history of the country which he plunders but the history of his nation regarding all that she skims off, all that she violates and starves. The immobility to which the native is condemned can only be called in question if the native decides to put an end to the history of colonization—the history of pillage— and to bring into existence … the history of decolonization.[22] Franz Fanon

The goal of the Canadian government to eradicate Indigenous people via Indian policy, particularly the IRS system, is genocidal. This reconceptualization of Indian education frames the rest of my thesis. Here, I address some of the literature that conceptualizes Indian education as genocide in Canada. I draw upon the work of several authors from varying fields including genocide studies, law, sociology and history, whose critical analysis and theory names settler colonialism, in its many shapes and forms, as genocidal. These authors explore the intentions of Indian education and address how created narratives have narrowed and limited the ability to name the criminality of Indian education, and subsequently ongoing colonial violence and injustice. The several scholars I analyze come from different disciplinary backgrounds, yet speak to the same topic and give voice and shape to the dimensions of ongoing settler colonialism, Canadian white supremacy and violence, and evasion of guilt on behalf of Canada regarding Indian education. Australian anthropologist and ethnographer Patrick Wolfe's foundational work on settler colonialism made a major shift in the academic discourse on colonialism. I draw from Wolfe's article, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," to illustrate the defining characteristics of settler colonialism and incorporate his insights on genocide within a framework of settler colonialism to support my argument.

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[22] Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1965).

In the edited collection, *Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America, g*enocide scholar Andrew Woolford explains how scholars and the general public conceptualize genocide in a way that has been consciously envisioned outside of the definition created by the UN Declaration on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Woolford elaborates on a theory of uneven meshing of colonial policy with an overarching agenda of eradication of the native. Legal scholar Tamara Starblanket makes an argument about Indian education as genocidal policy from a legal perspective in her book *Suffer the Little Children: Genocide, Indigenous Nations and the Canadian State*. Her work frames the IRS project and all accompanying Indian Policy as acts of genocide from a legal and personal perspective. Ronald Chrisjohn and Sherry Young's *The Circle Game: Shadows and Substance in the Indian Residential School Experience in Canada* came from the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.[23] They name Canada's moves toward evasion, denial, and revisionism that have created the common narrative of Indian education that underplays the genocidal intention of Indian education. They make evident in their report, from twenty years before the inception of the TRC, that tactics of denial and erasure are weaponized to silence and manipulate Indigenous peoples' lived experiences. *Power through Testimony: Reframing Residential Schools in the Age of Reconciliation*, published in 2017 and edited by sociologists Brieg Capitaine and Karine Vanthuyne, explores a dialogue around the limiting narrative created by Canada and the TRC, which is argued to constrain transmutation and opportunity to dismantle ongoing racism and colonialism. The authors contextualize the TRC as a tool of memory manipulation, as memory is

[23] The RCAP was a commission from 1991 that meant to address and inquire into all the issues Indigenous peoples in Canada were facing. The RCAP came up with many recommendations for creating a new relations between Canada and Indigenous people however, it has not been seriously considered politically or socially by Canada.

to some extent a social production. Therefore, by their own definition, memory making can risk cooptation of the social memory to control the erasure of colonial violence and genocide, as I argue has been done by the TRC and standard account.[24] Finally, Ronald Niezen's *Truth and Indignation* is concerned with the production of knowledge and the creation of narrative that flattens colonial genocidal nuances, as defined by Woolford.

The forced removal of children from their collective to be absorbed into another collective by means of Indian education intentionally inflicts psychological harm. Aside from that intention, within IRS children often endured physical, sexual and psychological abuse, in many cases leading to death, long-term illness including mental illness, and death by suicide, substance use, and other crises. The UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide's definition of genocide, as set out in the previous chapter, is as follows:

> Any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; [and] forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.[25]

Woolford explains that "seen through the lens of the Holocaust, the broader public and many academics consider genocide to be the most extreme form of violence imaginable. According to this widespread view, including other forms of destruction beside mass murder

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[24] Brieg Capitaine and Karine Vanthuyne, "Introduction" in *Power through Testimony: Reframing Residential Schools in the Age of Reconciliation* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2017), 9.

[25] Office of the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide (OSAPG). *OSAPG Analysis Framework.* https://www.un.org/ar/preventgenocide/adviser/pdf/osapg_analysis_framework.pdf. accessed March, 12, 2019.

risks diluting the meaning of the term."[26] Woolford goes on to explain that "the international legal statute clearly lists several indirectly lethal acts in its definition, including 'causing serious bodily or mental harm' and 'forcibly transferring children,' all under the condition that these acts are committed with 'intent to destroy.' When thus measured against the stated intentions of residential school administrators—such as the Canadian Deputy Superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs, Duncan Campbell Scott, who in 1920 proclaimed, 'our objective is...to get rid of the Indian problem'" – it becomes clear that Canada has administered genocidal policy.[27]

Patrick Wolfe conceptualizes genocidal actions within settler colonial states as the *logic of elimination*. Wolfe explains: "the logic of elimination not only refers to the summary liquidation of Indigenous people, though it includes that. In common with genocide as Raphael Lemkin characterized it, settler colonialism has both negative and positive dimensions. Negatively, it strives for the dissolution of native societies. Positively, it erects a new colonial society on the expropriated land base—as I put it, settler colonizers come to stay: invasion is a structure, not an event."[28] Central to the logic of elimination is the continual necessity to destroy and replace in order to maintain the settler state.[29] Wolfe insists that the unique ways in which settler colonial genocide manifests cannot be limited to a qualified form of genocide or a reduced version of the term.[30] Therefore, the logic of elimination defines the genocidal motives of the settler colonial state as it relates to Indigenous peoples over time and space. Acknowledging the

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[26] Andrew Woolford, *Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 30.
[27] Woolford, *Genocide in Indigenous North America*, 30.
[28] Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 388.
[29] Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism," 388.
[30] Ibid., 402.

usefulness of this definitional challenge, I continue with the term genocide as I analyze settler interventions and the residential schools system as acts of genocide.

Woolford builds on the concept of the logic of elimination, in his response to scholars' claims that IRS were not genocidal because of their uneven distribution of experience over time. He explains,

> By invoking the term genocide, I do not ignore the historical nuance of such scholarship. However, my effort is to show how genocidal processes are themselves uneven and uncertain because the colonial networks that generate these processes manifest in unpredictable ways. Like all grandiose modernist projects of statecraft, boarding schools were prone to inconsistencies, variable applications, resistances, and subversions. Therefore, in this chapter genocide speaks more to the process of destruction than a foregone outcome. In short, this chapter looks at the negotiation of genocide—at how groups intending to destroy other groups seek to mobilize their destructive powers, face obstacles and resistances, enroll or combat other actors (including nonhuman actors), and either succeed (in whole or in part) or fail in their efforts.[31]

His theoretical framing of colonial genocide supports my argument that Indian education in British Columbia and Canada, overall, intended to destroy the collective of Indigenous Nations. Although it may have manifested differently over time and space, this does not undermine the systemic intention, coined by Wolf as the logic of elimination. Chrisjohn and Young begin with a provocative series of rhetorical questions to express the intentions of their report:

> [what if] no collective outcry of humanity arose as stories of the State's abuses were recounted? And no Court of World Opinion seized the State's leaders and held them in judgment as their misdeeds were chronicled? … What if, instead, with the passage of time the world came to accept the actions of the state as the rightful and lawful policies of a sovereign nation having to deal with creatures that were less than fully human? And, what if, curbing some of the more glaring malignancies of its genocidal excesses, the State

[31] Woolford, *Genocide in Indigenous North America*, 30.

> increasingly became more prominent as both a resource for industrial powers and as an industrial power in its own right?[32]

Chrisjohn and Young claim that IRS have been addressed and remembered in Canada through a lens of revisionism. They call this revisionist narrative the *Standard Account*, describing the popular collective understanding of the IRS system. The Standard Account is as follows:

> The Standard Account (as we will call it) disposes neatly of all problems associated with Indian Residential Schooling. There is a statement of initial motive, recognition of responsibility, an exoneration of victims (Aboriginal Peoples), and the expression of a determination to tackle present manifestations of existing, unintentional injuries with all the armamentaria of modern social science. In short, the Standard Account is an act of contrition.[33]

The TRC reified, consolidated and spread far and wide the Standard Account. Chrisjohn and Young explain that the created narrative of the Standard Account was at the time being proliferated during the era of the 1960's RCAP. They explain that almost everyone "repeated accounts recognized [as the standard account]. But what was most interesting to us was that there seemed to be a significant ellipsis in the account: at the point when the possibility and extent of abuses at Residential Schools were raised, there should have been mention made of a judicial process, criminal prosecution, and monetary compensation."[34] This creation of a narrative that evades the criminality of the IRS and its perpetrators has been carried through and is central to the TRC's project.

Chrisjohn and Young offer the following as a counter-account:

> Residential schools were one of many attempts at the genocide of the Aboriginal peoples inhabiting the area now commonly called Canada. Initially, the goal of obliterating these

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[32] Roland David Chrisjohn, Sherri Lynn Young, and Michael Maraun, "Executive Summary" in *The Circle Game: Shadows and Substance in the Indian Residential School Experience in Canada*, Rev. ed. (Penticton, B.C: Theytus Books, 2006), 1.
[33] Chrisjohn, Young, and Maraun, "Executive Summary," 4.
[34] Ibid., 2.

> peoples was connected with stealing what they owned (the land, the sky, the waters, and their lives, and all that these encompassed); and although this connection persists, present-day acts and policies of genocide are also connected with the hypocritical, legal, and self-delusional need on the part of the perpetrators to conceal what they did and what they continue to do. A variety of rationalizations (social, legal, religious, political and economic) arose to engage (in one way or another) all segments of Canadian society in the task of genocide.[35]

Chrisjohn and Young express the importance of deconstructing the ideology behind the creation of IRS:

> The conceptual world-view that gave rise to the genocide of Aboriginal Peoples remains in place, unchallenged; its lineaments invade all aspects of present majority thinking about Indian Residential School. Unless this world-view is recognized, and the damage it has done and continues to do brought into focus, the long-term agenda of Indian Residential Schooling will succeed, even while we congratulate ourselves on having met it head-on and defeated it.[36]

This concept is lost when historians approach the topic of Indian education without a framework that includes a critique of settler colonialism, power, and systems of oppression, which are rooted in the conceptual world-view outlined here by Chrisjohn and Young.

Chrisjohn and Young also question how the legacy of Indian education has been imagined, created and reaffirmed over time. Specifically, they discuss how perpetrators of violence against Indigenous children have been treated as innocent people who have made mistakes, flattening and erasing their criminal actions. Chrisjohn and Young explain:

> The conundrum that occurred to us there remains unanswered: lawyers, judges, officers of the law... does no one here recognize that crimes have been committed? We have searched in vain the testimony of those experts in criminal matters for any suggestion that the aggressive uncovering and prosecution of criminals should form any part of an appropriate response to issues of Indian Residential Schooling. Precisely how typical of the law enforcement and criminal justice systems is this attitude? Is 'therapy for the victim' the bottom line in criminal law for, say, bank robbery, tax fraud, or insider trading?[37]

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[35] Ibid., 3.
[36] Chrisjohn and Young, *The Circle Game*, 13.
[37] Ibid.

In contrast, the TRC final report describes their mandate as the following, to:

> • reveal to Canadians the complex truth about the history and the ongoing legacy of the church-run residential schools, in a manner that fully documents the individual and collective harms perpetrated against Aboriginal peoples, and honours the resilience and courage of former students, their families, and communities; and
> • guide and inspire a process of truth and healing, leading toward reconciliation within Aboriginal families, and between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal communities, churches, governments, and Canadians generally. e process was to work to renew relationships on a basis of inclusion, mutual understanding, and respect.[38]

This mandate does not align with Chrisjohn and Young's counter-narrative and re-affirms the narrative which disassociates IRS from the larger genocidal settler colonial project that intertwines IRS within a web of ongoing attempts to eradicate Indigenous people. This same sentiment is also expressed by Tamara Starblanket in her book *Suffer the Little Children: Genocide, Indigenous Nations and the Canadian State*. As indicated in the previous chapter, Starblanket states that the TRC "conced[ed] that 'in the past' a limited range of 'wrongs,' invariably described as 'tragedies' rather than as criminal acts stemming from an even more criminal policy, were in fact done to numerous Indigenous individuals, most notably children confined in the schools." [39] Starblanket claims that in the 2008 apology by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, "the treatment suffered by those who'd survived the ordeal was minimized as amounting only to 'abuse' and 'neglect'," [40] rather than systemic criminal acts of genocide, or any criminal acts at all.

[38] Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future. Summary of the Final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 23.
[39] Starblanket, *Suffer the Little Children*, 26.
[40] Ibid.

In her chapter "The New Victim," Jula Hughes expresses how the criminals and institutions that administered IRS have been turned into a "new victim" of Indian education through the TRC. Hughes explains:

> the TRC responded to the difficulty of its limited legal powers by casting individual employees of the residential school system not as perpetrators but as a different class of victims and by casting institutional defendants not as perpetrator organizations but as co-sponsors of the TRC… However, it arguably altered the content of their contributions by selectively producing victim narratives and by narrowing the conceptual gaps between victims and perpetrators.[41]

The New Victim therefore adds to the present majority thinking, or the Standard Account, by removing criminality, ownership and accountability from the state and churches for their roles in the genocidal Indian education project, and producing a new class of victim, as Hughes describes, within the Standard Account, again limiting access to meaningful justice and truth within the TRC and the ongoing relationship between Indigenous people and Canada.

With sharp criticism of the TRC, Starblanket explores the political and legal implications of evading the criminal acts of child removal and settler colonialism and turns the spotlight on the government and its accomplices to answer for the harm they have caused and continue to perpetuate. Similar to Chrisjohn, Young, and Woolford, Starblanket draws from facts, not rhetoric, to examine Indian education and uncover genocidal intentions. She also articulates how genocide typically has been made to name mass and immediate physical destruction; she argues that "scholarly and legal arguments that make genocide synonymous with mass killings warp the very understanding of the term."[42] Starblanket and the others express the motivation for creating a "soft" narrative of what we now know as reconciliation, and how language and evasion are

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[41] Jula Hughes, "The New Victim" in *Power through Testimony: Reframing Residential Schools in the Age of Reconciliation* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2017) 179.
[42] Starblanket, *Suffer the Little Children*, 272.

used as tactics to evade criminality, prosecution, and accountability on behalf of Canada, the churches, and all their accomplices. Starblanket claims that "scholars who debate whether residential schools were 'really' genocidal are contributing to state genocide."[43] Woolford's theory brings this statement to life, as he argues that genocidal processes within settler colonial environments are ongoing. These scholars argue that to deny the violence and the manifestation of elimination, and refrain from naming it, makes space for it to continue.

Woolford acknowledges the nuances of Indian education and IRS experiences across time and space. He explains that historians and scholars who create historical narratives about missionaries and IRS teachers/staff within the colonial project often fall "into the trap of accepting perpetrators' claims to humanitarianism as an alibi for their role in the attempted destruction of another group."[44] Woolford discusses the multi-layered whole that is assimilation, colonization, and genocide, and how these "layers" must be analyzed on the micro, macro, and meso levels in order to have an understanding of the genocidal project. He explains:

> Together these layers of netting form a mesh, and understanding any particular experience of forced assimilative schooling in a local context requires a multilevel analysis of macro, meso, and micro networks so that one can identify when and where the mesh tightens or loosens in a manner that makes the genocidal project of settler colonialism more or less effective. The colonial mesh, therefore, must be examined processually, as it expands and contracts across time and differentially across space, with gaps in the mesh loosening in some regions while perhaps closing more tightly around Indigenous communities in others.[45]

Woolford shows how inconsistencies and nuances of experience within Indian education do not undermine the Genocidal intention or impact overall. Furthermore, Woolford provides a structure within which historians and scholars of colonialism in North America can adequately

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[43] Ibid.
[44] Woolford, *Colonial Genocide in North America*, 30.
[45] Ibid.

analyze their subject with the appropriate incorporation of genocide as a guiding intention at the root:

> To begin, three guidelines for examining colonial genocide in a settler context are in order. First, a multilevel analysis that integrates macro, meso, and micro factors into a processual account of forced assimilation through schooling is needed (Verdeja 2012). Second, a critical approach is required, so that colonial regimes are held to account, even while acknowledging the diversity and unevenness of settler colonialism (e.g., see Moses 2000; Wolfe 1999; Veracini 2010). Third, a study of colonial genocide should help decolonize genocide studies by challenging Eurocentric biases within the field.[46]

Starblanket's legal approach to IRS and Indian policy aims to hold Canada accountable mainly in legal terms, rather than the scholarly, academic (and moral) arguments put forward by Chrisjohn, Young, and Woolford. Drawing from an international dialogue on genocide Prevention and the UN definition, Starblanket reviews the points from the UN definition and references examples of different nations and legal perspectives. For instance, she refers to the then President of Uruguay, Mr. Manini Y Rios' contribution to the dialogue and support of the clause on child removal/apprehension to be included in the 1947 draft of the UN Genocide Convention, which Starblanket elaborates on thus: "The key point is that a human group or nation depends on its children to transmit to future generations the distinct characteristics of that nation's collective identity even if the destruction experienced is not physical or mental or bodily harm."[47] The president urges that if the intention, even if the children were to live "highly civilized" lives, is to destroy the integrity and ability of the group (or nation) to pass down knowledge, thus having its collective identity carried on – the practice constitutes genocide.[48]

The above collection of scholars discuss Canada's inability to address its historical and ongoing violence, including but not limited to IRS. A part of this conversation is about the TRC

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[46] Woolford, *Colonial Genocide in North America*, 31.
[47] Starblanket, *Suffer the Little Children*, 45.
[48] Starblanket, *Suffer the Little Children*, 56.

and its role in memory making and narrative manipulation. The TRC's commissioners defend the goal of reconciliation as societal healing, grounded in interpersonal understanding and forgiveness. In the introduction to *Power through Testimony,* Matt James explains that the emphasis on "the emotional need for understanding and support of individual residential school survivors" and "the remarkable power of the decision to forgive"[49] that this definition relies upon may at first seem to come at the cost of overlooking structural oppression and inequalities. The author asks, "to what extent has this particular process of epistemological decolonization for the sake of promoting Indigenous nations' sovereignty among the larger public, and more particularly among the church's clergy and congregations, been effective?"[50]

Similarly, in his 2017 second edition of *Truth and Indignation: Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools*, Niezen explores victim centrism as an approach that singularly addresses each survivor, creating an illusion that there were an array of experiences in IRS that then acts to obscure the overall goal of Indian education. Niezen explains that the phenomenon of victim centrism creates grand narratives of both victim and perpetrator that tend to emphasize survivor testimony over judicial powers; he explains that the shift to victim centrism has become "a central feature of collective justice claims and of human rights inquiry."[51] Furthermore, he states that the TRC's focus on "the production of knowledge and the construction of belonging as it broadened to include the ways that knowledge is challenged along

[49] James, quoted in Vanthuyne and Capitaine, *Power Through Testimony*, 13.
[50] Ibid., 14.
[51] Ronald Niezen. *Truth and Indignation: Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools.* Second ed. (North York, Ontario, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 167.

particular conduits of opinion that foreclosed entire realms of experience,"[52] contributing to the above dialogue of the churches and State's evasion of criminality and accountability.

Along with Starblanket and the contributors in *Power Through Testimony*, Niezen also focuses on Canada's unwillingness to name perpetrators in the TRC and how it, "to a unique degree gave preference to information-gathering and dissemination over judicial process."[53] He explains that:

> Canada was the only TRC to have been initiated as an outcome of civil litigation…When TRCs are held, the interruption of the trajectory of the state is considered to have already occurred. The Commission has been given a mandate intended to overcome a legacy of harm and to mark a transition to a new, more just, equitable, and human-rights-compliant state."[54]

Niezen expresses that the TRC aimed at spreading awareness and acknowledgment of the history of the IRS, including within the Commission itself, which resulted in the Commission orienting "more toward the persuasion of others concerning its basic premises, leaving more room for doubt and contestation over institutional responsibility and the essential truths of history…Canada's TRC was prevented from acting on any possible extension of 'truth-telling' into judicial procedure."[55]

James's article, "A Carnival of Truth? Knowledge, Ignorance and the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission" introduces the claim that Niezen does not quite reach in his book. James discusses the "possible limitations of victim-centred approaches in contexts where the

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[52] Ibid., xiv.
[53] Niezen, *Truth and Indignation*, 3.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid., 5.

perpetrators and beneficiaries of the injustices continue to be socially dominant."[56] James explicitly articulates the evasion of responsibility for crime with the victim-centered approach. He goes on to explain: "Thus, by focusing on the voices and truths of former residential school students, the Commission enacts a form of ongoing symbolic reversal of the power relations and colonial knowledge assumptions that were embodied in the schools and that continue to be woven into Canadian institutions and society today."[57]

Starblanket, Capitaine et al. and James all address how Canada has evaded judicial accountability for the genocidal crimes committed in their creation and administration of Indian education. Although each of these scholars approaches the topic from different perspectives, their overall message is unified. Canada has created an alternative narrative, coined the Standard Account by Chrisjohn and Young, to ensure that it will not be held accountable for the crimes of the past—yet more importantly, to pave the way to continue the logic of elimination and the oppression and subjugation of Indigenous lands and bodies. James's analysis of the TRC itself adds to the mesh which Woodford articulates. The commission itself becomes a part of the "meaning-making" of the IRS and creates a public memory of Indian education that focuses on the victim rather than the perpetrator, therefore de-criminalizing the genocidal attempt.

These critical analyses contribute to a crucial dialogue about IRS, the TRC, and Canada's deceptive tactics to evade punishment and to ensure that all involved in the IRS have their innocence preserved and remain unscathed and unpunished by their crimes. Through omitting

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[56] Matt James, "A Carnival of Truth? Knowledge, Ignorance and the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission." *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 6, no. 2 (2012): 182-204.

[57] James, 183

criminality and justice in the TRC and Settlement Agreement, Canada has decriminalized violence towards and rape of Indigenous people; the legal constraints of the TRC and Settlement agreement have created another legacy of genocide which is evident today for Indigenous People. This precedent makes space for a future of ongoing unchallenged and unpunished violence against Indigenous people and land.

Have historians of Indian education been critical of Canada's motivations, or have they fallen into the trap of the Standard Account? Does their scholarship critique church and state institutional power, or do historians fail to address the logic of elimination and erase the face of the settler state and its violence? Here I will apply the lens offered by the previous theorists on settler colonialism and genocide to the historiography on Indian education. To provide a general idea of how Indian education has been taken up in the field, I sample from a few examples that look at Indian education in British Columbia and Canada overall. Settler colonialism and Indian policy are inconsistent and irrational, and manifest differently from region to region. I pay special attention to histories of Indian education in what is now known as British Columbia to capture a glimpse of the landscape in the region I analyze in the third and fourth chapters of this thesis. With that said, the following works do include various regions and timelines. Overall, they range across the IRS era which spans approximately between the mid 19th to late 20th century.

In Robin Fisher's *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890*, he discusses at length the role of the missionary in the elimination of the native. He explains that at the core of mid 19th century missionary work was the goal of "the complete destruction of the traditional integrated Indian way of life. The missionaries demanded even more far-reaching transformation than the settlers, and they pushed it more aggressively than any

other group."[58] In reference to William Duncan's rules at Metlakatla, which were mimicked in Gitxsan territory (explored in chapter three of this thesis), Fisher states that "five regulations prohibited traditional Tsimshian customs integral to the Indians' old way of life, and ten more were to establish a new one."[59] The rules to outlaw "Indian devilry"; "to cease calling in conjures when sick"; "to cease giving their property away for display"; and "to cease painting their faces" were direct attacks on the laws, governance, and self-determination of the Tsimshian. Although Fisher has been criticized[60] for underplaying the role of traders in the region and insisting that missionaries were the sole perpetrators of harm to Indigenous collectives, the critique of the missionary in my argument does not remove or belittle the great and devastating effects that came from traders, specifically the HBC and migrant workers. The critique that Fisher is not nuanced in his analysis is exactly my argument.

My focus is on the work of missionaries as a part of Indian education genocidal intentions, not on settlement in general. Fisher's examination of Metlakatla rules does in fact carry significant weight as evidence of missionary intention to destroy the Indigeneity of the child, with the goal to completely dissolve the Indigenous collective. Calls that come from scholars, demanding the perspective of oppressors to be considered, are weaponized to dismiss overarching systems and structures of power that they benefit from. Fisher's critical analysis of missionary work is useful in my analysis, as it aligns with Woolford's theory that the intent may

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[58] Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992).
[59] Ibid., 133.
[60] Susan Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 12.

appear humanitarian yet the impact was purely destructive and exploitative, clearly contributing to the destruction of the collective.

In *Resistance and Renewal*, Celia Haig-Brown discusses her role as a settler in articulating the story of Indian education because "the story of the schools is one in which non-Natives played a central role."[61] Her self-location aligns with the call to action from Chrisjohn, Young, and Starblanket, acknowledging the positive power of white voices in re-telling Canada's history truthfully. She also fulfills the standards noted by the previous authors and names the intentions of Canada and the church and includes another dimension to the narrative by insisting that Canada has taken part in genocidal acts. She explains: "Colonizers utilize two-forms of genocide: intentional and unintentional. The intentional forms include residential schools, land grabbing, and downright murder."[62] Here, I diverge from her theory: although individuals can be perhaps unconsciously complicit in acts of genocide, there cannot be genocide without an intention to destroy a collective as explored earlier. Although people can be unconsciously complicit in the structure which has been intentionally created, it cannot be a genocide without a clear intention to destroy. Church groups and missionaries were explicit in their intention to destroy the Indigeneity of the child, and this is an intention to destroy - as defined by the UN, through psychological and physical harm.

In John S. Milloy's *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986*, originally published in 1999, his main goal is to address and intervene in the pervasive narrative of Indian education in Canada as a generous and positive gift to Indian children and families. He explains that narratives about Indian education have failed to

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[61] Celia Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School* (Vancouver, B.C., Canada: Tillacum Library, 1988), 10.
[62] Ibid., 15.

reflect the true intention and reality of the creation of IRSs on behalf of the government and churches. He argues "that common representation has stood neither the test of time nor, in the pages that follow, of historical research. Indeed, it exists in sharp contrast to the historical record etched in the memories of students and set out in official files."[63] Milloy's argument aligns with the critiques presented by Chrisjohn and Young, et al., as he acknowledges that the impact overall is what needs to be addressed, from a lens that includes acknowledgment of criminality on behalf of the churches and State.[64] Milloy's history of Indian education is a comprehensive overview of the creation of the IRS system and the church and state alliance. Milloy traces Indian Policy as it ebbs and flows between 1879 to the post-war period and beyond. By following the policy creation and the implementation of Indian education Milloy illustrates the inconsistencies of Indian education. As expressed by Woolford, these inconsistencies should not be taken as evidence that the federal government or churches had moments of good conscience. Instead, they illustrate the way that settler colonialism and its intention to eradicate Indigenous peoples in Canada shape-shifts over time and space.

Moments and pockets within Indian education where the environment was not completely dangerous or violent do not amount to a positive experience on balance, nor do they mean that church and state institutionalized violence was an anomaly. Milloy makes this clear in *A National Crime,* as he expresses that Indian education was "the core policy"[65] of the civilization project. His study is "to provide an 'operational history' of the system," not to judge each child's experience or those of administrators. Milloy urges readers to understand that the

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[63] John S. Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1886,* Anniversary ed. (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2017), 2.
[64] Milloy, *A National Crime,* 2.
[65] Milloy, *A National Crime,* 1.

history of Indian education is Canada's story, and it is Canada's to own and be accountable for. Similar to Chrisjohn and Young, Milloy sensed at the time of his research, which was also a part of RCAP, that the narrative would be skewed to remove the onus of guilt from Canada and all who inherit and benefit from the legacy of Indian education and ongoing settler colonialism, and placed upon individual survivors. Milloy states: "It is *our* history, *our* shaping of the 'new world'; it is *our* swallowing of the land and its First Nations peoples and spitting them out as cities and farms and hydroelectric projects and as strangers in their own land and communities."[66]

The Many Voyages of Arthur Wellington Clah: A Tsimshian Man on the Pacific Northwest Coast, by Peggy Brock, has no mention of Tsimshian people in her acknowledgments, a significant omission in a memoir type history of an Indigenous person, Arthur Wellington Clah. Clah was a Tsymsen chief who famously befriended the *Umshewa* and accepted Christianity in mid 19th century British Columbia. Some of Brock's use of language in her book is problematic. For example, stating that Clah was disturbed by "the tragedy of losing his lands" allows for the reader's imagination to skip over the fact that land was stolen and Native peoples continue to suffer from that today, an example of the ellipsis which feeds into the de-criminalization of colonial and genocidal acts. [67] Although Brock has a hard time finding the right language, she does attempt to explain the imposition of white destruction on the North West Coast Indians: "They [natives] experienced triumphs and irritations that gradually became major annoyances until they realized that people in distant places were making decisions that affected

[66] Milloy, *National Crime*, 5.
[67] Peggy Brock, *The Many Voyages of Arthur Wellington Clah: A Tsimshian Man on the Pacific Northwest Coast* (Vancouver [B.C.]: UBC Press, 2011), 16.

their lives and over which they had no influence."[68] The lack of Indigenous consultation is illustrated where Brock refers to the Gitxsan and Nisga'a as Tsimshian, which is not accepted by either of the Nations.[69]

Beside these omissions, Brock acknowledges a critical point which many historians of British Columbia overlook: that a system of power within relationships was at play which influenced the lives of the Tsimshian. For example, she explains that Clah's "regular [diary] entries give the impression of a systematic endeavour, but the diarist has decided who and what has to be recorded."[70] Although she is speaking about Clah as a diarist, her argument can also be applied to primary documents in general. She acknowledges, in part, that this diary offers a narrow perspective. Yet, she puts great emphasis on Clah's experiences with white folks, Christianity, and Indian education as an overall snapshot of how Natives of the North West coast would have experienced life at that time. This study does not acknowledge Clah's position as a man who aligned with and benefitted from whiteness, Christianity, and maleness.

The obsession with Indigenous male chief figures that have a close proximity to whiteness, patriarchy, and Christianity is a significant theme in many histories of BC. Mohawk historian Susan Hill describes this as the "Big Chief" method.[71] She states that the focus on single male historical actors makes it easy for historians to create a narrative of settlement that is based on an extremely narrow spectrum of experience. This narrow narrative does not account for gender discrimination via patriarchy, and portrays the singular experience as the norm rather

[68] Brock, *The Many Voyages*, 16.
[69] Brock, *The Many Voyages*, 16.
[70] Brock, *The Many Voyages*, 39.
[71] Susan Hill, *The Clay we are made of: Haudenosaunee Land Tenure on the Grand River*. (Winnipeg. Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 2017), 2.

than exploring the realities of non-binary folks, women, children and heathens living on the periphery.[72]

A contrast to Fisher's analysis of missionary impact is Susan Neylan's *The Heavens Are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity.* She aims to redeem the missionaries and claims that Fisher's view of the missionaries is problematic. She explains that "throughout human history when confronted with 'abnormal' societal pressures and cultural assault, people frequently turn inward to traditional faiths or reformulate their religion to adapt to the new circumstances."[73] This narrative resonates with Woolford's sentiments on historians actively trying to redeem missionaries by claiming they had humanitarian motivations to distract from the overarching genocidal intentions to destroy the collective and replace it with values and culture of the settler colonizers. Not only does Neylan undermine the violence of missionaries and colonization and the pure destructive intentions of their efforts, she is also misguided in her theory. Fisher claims that missionaries' intentions were to benefit from the Tsimshians' plight and in turn perpetrate more chaos and harm by prohibiting their governance and legal orders, and demonizing all Indigenous people who did not convert to their religion. He states that there was intentional harm by the missionaries to allow them to succeed in their missions. Neylan's argument that Indigenous People "indigenize" Christianity is not at odds with this theory, yet she portrays it as such in an attempt to redeem and soften the true impact and intentions of the missionaries.[74] Her analysis that focuses on the nuances of experience within Christianity fails to acknowledge the structures of power which benefit from the destruction of

[72] Heathen has been reclaimed, and is cherished by many members in our communities as we try to undo the harm done by Christianity. Here, heathen simply describes Indigenous people who were not indoctrinated in Christianity at the time.
[73] Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*, 12.
[74] Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*, 12.

Indigenous worldview, culture, and physical and spiritual existence. Therefore, Neylan fails to grasp what Chrisjohn, Young et al., state as seminal in the analysis of Indian education history. For example, her statement of intent is as follows: "This study examines the nature of Protestant Christian missions in their first generation on the North Pacific Coast of British Columbia (1857 - 1901) by focusing on Native roles in Christianity." Centering Native people as leaders in their own destiny with Christianity is extremely misleading, again underplaying the violence that is missionization, as we see in the analysis of physiological harm and its role in genocide. Neylan paints a picture of missionary innocence in vague statements such as: "the encounter between any First Nation and missionary was a culturally laden relationship, wrought with misunderstandings on both sides."[75] Language like "misunderstanding" and "on both sides" works to create a false image of innocence and de-politicizes and de-contextualizes the intentions of the missionaries and their relationship with the genocidal project of colonization. Drawing on Brock's analysis of the narrow scope of Clah's diary, Hill's theory of the Big Chief, and my analysis of how historical actors contained within colonial archival documents are not reflective of the population and experience overall due to the proximity to whiteness, Christianity, and patriarchy, helps us understand how narrow and flawed Neylan's argument is. She explains that her study centres "Native Christians, Native mission workers, and Native Missionaries."[76] White innocence is the most powerful tool of white supremacy, affecting the silencing and erasure of oppressed groups. It is weaponized by the settler state to continue the subjugation of oppressed peoples.[77]

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[75] Ibid., 4.
[76] Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*, 6.
[77] Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized: Portrait Du Colonisé, précédé Du Portrait Du Colonisateur*, English Expand ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991)

Neylan also argues that "despite missionary agendas and objectives, conversion to Christianity did not constitute a replacement of pre-existing spiritual beliefs," which in fact is an oxymoron. As not to waste all my time arguing that Christianity forced Indigenous people to largely deny their own heritage, identity and spirituality, I will end with one last point to dismiss Neylan's absurd argument. Indigenous Peoples are in the wake of having their culture, language and identity completely eradicated, resulting directly from the attack by Christian missionaries, in conjunction with the Canadian State. As a Gitxsan person, working to reclaim what it means to be Gitxsan, I face barriers that have been erected directly from the work of missionaries and the Christianization of our people. There is absolutely no way that one can argue that Indigenous people were able to fully hold on to their laws, governance, ceremony, spirituality and kinship structures as well as becoming Christian, as these are explicitly described as being at odd with Christianity and civilization by missionaries like Duncan.

Similarly, Hare and Barman's *Good Intentions Gone Awry: Emma Crosby and the Methodist Mission on the Northwest Coast* creates and centres a narrative about Emma Crosby, wife of Methodist missionary Thomas Crosby. The authors create an image of Mrs. Crosby's innocence and femininity by referencing her loving and enduring relationship with her mother who remained in Europe.[78] The authors also co-opt Indigenous women in their narrative to further their goal of portraying Emma Crosby as a pioneering feminist by insisting that Indigenous women were *given* a better life by Crosby. In their introduction, they imply that Indigenous women had a newfound sense of power and agency in their roles at the mission. The authors quote Susan Neylan to illustrate their point: "the mission environment provided Native

[78] Jan Hare and Jean Barman, *Good Intentions Gone Awry: Emma Crosby and the Methodist Mission on the Northwest Coast* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), xxi.

women with new opportunities to exercise power and influence, opportunities that were challenged or restricted in other social milieus."[79] Diminishing Mr. and Mrs. Crosby's exploitation of the dispossession and disappearance brought to Indigenous Peoples by settlers colonizers and missionaries is a significant flaw, as explained by Fisher. Hare and Barman ironically celebrate a white woman who has contributed to the destruction of Indigenous People's governance, laws, and well-being, to add to their agenda of including women as important historical actors in the field of history.

Although there is no doubt that white history excludes, diminishes, and erases women, feminist historians hoping to counter misogyny and patriarchy written into history must have an intersectional foundation. Otherwise, they risk reiterating the exact modes of oppression which they are trying to dismantle. The authors do admit that in spite of Emma's best intentions, the girls' school ended up more like a prison, where the girls were confined and controlled, and the mission ended up not beneficial to the Tsimshian.[80] Ironically, the best intentions of Hare and Barman also go awry. Emma Crosby's intentions were never good, meaning that the assertion of good intentions is morally relative. Justifying the actions of Emma Crosby and other missionaries because of their worldview and ideology does not free them from answering for the damage they have caused, and particularly they do not deserve redemption from white historians. From my perspective and the perspective of others who critique the work of missionaries and colonizers, the intentions of folks like Emma Crosby were exploitative and colonial, and her legacy is one of ravaging a vulnerable population and feeding off of and contributing to the destruction of their way of life and autonomy.

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[79] Hare and Barman, *Good Intentions*, xxi.
[80] Ibid., 219.

Applying a critique of power structures does not erase the nuances of particular people and circumstances. Of course, there were and are many Indigenous folks like Clah and many others who accepted Christianity and did not allow it to fully override their Indigenous principles and knowledge. My critique does not flatten this experience and my argument is not that these people don't exist and cannot be acknowledged. I am seeking a clear and honest articulation of the intentions and impact of missionaries which very clearly, according to Fisher and Woolford, align with the goals to destroy Indigenous collectives and replace them with Christian and western societies. This is an act of genocide. The following analysis is of work that has a strong focus on the Indigenous experience on a micro level within Indian education and provides a different perspective than addressed in the above analyzed works.

Starting with the 1989 collection, *SA TS'E: Historical Perspectives on Northern British Columbia*, edited by Thomas Thorner, Jo-Anne Fiske contributes the chapter "Life at Lejac."[81] Her chapter focuses on the experiences of students at the Lejac Residential School on the shore of Fraser Lake, British Columbia. Fiske makes clear that within IRS, it is possible for resistance to take the form of the children simply embodying Indigeneity, aligning with Woolford's argument that the inconsistency of genocide in Indian education that gives space for resistance yet does not override the goal of the structure as a whole. According to Fiske, defiance and resistance exhibited by Indigenous boys at the school included "initiating behaviors to arouse anger and frustration among adults," and among girls appeared to be "more pragmatic and to have negotiated a range of personal interactive styles" with the staff.[82] Fiske shows that Indigenous children's resistance within residential schools was gendered and many times appears

[81] Jo-Anne Fiske, "Life at Lejac," in *Sa ts'e: Historical Perspectives on Northern British Columbia*, ed. Thomas Thorner (Prince George, B.C: College of New Caledonia Press, 1989),
[82] Fiske, *Sa ts'e: Historical Perspectives*, 255.

in the form of speaking their language to each other in secret and other acts which upheld their Indigeneity. Fiske invites a nuanced perspective to this history and does not fail to acknowledge the structures of power, an approach that is ideal for historical narratives of Indian education.

Elizabeth Furniss' *Victims of Benevolence: The Dark Legacy of the Williams Lake Residential School* documents others forms of resistance in the schools. In her work, Furniss acknowledges the foundational power dynamic which informs the way communities could resist Indian education. She believes that often "left unexamined is the broader issue of how relations of unequal power between Native people, the church, and the government imposed limits not only on the possible avenues for resistance but on how successful those forms of resistance could be."[83] This crucial nexus has gone unobserved in Neylan, Hare, and Barman's work and resulted in the shallowness of their arguments. In her sixth chapter, titled "Runaways and a Suicide," Furniss introduces Indigenous children's resistance in a different form from that recalled in Fiske's article. According to Furniss, the issue of students trying to escape the institution in the early to mid 1900's "had become so serious that the boys were barred from working in the fields."[84] The chapter goes on to disclose a suicide pact between nine young boys at the school which was allegedly brought on by excessive beatings by the administrators. Only one boy died, yet this account is a horrific example of how young children chose to resist such brutality, framed in a way that allows the reader to consider the inescapable dread of state-sponsored and church administered violence experienced by these children.

Furthermore, Furniss' contributions draw out essential aspects of Indigenous resistance during this period which highlight complexities not examined or considered in earlier texts. She

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[83] Elizabeth Furniss, *Victims of Benevolence: The Dark Legacy of the Williams Lake Residential School* (Vancouver, B.C: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2000), 32.
[84] Ibid., 12.

explains that "because of the *power structure* within the residential schools, resistance usually took the form of subtle, indirect and largely symbolic acts such as stealing food, lying, refusing to cry when punished and speaking Native languages in private."[85] Here she is addressing power which allows for a discussion of the nuances of experience in the schools. According to Woolford, Starblanket, Chrisjohn, and the others, Furniss' work does justice to the history of Indian education by centering power structures rather than underplaying the overall systems and structures like Hare, Barman, and Neylan do in their work.

What We Learned: Two Generations Reflect on Tsimshian Education and The Day Schools by Helen Raptis, published in 2016, explores the questions "How has Indigenous Education evolved over time and place? What has remained stable and what has changed? How was education—both traditional and Western-style—experienced by the children who were being educated? What impacts have former pupils' educational experiences had on their adult lives overall?"[86] Raptis uses oral history as a way to centre Indigenous experiences. In her introduction, she explains the importance of creating trust in her relationships with local community members as she conducted her research. She also emphasizes the role she took: not leading, but being led and guided by what the community wanted and needed. Although this work does not do as I have suggested earlier—create a clear foundation of state-imposed measures to destroy—it does, however, do what any history of Indian education should: it is led by the community, it is for the community, and it centers the voices of the community. The narrative draws out the nuances of Indian education in Tsimshian territory, yet lacks a strong stance on the power dynamics which are laid out so well by Furniss.

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[85] Furniss, *Victims of Benevolence*, 32.
[86] Helen Raptis, *What We Learned: Two Generations Reflect on Tsimshian Education and The Days Schools* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 4.

The last category in scholarship on Indian education in British Columbia that I address is Indigenous community-led research projects. In 1996, the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council published *Indian Residential Schools: The Nuu-chah-nulth experience.* The Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council centers the voices and experiences of their members in a recollection of the Indian Residential Schools their people attended. This approach aims to tell the "stories so that [their] history can have a face, or more properly, so that [they] can own [their] history."[87] The interviews were conducted by Nuu-Chah-Nulth researchers and "were conducted in a relaxed manner, using a conversational approach, often while cutting fish, making jam or getting ready to go to town, etc."[88] This method of interviewing reflects community values and the type of relation and proximity that Indigenous peoples have within their research practice, and how research should be conducted when interviewing people you know or are in relationship with. This report details the following: "Separation from family and home, Physical Conditions, Loss of Native Language, Abuse: Emotional; Physical; Sexual; Spiritual, Child Labour, Loss of Native Culture, Loss of Self-Respect, What was Learned in Residential School, Going Back Home, Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse, Where to From here?"[89] This oral history led by the nation itself is a reclamation of voice and of power which was taken from survivors and their relatives for many decades. Chrisjohn, Young, and Starblanket articulate that Indigenous peoples must tell their history from their perspective to truly measure the impact of these Indian education systems over time.

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[87] Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council, *Indian Residential Schools: The Nuu-chah-nulth Experience* (Port Alberni, BC: Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, 1996),
[88] Ibid., p.v.
[89] Ibid.

Similarly, *Behind Closed Doors: Stories from Kamloops Indian Residential School* is a project that was taken up by the Secwepemc Cultural Education Society to provide the opportunity for survivors to be heard. This book is simply a collection of survivors' stories, stating a name or "anonymous" followed by their story. This method differs from the Nuu-Chah-Nulth approach as there is no index, analysis, or findings; it stands alone as storytelling with few conclusions drawn. These two examples, although created during a vastly different political era than the current, show the possibility of giving full authority to Indigenous Peoples/survivors in writing a history. Unfortunately, academia does not often welcome accounts that are not framed within developed methodologies or theories and are not recognizable as traditional western histories.

The contributions of Wolfe, Woolford, Chrisjohn, Young, Niezen, and Starblanket have informed my critique of several histories of Indian education, missionization, and Indian policy. These authors provide a framework from which I analyze whether historians of Indian education have succeeded or failed in properly acknowledging structures of power and the intention of the Church and State to eradicate Native people in myriad ways across space and time. From here I will look at some primary documents to give context to the history of Indian education in Gitxsan territory, and I will draw from the critical power framework utilized here.

Chapter 3. Indian Education, IRS, Missionaries, and Indian Affairs Canada

In this chapter, I analyze the inception of Indian education in colonial records through the lenses of settler colonialism and genocide studies. First, I introduce and examine Nicholas Flood Davin's 1878 Report to Minister of the Interior, John A. Macdonald, on Indian boarding schools in the United States. The report reveals the genocidal intentions of IRS to destroy the Indigenous collectives by forcibly removing and psychologically disturbing Indian children. Secondly, I analyze primary sources that explore the inception of settler occupation of Gitxsan (sometimes including Tsimshian) territory, including the distinct and unique presence of missionary and church, Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and migrant workers, and Indian Affairs/Dominion government. Incorporating the context of the HBC and migrant workers helps us understand the environment in which missionary work and Indian education was subsequently built. Although these entities had different goals in the region, whether intentionally or not, they were unified as a force to begin a series of attacks on Gitxsan peoples, lands, and sovereignty that continues today.

The complexities of these relationships require an understanding of the motivation behind and the creation of Indian education. Indian education, including Industrial Schools and Day Schools, was instrumental in destroying Indigenous ties to community, to the land, and to the spiritual world—undermining Indigenous legal and governance systems. Before and continuing through the IRS era, some of the Day Schools remained. However, the IRS system alone was significant and had particular goals to eradicate the Native. As covered in Chapter two of this thesis, the intention of Indian education was to physically and psychologically harm Indigenous children in order to discontinue their ability to be functioning members of their societies, and to gravely disrupt healthy familial and community relations to the point of complete destruction of

Indigenous Nationhood. The creation of the IRS system began with an investigation on the Indian Boarding Schools in the United States, mandated by John A. Macdonald, the first prime minister of Canada. I analyze this report to illustrate the intentions behind the creation of the IRS system and its relationship with church institutions.

John A. Macdonald became the Minister of the Interior in 1878 and took on the responsibility of dealing with the Indigenous in Canada. His mission was clear, to solve the "Indian Problem," and to ensure Indianness dissolved among the Indigenous peoples along with any urge to revolt against the settler state. His hope was to maintain and extend Canada's sovereignty and land base via the destruction of Indigenous Nationhood. In January 1878, Macdonald requested a report on Indian education in the United States to guide his vision of using education as a tool to get at the root of Indianness and "civilize" Indian children in Canada. The United States industrial schools were to be examined and reported on by investigator, Nicholas Flood Davin. Flood Davin visited various schools in operation in the United States, meeting with church leadership, principals and teachers, and some Indian leaders.

He found that in the United States, the goal was to educate all Indigenous children in order for them to "speedily become a citizen of the United States…by educating them in industry and in the arts of civilization."[90] However, Flood Davin found that over time, it became clear that simply educating Indigenous children in industrial schools, on or close to their reserves, was not swift enough. He explains that although "vigorous efforts in an educational direction were put forward,"[91] they were not extreme enough to meet the government's goals—meaning they were

[90] Nicholas Flood Davin, Report on Indian Industrial Schools from the United States to the Minister of the Interior, 1879, RG 10, Volume 6001, File 1-1-1, part 1, School Files, Slide One, 1.
[91] Flood Davin, *Report on Indian Industrial Schools from the United States*, 1.

not successfully breaking down the fabric of indigeneity or the meshing of family, community, and nation, as intended. Flood Davin explains the problem: "It was found that the day school did not work, because the influence of the wigwams was stronger than the influence of the school. Industrial Boarding Schools were therefore established, and these are now numerous and will soon be universal."[92]

This became the foundation of IRS in Canada. The importance of removing children from their families and communities rather than sending them to day schools is the defining feature of the IRS system that differentiates it from other approaches to Indian education. Physically moving children to a foreign place, far from their communities and the love and embrace of their families and parents, is a tactic of colonialism which would not be unfamiliar to the leaders of both the United States and Canada at this time. Furthermore, views and beliefs about Indigenous people in the report are clear, and should be taken into consideration as guiding principles and values that were and are the foundation of Indian Policy in Canada, and particularly of Indian education. For example, from the report, Flood Davin explains: "The experience of the United States is the same as our own as far as the adult Indian is concerned. Little can be done with him. He can be taught to do a little at farming, and at stock-raising, and to dress in a more civilized manner, but that is all. The child, again, who goes to a day school learns little, and what little he learns is soon forgotten, while his tastes are fashioned at home, and his inherited aversion to toil is in no way combated."[93]

Furthermore, Flood Davin explains that Indian education was not intended to be equivalent to the system of education for white children. He illustrates this point by referencing

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[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid., 2.

Colonel Brown of the Seminoles opinion that "they [Indians] never could, in his opinion, cope with the white man in either cunning or industry."[94] The basis of IRS education is founded on the myths of racial inferiority and cultural deficiency, and is recognizable as a common thread that continues to today—myths that still uphold white supremacy and settler colonialism.

Flood Davin explained the expenses and revenue created by industrial schools. He explained that with the labour produced by the young boys, schools could break even, and sometimes also make a profit. For example, he proclaimed that the students in a boarding school in the USA, raising the "359 head of stock of all kinds" ensured the school would eventually become self-supporting.[95] This is reminiscent of what we know of many IRS's in Canada and in particular schools in BC, and those that many Gitxsan attended. My late grandfather, Fred Wale, a survivor of Lytton Residential School, expressed this sentiment at the Anglican Church Second National Native Convocation in 1993: "2 hours a day in the classroom the rest was out in the field working, I remember I used to get thrown outta bed at 5 in the morning, milking 5 cows… five cows… That was my education, by listening to you people crying, I'm with you, I'm with you. I don't know how we are gonna get away with the hurting that's inside us."[96]

Flood Davin suggested that it would be best practice for the religious denomination running the school to delegate the principal and scholars in charge. For example, he says: "When an agent is to be appointed, the candidate is chosen on the recommendation of a representative of one or other of these religious bodies."[97] Disconnect between churches and state led to great amounts of death and abuse in IRS. Issues that arose from the void of accountability between

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[94] Ibid., 5.
[95] Ibid., 3.
[96] The Anglican Church of Canada, *Sacred Circle: Dancing the Dream, Second National Native Convocation,* 1993. https://vimeo.com/11242771 (accessed, 4 February 2019).
[97] Flood Davin, *Report on Indian Industrial Schools from the United States*, P3.

churches and State in running the IRS are attributed to lack of surveillance and evasion of responsibility. This gave space for the government to neglect calls to action by parents and children in the institutions who were experiencing and witnessing violence, starvation, and sexual, physical and emotional abuse.[98]

All of the beliefs about Indigenous people shared in this report are in direct correlation with the creation of Indian policy and a reflection of settler colonial mentality, and in particular those of Macdonald, the founder of the IRS system. From this report, the IRS was created and implemented across Canada. Macdonald's vision was brought to life by many policymakers, public servants, teachers, priests, and administrators for the next century. A few politicians following Macdonald continued extreme advocacy for the IRS system. One of those was Duncan Campbell Scott, who in 1920 stated: "I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that the country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone. . . . Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department, that is the whole object of this Bill."[99]

In regard to the collaboration between church and state, on 8 November 1910, a conference was held for all church officials to meet with the Superintendent of Indian Affairs and the Superintendent of Indian Education, to map out a common vision of Indian education in Canada.[100] From this conference, the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) created a memorandum

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[98] This along with overt supported and systemic racism.
[99] Duncan Campbell Scott on Indian Education. National Archives of Canada, Record Group 10, vol. 6810, file 470-2-3, vol. 7, 55 (L-3) and 63 (N-3)
[100] Letter from Department of Indian Affairs to Church Officials, 25. Nov 1910,. British Columbia Archives, Indian Affairs. RG 10, Volume 6039, file 160-1, part 1, accessed June, 10, 2018.

and contract for the church officials who would be establishing or had already established Indian boarding schools in Canada to sign on to. In this way, they would be held to account to the parameters and expectations of the DIA. This memorandum's purpose was to propose "that the authorities responsible for the maintenance and conduct of Indian Boarding schools shall become a party to in order to entitle such schools to Government aid."[101] The memorandum is a formalization and unification of liabilities between church and state in running IRS's.

From the very beginnings of Indian education, there were severe issues regarding the delivery of the education, the costs of funding, the responsibility and liability between government and the churches, and the ongoing treacherous conditions in the schools. There is a common thread of inconsistency between the teachers, administration, government, and church representatives concerning the welfare of the children. In 1923, in several letters to Duncan Campbell Scott, Indian Commissioner William Morris Graham expressed his worries about pupils at IRS not getting the training they needed to succeed as farmers upon the completion of their studies. Duncan Campbell Scott swiftly replied that the department had no intention to address this issue and that the schools were running successfully.[102] In my research, I have found many letters expressing concern for the students in the schools, some from teachers, some from non-Indigenous community members, some from parents, and even some from within the government. I will not go into detail as this falls outside of the scope of my study, but as Woolford expresses, this reflects the inconsistencies, complexities and uneven meshing of genocidal policies.

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[101] Ibid.

[102] Letter from Duncan Campbell Scott to William Morris Graham, 23.April 1923. British Columbia Archives, Indian Affairs. RG 10, Volume 6039, file 160-1, part 1, accessed June, 10, 2018.

In exploring colonial records, many of which are correspondence around Indian education, it is nearly impossible to grasp reality beyond the rhetoric of white supremacy and white-centrism. Natives mentioned are often nameless and referred to as uncivilized, primitive, angry, and quickly taken to alcohol and violence, as modelled by John A Macdonald, Duncan Campbell Scott and others referenced earlier. This version, of course, does not include the perspective of the Gitxsan/Tsimshian people. Resistance is not accounted for in these records, giving the impression that the people were passively accepting of the change inflicted upon them.

In contrast to the slow evolution of Indian education in eastern Canada, western Canada was experiencing accelerated effort to colonize and civilize indigenous people and lands.[103] To understand the situation of the Gitxsan and Tsimshian during the beginning of settler occupation and influence, we must address the mass death they experienced in the mid to late nineteenth century. Unlike other historians who contribute to this discourse, I will not be making an argument about whether diseases were spread on purpose or by accident. The settler colonizers who brought these diseases are the perpetrators of mass death among the Gitxsan, Tsimshian, and all other natives in British Columbia, whether they intended this outcome or not. Death due to disease was rampant during first settler colonizer encroachment on the Northwest Coast. Wilson Duff states that the number of Tsimshian (which includes Gitxsan) dropped from 8500 in 1835 to 3550 by 1895, and that a man from San Francisco brought the smallpox virus to the Northwest Coastal communities.[104] In Robert Boyd's chapter "Demographic History, 1774-

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[103] John L. Tobias. "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline History of Canada's Indian Policy." In *The Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology* 6 (1976), reprinted in As Long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows (Vancouver, BC: UBC press, 1983), 45.
[104] Wilson Duff, *The Indians of British Columbia*, vol. 1, *The Impact of the White Man* (Third ed. Victoria, Canada: Royal BC Museum, 2014). 39.

1874" in the Smithsonian's 7th volume of the *Handbook of North American Indians: Northwest Coast*, he explains that among the Nisga'a and the Tsimshian, the populations dropped at least 33% post-1836-1837 epidemic. The losses from the 1862-1863 smallpox epidemic meant a 22% decrease in population due to death from the disease. Often historians of first settler occupation in the Northwest Coast acknowledge mass destruction from disease, but approach the topic from a lens of cultural deficiency and understate the tragedy.[105] Duff also states that the epidemics rendered the Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast "a sick and demoralized minority, to be pitied, converted and administered."[106]

The infamous missionary of the Northwest Coast, William Duncan of the CMS, Anglican denomination, who arrived in Port Simpson in 1857, is known to have moved a group of Tsimshian to the new village of Metlakatla and to have avoided the disease at a key moment.[107] He attributed this luck to God's grace to persuade other Tsimshian to join his mission and transform into civilized sub-humans.

As referenced earlier, in Robin Fisher's chapter on missionaries in *Contact and Conflict*, he articulates that "missionaries did not leave Europe to accommodate themselves to the frontier; they came with plans to alter Indian society totally."[108] He explains that "it was no accident that the establishment of effective missions to the Indians coincided with the beginning of settlement. As long as their traditional way of life remained intact, the Indians had no reason to adopt a new

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[105] See for example, Fred Thirkell and Robert Scullion. *British Columbia 100 Years Ago: Portraits of a Province* (Surrey, B.C: Heritage House Pub. Co, 2002;2000) and Jean Barman. *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia*. 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007)
[106] Duff, *The Indians of British Columbia*, 45.
[107] R. Geddes Large, *The Skeena, River of Destiny*, 6th ed. (Surrey, B.C: Heritage House, 2000), 88.
[108] Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, 120.

value system such as Christianity. It was only after the disruptive impact of settlement seemed to render old truths ineffectual that the Indians needed to turn to new ones."[109] To elaborate further, the destruction of "old ways," ie. Shamanism and other spiritual beliefs and practices, was synonymous with the conversion of Indigenous people to Christianity. Fisher's work illustrates the demand for the psychological breakdown of Indigenous peoples to be converted to Christianity and the destruction of Indigenous peoples' entire way of life by the missionaries. This includes the breakdown of laws and governance and the integral role of Shamans and female/Two-Spirit leadership—linking the conversion to Christianity inherently to the project of settler colonialism in British Columbia.

From the time of first contact with settler colonizers, there was distrust of *Umshewa* among the Gitxsan. Although it is often noted that first interactions among Northwest Coast natives and migrant workers, fur traders, and HBC employees were collaborative, there is reason to believe that the Indigenous folks in the Skeena watershed were opposed to these people being on their territories. Following Gitxsan legal orders, *Ayook*, it is against the law for anyone to enter *Lax yip* (house groups' individual territories) without permission. Furthermore, to extract resources from *Lax yip* without permission would have been incredibly jarring to the Gitxsan (as it continues to be).

Historians who have written about this region and an influx of settlers rely on missionary, HBC, and government documents, which all have reasons to exclude Gitxsan/Tsimshian perspectives in their records. The first reason is that settlers at this time did not see common Indigenous people, especially non-binary folks and women, as fully-human or worthy of listening to or recording. As analyzed in Brock's work, Arthur Wellington Clah is only

[109] Ibid.

remembered and celebrated because of his proximity to whiteness and his affiliation with Christianity. Secondly, all of these historical actors were trying to convince their agencies and audiences that the work they were doing was going well, with some challenges, but overall that their presence in the region was needed and had a future. A Gitxsan perspective, which would include a strong stance against this presence, would not be a welcome perspective in their correspondence. Although there are some mentions of the "Skeena Uprising" and other accounts where the Gitxsan resisted and protested the settlers' presence on their territories, I believe frustration and protest would have been a commonly held feeling among the people who were being treated as if they were "uncivilized" and manipulated by liquor and violence.[110]

Arguably the most outstanding and long-lasting effect of the white newcomers was the introduction of patriarchy and misogyny into Gitxsan/Tsimshian communities, which led to social breakdown and widespread and rampant physical and sexual abuse from the settlers on Gitxsan/Tsimshian women. This is observed in Brock's work and others, although usually mentioned as an unfortunate afterthought.[111] White settler worldview and social practices that brought harm and violence to Native women of the coast was also the same worldview and culture that missionaries believed would be the solution. This is counter-intuitive, and of course, violence against Indigenous women continues to be pervasive in Canada, particularly in the Gitxsan/Tsimshian territory on Highway 16, known as the *Highway of Tears*.[112]

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[110] This is acknowledged in R. Geddes Large, *The Skeena, River of Destiny*, 6th ed. (Surrey, B.C: Heritage House, 2000), Peggy Brock, *The Many Voyages of Arthur Wellington Clah: A Tsimshian Man on the Pacific Northwest Coast* (Vancouver [B.C.]: UBC Press, 2011) and Marious Barbeau, *The Downfall of Temlaham*. (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1973)
[111] Brock, *The Many Voyages of Arthur Wellington Clah.* 23.
[112] National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered*

Fisher explains that "the missionaries were aggressively confident about the superiority of their own culture and therefore had no qualms about interfering with the customs of the Indians. Unlike those of the trader, the demands of the missionaries could not be incorporated into existing Indian society; their teachings and their example had to be either accepted or rejected, and acceptance meant virtually a total cultural change for the proselyte."[113] Fisher's argument has been critiqued because it does not account for the Indigenous folks who have and continue to adopt Christianity into their spiritual framework. I acknowledge that our people have agency and have chosen to accept aspects of Christianity. My argument is that the goal and intention of the missionaries was to destroy the fabric of Indigeneity, which is expressed and named as ceremony, shamanism, traditional kinship and governance structures. This is undeniable, and Fisher does an excellent job of exploring these intentions. It allows us to measure the impact of the church's role in breaking down Gitxsan and many other Indigenous Nations' governance and kinship structures. All this is important to keep in mind as we look towards Indian policy and the close ties between the churches and the state in the common goal to eradicate the Indian race.

The mid to late nineteenth century was a dark time for the Gitxsan and all Indigenous peoples in what would become "British Columbia." With such a huge population loss, many people – non-binary folks, women, children, and men – did not receive proper ceremony for spiritual departure from their bodies. There is strict law around dealing with the dead, and currently, there are concerns in Indigenous communities about those who did not receive their

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Indigenous Women and Girls volume 1a. https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1a-1.pdf. accessed July 5, 2019.

[113] Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, 120.

proper rites, and the impact that has on their spirits; many hope to take care of those people/spirits one day.[114] The same sentiment was shared about young people who died at the Miller Bay Indian Hospital in Terrace, and it was shared with me that a Gitxsan person went into the building and took care of the spirits of children that had not left the building since their deaths.[115]

These circumstances of mass disease and death put the already vulnerable Gitxsan in a very particular position.[116] For the incoming missionaries who relied on populations that were disjointed or suffering, the Indigenous peoples on the Northwest Coast were ideal prey for their work. Education was seminal in the work of the missionary. I now turn to archival sources to illustrate the missionary and government presence in the Gitxsan territories from the late-nineteenth century to the twentieth century. This is a very particular time for Indian Policy, before the intentional liberal shift to a neo-colonial approach.

In the Skeena Valley, there were church-run day schools in Gitxsan and Tsimshian communities, starting in the mid-19th century to the early 20th century. These schools were run exclusively by missionaries of different denominations, including Methodist, Presbyterian, and Church of England. In the Babine Agency,[117] there were fourteen schools in operation during this timeline, eleven of which were in Gitxsan territory (see Fig. 1).

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[114] Personal Conversation at Gyets Gitxsan Meeting, the 10th of December 2018, Gitwangak Band Office. People have been calling their spirit back in places all over the world.
[115] Ibid.
[116] I have been warned that this description is victimizing Indigenous people. To acknowledge the mass death in Indigenous Nations and the undeniable vulnerability that caused (causes) is part of the legacy of colonialism and does not undermine the strength and resilience of Indigenous people. It is merely a fact.
[117] The Babine Agency is the branch of Indian Affairs that deals with the region including Gitxsan and Wet'suwet'en territories.

Babine Agency Schools 1895–1912	
1894	Hazelton Day School
1895	Kisgegas Day School
1895	Kispiox Day School
1900	Kitwangka Day School
1902	Glen Vowell School
1906	Meanskinisht School
1910	Rocher De Boule School
1912	Old Kizeguecla School

Figure 1. Babine Agency schools 1895–1912.

In 1912 Martin Benson, Head of Education in the DIA, wrote to the Deputy Superintendent General in opposition to the Methodist Church's plan to establish an Industrial School in Hazelton. This request had been brought forward previously by Superintendent of Methodist Missions of British Columbia, Robert Whittington. The letter from Martin Benson to Frank Pedley, Deputy Minister of the Department of Indian Affairs at the time, stated that Dr. Sutherland and later Whittington had been lobbying the government to support the development of a Methodist Industrial School in Hazelton with the support of Indian Agent R.E. Loring and Arthur Vowell, Indian Superintendent for British Columbia. Benson stated that the Anglicans were against the creation of the school due to their long presence and influence in the region. Correspondence also shows that the school was not supported because the government did not have the funds to support it.[118]

[118] Letter from Martin Benson To Super Intendant Pedley, 13. December 1912 British Columbia Archives, Indian Affairs. RG 10, Volume 6036, file 151-1-1, part 1, accessed June, 10, 2018.

An excerpt from Benson's letter from 1912 states:

> Out of the 241 Indians returned in last years' census for Hazelton, 231 are Anglican and the remaining 10 pagans. The largest settlement of Methodist Indians is at Kishpiax, where out of a total of 216 they have 197 adherents, the remaining 19 being pagans. There are 52 children of school age in this band, and the Methodists have a day school there with an enrolment of 43 and an average of 26. This school is kept open only from the 1st October to the 21st of March of each year, but Mr. Agent Loring in his last report says that during the season it is well attended and good progress is made by the pupils and that the parents take an interest in the matters of enforcing their children's attendance when conditions permit. There are 2951 Indians in the Babine and Upper Skeena River agency, 1831 of whom are Roman Catholics, 603 Anglicans, 276 Methodists, 105 of other Christian beliefs (chiefly Salvationists) and the remaining 136 pagans. In a letter forwarded by the Indian Superintendent, Victoria, Bishop Du Vernet protested on behalf of the Anglicans against the establishment by the Methodists of an industrial school at Hazleton. He claimed that Hazleton has been a Church of England Mission for 25 years and that if the government contemplates establishing an industrial school his Church should be accorded the privilege of carrying it on.[119]

Benson indicates that previous existing religious denominations in the area prohibited the Methodists from beginning their proposed school as to not disturb the work of the Church of England. This is an example of how influential the churches were in Indian education, and the entanglements between various denominations and between church and state.

Continuing to 1920, Duncan Campbell Scott continued to deny the call for a Methodist-run industrial school in Hazleton. In 1925 there was another letter sent to the missionary society of Methodists ensuring that when funds became available the Indians of Hazelton "would not be overlooked."[120] The needs of the Indians, according to the Methodists and a few supporters, would be met by the creation of an industrial school. Although the Gitxsan perspective is absent,

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[119] Letter from Superintendent of Indian Affairs to Methodist Church , 28. December, 1905. British Columbia Archives, Indian Affairs. RG 10, Volume 6036, file 151-1-1, part 1. accessed June, 10, 2018.

[120] Letter from A.F. MacKenzie to Rev Young Terrace. 21. July 1925. British Columbia Archives, Indian Affairs. RG 10, Volume 6036, file 151-1-1, part 1, accessed June, 10, 2018.

even if they did want the school, it was never created for two reasons. The first was church rivalries in the region, meaning that if another church denomination came in to create another school, it would take away Gitxsan pupils that they relied on as capital in their own missionary project (the best interests of the Gitxsan were not considered in this project). Secondly, the motives of the Federal government to remove Indigenous children from their communities: funding a local industrial school did not align with the goal of removing Gitxsan children from kin and subsequently their culture, land and understanding of who they were as Gitxsan people. As expressed previously, the Canadian government's goal was not to educate Indigenous children but to remove them from their homes in order to destroy their Indigeneity. An industrial school in Hazelton was not conducive to this vision.

Similarly, in a letter from Anglican missionary Reverend Robert Tomlinson, who arrived in Victoria in 1867 with the CMS, to Indian Agent R.E. Loring, he requested funding for this school at his Metlakatla-inspired community in 1906 called Meanskinisht. This mock-settler community aimed to host Gitxsan people and provide training in white culture and Christianity. Tomlinson said: "Ever since we settled here some eighteen years ago we have [provided] schools for the Indian Settlers. The parents of these children first passed a Village rule binding themselves and any who might join this village to send their children regularly to school."[121] He explains: "we have twenty-two children of school age belonging to this village at present."[122] The goal of the missionaries was to convert Indians to their religion and civilize them, and the goal of the government was to remove the Indian from the child via "education." Both of these

[121] Large, *The Skeena*, 88.
[122] Letter from Meanskinisht To I.A. Loring, 29 October, 1906. British Columbia Archives, Indian Affairs. RG 10, Volume 6037, file 151-20-1, part 1, accessed June, 10, 2018.

intentions, while superficially diverging, yielded the same devastating results and each supported the goals of the other.

In a letter eight years later, in 1914, Father Frederick Du Vernet of the Diocese of Caledonia responded to the DIA's request for his input on the school/teaching situation at Meanshinisht. His letter states the following: "[T]hank you for your courtesy in consulting me, but this is a case in which I have nothing to say." He goes on to say:

> Rev. Robert Tomlinson, the founder of Meanshinisht, was a clergyman of the Church of England though of late years he carried on his work in a more or less independent manner. After his death, last winter his son Richard formally handed over the mission to the Methodist Church. There is no Indian Reserve at Meanshinish. The Indian village stands on the Tomlinson Estate. Rev. Robert Tomlinson drew up a lease to the village Council under certain strict conditions. I doubt whether this lease was ever registered or whether it would hold in law. The consequence is that while I used to visit Mr. Tomlinson as a friend I always felt that the village was his private property. He was a man of strong opinions of his own and it was best that he should work in his own way….I am now not in any way connected with the Mission of Meanskinisht.[123]

There are undertones of disapproval and wariness towards the way Tomlinson was living his life and running his private village. Tomlinson, his family, and the other missionaries in the area embodied the self-serving and destructive image that Fisher paints of missionaries in the region. Overall, these communications between missionaries, politicians and government employees show the intermeshing of layers of control, surveillance, and paternalism employed over the Gitxsan people during this time. There is not one whisper of Gitxsan perspective in these accounts. I do not find it difficult to see how the plans that were created by these men, whom we will hear from in the next chapter, did and continue to do great harm. There has been considerable work done by non-Native scholars that discusses the "good intentions" of missionaries, Indian agents and other early settler colonizers, as addressed in chapter two of this

[123] Ibid.

thesis. Many Indigenous people do not share this perspective. The argument laid out in chapter two of "impact over intent" is useful while addressing the absurd belief that there were good intentions to begin with, which from an Indigenous perspective is not only dehumanizing but extremely white supremacist. No, it is not a good intention to decimate the culture of a people whom you hope will submit to your culture so that you can eventually destroy their sacred homelands. Each settler colonizer historical actor has political, economic and religious motivations -- serving the state, the church, or (white) man. I do not entertain any delusion that these women and men had good intentions for our people.

Although this is a small snapshot into the early days of Indian education in the Gitxsan Nation, there are a few key takeaways. Firstly, the needs and wants of the sovereign Gitxsan people are entirely absent in these records, which mirrors the ideologies of Indigenous people being sub-human, uncivilized, and unable to care for themselves—subsequently undermining their sovereignty, laws, and governments, justifying the theft of their land and the violence against their people. Secondly, these records are incredibly narrow and shallow and it would be unwise to draw any conclusions from them that assume that settler experience is a reflection of reality. We can draw from these records an understanding of how paternalism, patriarchy, violence, manipulation, control, and surveillance was the foundation of settler occupation and relations with Gitxsan/Tsimshian people during the mid to late nineteenth century.

Chapter 4. Social and Oral History of Indian Education: Gitxsan Perspectives

How can they address it? How can the government say"oh we apologize" too late to apologize, it's done you've done the deed, you've done what your agenda has said to assimilate, and you've stayed true to it and it's still going on so they cannot. I would never be comfortable with their apology, and to say words that, like reconciliation and all that BS that they are talking about, and then to turn around and say you have a time frame on it, oh you guys haven't decided this, by this, or else you lose it. Then they say things that they don't mean. One of the big teachings from our elders is Ama gya'adihl hen, be careful what you say, Ama gya'adihl win, be careful what you do, Ama gya'adihl hen, be careful what you say because you cannot take those words and put it back in your mouth. An apology is just a smokescreen, because your words are already out there, where can you find it? It's out there, you can put it back in your mouth, it'll be gone, that's what they've taught us, be careful how you walk, don't step on people's toes, because it'll cost you, you'll have to put on a big feast and then, Xsgook dim gukws haldim guutxwin hligook dim hlo'odiit 'niin, you gotta pick yourself up, before anybody respects you again - Gwass Hlaam

Finally, we arrive at the essential part of this thesis. With the foundation laid in the previous chapters, we can truly measure the resilience of Indigenous people, we can mourn the loss of our loved ones, and we can share stories of resistance and resurgence. Without this foundation, we cannot truly appreciate the strength of our people, then and now. I now turn to conversations with four Gitxsan *Simgigyet* (chiefs) and elders on this topic and explore Gitxsan reflections on IRS and the future for Gitxsan people.

Oral history is a method of gathering information about experiences and events from the past from memories of people who have a living relationship with the historical topic. This method is often invoked to address gaps in the written record and to give voice and agency to perspectives that are excluded from the historical record, intentionally or not. In *Written as I Remember it: Teachings (?Ems Ta?Aw) from the Life of a Sliammon Elder*, the authors explain that oral history has "the power to unearth sociopolitical assumptions and intellectual

foundations."[124] They explain that their text should be regarded "as a collaboratively authored historical analysis, a secondary source in its own right, and Chi-chia as a *la>amun* historian in her own right. Both the open-ended listening discussed above and the recognition of the expertise of Indigenous elders and knowledge keepers are important elements of the Indigenous methodology we have followed in producing this book."[125]

I have also followed an Indigenous methodology in writing this chapter, and perhaps throughout this entire thesis. To me, following general principles of Gitxsan teachings is an Indigenous methodology, which have been outlined in my introduction. Here I will do a brief overview of this method. My method includes but is not limited to: listening with your heart and spirit, speaking the truth honestly and respectfully, honouring the power of stories shared by elders, honouring the significance of elders' time and what they choose to share, accepting the stories shared with you and continuing to learn from them over time, sharing food and gifts with those sharing time and knowledge with you, honouring that all good things take time and patience, and honouring that it is possible to have many perspectives on one story and that is a strength not a weakness. Furthermore, it is important to understand that details are not the most significant part of a story, but the message and the teachings within that story are most significant. It is not my job to do an in-depth analysis of the stories shared with me, the knowledge keepers that I have had the honour of speaking with are expert storytellers and their words and stories stand alone as valid. With that, I have contributed a few notes on some of what they have shared to give context to some of these stories.

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[124] Paige Raibmon, "Introduction" in *Written as I Remember it: Teachings (?Ems Ta?Aw) from the Life of a Sliammon Elder*. (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2014) 4.
[125] Raibmon, *Introduction,* 8.

Oral narratives and history, specifically around IRS, are at risk of being co-opted to feed the current victim and trauma narratives that Canada is embracing,[126] missing out on the opportunity to envision futures, to seek land/body justice, and to acknowledge the ongoing and uneven trajectory of healing and resisting ongoing colonial violence.[127] Therefore, in this thesis, I prioritize interviews with Gitxsan elders/survivors to honour their experiences with the IRS system and its ongoing effects, to express what stories are vital for them to share, and to inform and guide a strong future for coming Gitxsan generations.

I have been working with the Gyets Gitxsan IRS[128] group on a curriculum project within a long-term mandate they have for healing and Gitxsan cultural resurgence. This collective does work to heal survivors, families, and communities, through survivors telling their stories and calling back their spirit.[129] In this process, it is not my place to ask for emotional labour or to ask participants to reveal traumatic experiences to me. Even with the mention of the project, or during informal conversations with some family and elders in the communities, if I said "oh I would love to interview you and hear more about this!" (regarding funny stories or stories of resistance), most people would instantly change the mood and express fear or unwillingness to talk about their lives. They seemed to believe that inherently the interviews would demand they share negative experiences. I believe that this stems from the way that the TRC, and in response, government, institutions, and Canadian society overall, have shaped how Indigenous peoples are

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[126] Dian Million, *Therapeutic Nations: Healing in an Age of Indigenous Human Rights* (Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 2013), 6.
[127] Karine Vanthuyne, and Brieg Capitaine, *Power through Testimony: Reframing Residential Schools in the Age of Reconciliation* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2017), 9.
[128] A group of Gitxsan elders and survivors, supported by the United Church and Gitanyow Health Services
[129] Calling back the spirit is a Gitxsan practice of healthcare and spiritual reclamation.

conditioned to share their stories and what is expected/wanted from them.[130] Furthermore, there is no way to separate experiences of trauma from those of other life experiences. Many Gitxsan people have experienced significant loss and hardship in their lives due to settler colonialism and it is impossible for that to not come up in conversation about their childhoods or their lives in general. This is something that I was prepared to face in the interviews.

The first week of December 2018, I sat down with and had conversations with four Gitxsan elders in Gitxsan territory. Three of the Gitxsan elders I spoke with are hereditary chiefs and are responsible for their Wilp (house) and Lax Yip (territory). The fourth is a revered elder and member of the community. First, I spoke with Guxsen from Gitsegukla, Fireweed clan; second, Gwass Hlaam of Gitanyow, Wolf clan, who lives in Gitsegukla; third Niisnoolh, Fireweed clan from Gitsegukla, a survivor of Edmonton Indian Residential School. The last person, referred to here as Git,[131] grew up in Gitxsan territory and is a name holder in one of the four Gitxsan clans. The Gitxsan clan system includes the following four clan groups: Lax Gibuu (Wolf), Lax Seel (Frog) and Ganada (Frog/Raven), Lax Gisgaast (Fireweed) and Lax Skiik (Eagle). Within the clans are kinship groups called Wilp (house), each with a Simogyet (Chief) which shares the name of the Wilp. Sixty-four Wilp make up the 33,000 square kilometres of territory in the Skeena valley region of "British Columbia."

Three of the four elders I interviewed are not IRS survivors. In the time I have spent interviewing Gitxsan elders and from my own family history, it is clear that in many cases during the IRS era, a few children would be left at home in each family. In conversations about this, it has become clear that removing *all* children from a village would make for a high risk of

[130] Vanthuyne and Capitaine, *Power through testimony,*13.
[131] This is a pseudonym for an anonymous interviewee.

disobedience by the parents. Subsequently, leaving the parents with a number of children to take care of in the home and in the communities made it less likely for parents to revolt against local authorities taking their children to IRS; parents feared being arrested, thus leaving their other children to become orphans. Although three of these four elders did not attend IRS, it is clear that the IRS system and its goals drastically affected their lives, their families, communities, and the Nation. They, their parents, and siblings were often mentally and emotionally traumatized by their experience of having children forcibly removed from their homes. In the interviews, recollections of children being apprehended and being forced to go to unknown institutions are expressed as traumatic experiences, and the families and parents are noted as having little to no choice in the matter.[132] In some cases, the families encouraged the child to go to school because of the illusion of opportunities given to those who went to the schools. In some instances, the child swiftly urged the parents not to send any of their siblings to the schools out of wanting to protect them from the horrors they witnessed. Guxsen and Gwass Hlaam elaborate on their experiences with the church-run Indian Day Schools which were in their communities; this is another dimension of Indian Education that is explored in this chapter.

I also include a considerable amount of content from the PhD dissertation of Jane Smith, Xwiswis, titled *Returning the Feathers: Five Gitxsan Stories*. Smith emphasizes the importance of discussing the effects of IRS on the Gitxsan. She explores the spectrum of loss that children suffered due to their experience at IRS. This spectrum includes, but is not limited to: loss of family connection, loss of language, loss of culture, loss of Gitxsan identity, broken spirit leading to mental health and substance abuse, and so on. As part of her dissertation, Smith has created a

[132] Most families encouraged education, yet the reality of having children forcibly removed was never the vision or the intention of sending children to school.

curriculum from a Gitxsan pedagogical perspective. Smith frames Gitxsan stories as a pedagogical method of teaching Gitxsan worldview to children. Smith explains that she uses a "method of storytelling based on learning and sharing." Furthermore, she explains that "storytelling in Indigenous research is both phenomenon and method."[133]

In my conversations with the four chiefs and elders, the participants shared stories of resistance and strength, vulnerability, pain and loss, humour, laughter and happiness, frustration, vision and responsibility for the future generation of Gitxsan and the land. The questions I asked were broad as I wanted to capture and express here, and in the curriculum, precisely the knowledge that elders prioritized in their sharing. In general, I asked the following open-ended questions to start a conversation with each elder: Who are you? Where are you from? How did *Umshewa* School and Residential School affect your life? What do you remember of Gitxsan teachings and upbringing? How did Gitxsan teachings shape who you are today? What is essential to be passed down and for young Gitxsan/Survivors to learn?

From these conversations, there was a great deal of knowledge, beautiful stories and Gitxsan teachings shared. I am humbled and honoured to have had conversations with these beautiful and incredible people about their lives, experiences, their vision for the future, and healing of their families, communities, Nation and lands. I have broken up these conversations into four general themes. I look at a) Umshewa Education and IRS and its legacy (this theme includes Indian Day Schools); b) Teachings passed down by females in the family; c) Gitxsan Resistance to Colonial violence against land and governance systems; and d) Revitalization of Gitxsan knowledge, teachings, laws, governance, and identity.

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[133] Jane Smith and Ken N. Mowatt. *Returning the Feathers: Five Gitxsan Stories*. (Smithers, B.C: Creekstone Press, 2004). 43.

Starting with *Umshewa* education and IRS and its negative effects on the participants, their families and communities, the elders share stories of resistance and negative experiences, and express different ways that the IRS system changed their lives and the lives of their families. In the following excerpts, the participants express the loss and the pain of IRS and *Umshewa* schooling. They also talk generally about IRS and the choices they were forced to make (one survivor in particular), and at times express how education was an act of survival.

Niishnoolh explains some of his experience with IRS:

> I was born in North Pacific Cannery, and then when I was 11 years old, I was in grade 6, 1956-57. I went to Edmonton Indian Residential school along with my younger brother Tom, and after that year when we came back, I told my parents not to send my brother to any other residential school 'cause it was pretty tough for him. After grade 8, I was 13 years old, the local Indian Agent Education Superintendent said I had three choices to go on, first was go back to Edmonton Residential school, second go to Alberni Residential School, and the third was to drop out. Dropping out at 13, my parents and grandparents would have had conniptions. Because I already had some friends and relatives in Edmonton, I went back there, and I graduated. I graduated from Jasper Place Comp high school, in Jasper Place, which was not a part of Edmonton, just along the west part of Edmonton; at that time it wasn't part of Edmonton, 1963. And after that, I went back and went to college in downtown Edmonton, Alberta College. The Indian Residential school in Edmonton was a United Church-run school.[134]

Niishnoolh's experience is an example of how Indian Education pushed children out of their communities through such methods, in this case, as administrators giving children difficult ultimatums. Niishnoolh faced the choice to drop out of school completely, which would narrow his opportunities in the *Umshewa* world, or to leave his community and attend IRS far from home. His family would have "conniptions" if he dropped out, showing that education was highly valued. As mentioned later on by Guxsen, education was conceptualized as a means of survival for many during this era. We see here in Niishnoolh's recollection that school was a

[134] Niishnoolh, interviewed by Gina Mowatt, December 6, 2018, Gitsegukla.

priority, but he also acknowledges it as a place of fear and danger for some students, including his brother. This example of a complex relationship with IRS illustrates the nuances within the genocidal project, described by Woolford as layers of netting that mesh together as an overall goal of destruction. Woolford explains: "genocidal processes are themselves uneven and uncertain because colonial networks that generate these processes manifest in unpredictable ways."[135] This description encompasses the complexity of Niishnoolh's situation as he had no choice but to attend IRS because of the value placed on education by his family, yet he also experienced IRS as an unsafe space for him and his peers.[136] Also mentioned is Niishnoolh's brother Tom's experience. Tom did not adjust well to the IRS, and Niishnoolh was swift to tell his parents that he should not be sent away to the schools. Attempting to protect and support peers and kin within IRS is a major theme in Niishnoolh's experience at Edmonton Residential School.

Indian Day Schools come up in the interviews with Guxsen and Gwass Hlaam, both of whom did not go to IRS but stayed in their communities and went to the church-run schools. Both explained their experiences of neglect, and mental and emotional abuse at the schools. Guxsen explains:

> [I was a] fluent speaker, started speaking when I was three or four. That was the only language they used. I didn't go to school until I was 6. There was a small schoolhouse in Gitsegukla. So we had to wait, just started off in grade 1. So when we started grade 1, I struggled quite a bit, same with my other friends who were my age. We didn't know how to speak English, or how to read. We just knew Gitxsan, that's all. We really struggled; we were "dumb Indians" when we went to school. We spoke really good Gitxsan though.[137]

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[135] Andrew Woolford, *Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 30.
[136] Woolford, *Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America,* 31.
[137] Guxsen, interviewed by Gina Mowatt, December 5, 2018, Gitanyow.

Guxsen's memory of being treated as though he and his peers were "dumb Indians" illustrates the mentality of the teachers and staff, and the pervasive perspective among whites in this era. Guxsen and his peers were not merely students who were behind in learning English; they were coded as "dumb" because they were Gitxsan. Their proficiency in their own language was not only recognized as invalid, it signified inferiority. This idea is expressed in the Flood Davin report of 1879, as mentioned earlier. In the foundational report, Flood Davin reiterated the perspective that Indian children were not able to rise to the white standard or ability, so their education was to be confined to industrial skills training and very basic, primary learning.[138]

Gwass Hlaam's experience in the Indian Day School in Gitwangak was similar to Guxsen's:

> Ya, it wasn't a very good experience for a lot of us because of the attitude of some of the teachers, especially the teacher that they call the principal, he would be teaching the 6, 7, 8 and 9's, the higher classes. Some of them were very mean. When it was time for recess everybody had to go outside, no matter what the weather was like in the wintertime you had to go outside, and he'd lock the door. And same thing when you'd go to school in the morning, the doors were locked and when it was time for him to ring the bell, he'd unlock the door and ring the bell. And a lot of people weren't really dressed for the cold winter because there was only so much that you could buy with your father's income. I understand how that is because my first paycheque when I was working at the sawmill at the Gitwangak Valley, just a little under 200 dollars for two weeks, that's when I realized that it was hard for my dad to raise all us kids.[139]

Guxsen and Gwass Hlaam's experiences in the Indian Day Schools demonstrate how missionary work was aligned with the agenda of the government in demoralizing the children and shaming them for their Indianness. Harsh physical treatment (e.g., locking children outside in extreme cold weather), made worse by families' poverty, speaks to the meshing of negative daily

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[138] Flood Davin, *Report on Indian Industrial Schools from the USA to the Minister of the Interior*, 2.
[139] Gwass Hlaam, interviewed by Gina Mowatt, December 5, 2018, Gitanyow.

personal experience at school and broader socio-economic marginalization of Indigenous peoples under the policies of the Canadian state.

Guxsen explains how Indian Day Schools operated to remove the Gitxsan way from the child:

> The Gitxsan way is something that you can never get back again. Learning and going to school and Indian Day School really took us away from our culture and language.
>
> Gina: Do you find that was taken away from you?
>
> Guxsen: Yeah, mhm. In a way, education is a priority for any house. It has a lot to do with surviving.[140]

Guxsen reiterates Niishnoolh's sentiments about the importance of education, although it was an unpleasant and sometimes dangerous situation. Often emotionally, mentally and physically abusive, the church-run schools were still seen as a necessary process to engage with.

Gwass Hlaam elaborates on his experience in an *Umshewa* high school in Vancouver. Many Gitxsan teenagers were sent to the city and to be hosted by white families and attend public schools. This took place over a few decades at least, generally between the 1950's - 1980's.[141] As Gwass Hlaam explains,

> There was a short cut that we went through kind of like an alley, some of the higher grades up high. Every time I'd go to my next class somebody would be up there hooting and hollering giving the war-whoop, but um it's always in you that um, if somebody's going to do that ignore them, and walk away 'cause if you start to turn around and look at the short cut in front, you were the only one there, and he's got all his friends around him. That's part of the things that the old people always said, if like um, one of the things that I always remember is um times would be so bad that a big wind will come and hit you, that's talk eh, the big wind will come and hit you, just stand there, it'll go around you, and all that, it'll go by and if you're true, and you're not wrong in what you're doing, you'll still stand there and they will fade away.[142]

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[140] Guxsen, interviewed by Gina Mowatt, December 5, 2018, Gitanyow.
[141] My knowledge from communication within the community/family
[142] Gwass Hlaam, interviewed by Gina Mowatt, December 5, 2018, Gitanyow.

Gwass Hlaam explains that he was taunted, bullied and racially profiled by the other students. His story also demonstrates the strength of Gitxsan teachings in the face of white supremacy and racism. Gwass Hlaam was able to persevere because of the teachings he brought with him – teachings that told him hurtful words were like wind, and that he could stand up to them. This was something that Indian Education did not succeed in taking away from him.

As mentioned above, Gwass Hlaam and Guxsen did not attend IRS, but they both expressed at length how IRS affected them, their families and their communities. In the following excerpt, Gwass Hlaam discusses this theme:

> A lot of the problems that we have now are the [because of the] IRS system. I remember my mother and father getting stuff together for my brother and sister because they were told they had to send them to Edmonton and I was wondering why my parents were so lost, some would say, what they call *Kw'ootxw ga goodiit* their heart is lost, because they had to get ready to put their two children on a train to go to Edmonton. After that when they went on the train, I remember my mom standing there, a really blank look on her face, and I don't think she ever got over it. Same with my father because my father came to a point where he wouldn't ever hug us, he never did hug us, because why hang, I guess maybe he figured, why would I hang on to something that I'm gonna lose later on. And like my mother, she stood there and watched the train go, she got home, she went to her room, and all she did was just mend clothes and time for supper, time for dinner, she'd just get up and go through the motion of preparing things and what not. It always bothered me to remember that. Not too long before that we went to Prince Rupert, the one that they had to send to Edmonton, she was in Millar Bay, in Prince Rupert, she was there for many years, because as a child, I don't really remember growing up with her, but then my parents went down to [Prince] Rupert, and they came back with her, we had to get adjusted to having another sister in the house, and to have my mother sit there and go through the motions of living, and losing her daughter again, and to be told that if those kids don't get on the train, you guys are going to be arrested, and then what would happen to us? The siblings? I guess you would say they were damned if they did, damned if they didn't. That's the thing that really stuck to my mind is the torture my parents went through and other parents to watch the train go away and carry their children away from them and not to know where they were going and the environment that they were going to be in. Like I said I was lucky when I got sent away to high school in Vancouver because the people I went to, they looked after me, they fed me, and they respected me. Like I said, the hardest part is watching my mother trying to get through losing her daughter again. [143]

[143] Gwass Hlaam, interviewed by Gina Mowatt, December 5, 2018, Gitanyow.

Although Gwass Hlaam did not attend IRS, it is clear how deeply affected he was and continues to be by the experience of seeing his siblings taken from his family, and his parents' pain and loss. Guxsen expresses a similar experience:

> I would've lived a rough life even if I didn't go, and hearing on the news that survivors they all pass on before their time. I'm just glad that I didn't go to residential school. That [IRS] really affected my brother. He was that last one to hold my name. It really affected him, but he wouldn't talk about it. When he took the name Guxsen he was really proud, he took the name with honour, but the IRS really made him struggle, he didn't know much about our law and our Adaawk. I tried to help him a few times, but he got really upset with me. He would never talk about it. He'd just get really angry. I think he had that name for 10 or 11 years…I think the survivors before they got their settlement should have got a lot of counselling. The things they went through. There's just a few survivors left, that really wanna work with us with the IRS. So I think if we had have started our workshops before the settlement we wouldn't have lost a lot of our families, our siblings, yeah.[144]

Smith recalls her memories of *Umshewa* schooling:

> It's important to note that I did not attend residential school. The Gitanmaaxs Band Council, of which my grandfather John Smith was a member, decided that a school should be built in Hazelton. Discussions started in 1946 to obtain land for an amalgamated school to service both Gitxsan and non-Gitxsan students in the area. It was not opened until 1954. The council surrendered land, and the Skeena Amalgamated School was built in joint agreement with Hazelton School Districts # 53 (now known as Coast Mountains School District #82). Gitxsan children no longer had to attend Indian Day School or leave to go to residential school. The teachers of the public school system seemed very unhappy. By the time I went to school in the 1950s the attitude of the teachers was still the same. It appeared as if they considered it a great burden to have to teach Gitxsan students. My elementary schooling was very difficult, because of the differential treatment of First Nations students, non-First Nations curriculum and racism. I had older sisters who taught me to read. My father taught me to do Math. So in spite of the seemingly negative environment at the school, I made progress.[145]

Smith's experience in Umshewa school is similar to that of Gwass Hlaam and Guxsen, as they express the racism and hostility directed at them by their Day School teachers. These experiences stand in contrast to the concept of education which *Umshewa* people value and see as a

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[144] Guxsen interviewed by Gina Mowatt, December 5, 2018, Gitanyow.
[145] Smith, Re*turning the Feathers*, 20.

fundamental right — for children to be groomed, lifted up, pushed to their full potential and celebrated. Indian Education, for Gwass Hlaam, Guxsen, Niishnoolh and Smith, was none of those things.

Niishnoolh shared a story of resistance and solidarity with other Gitxsan at Edmonton Residential School. His story shows the incredible strength of the children who were sent away and that the teachings they took with them became part of their resistance and their survival strategy for getting through their time away. Niishnoolh talks about language, and how important it was to keep it as a Gitxsan person:

> Well, the Gitxsan were always noted for resistance from way back. Residential school, for me personally, we weren't allowed to speak, as you know, our language. But when I went back in 59, 60 year,[146] there's two brothers, young brothers that got on in Hazleton, Greg[147] and Gerald[148], and another young guy Max[149], so I kind of took them under my wing. Max, he did not speak the language but Greg and Gerald were very fluent when they were young, and they would speak the language on the train. So I told them, I'll look after you guys, we'll work together, don't speak the language. So when after we got to the Residential School, I made a pact with them, even though there were other Gitxsan kids or guys I know that spoke the language, there were some, by that time there were a lot that didn't speak the language because they'd been in Edmonton for quite a while. So I made a pact with these guys, that we speak our language when we are together, when nobody else is around, in earshot, you know, we will speak our language and if there are other Gitxsan guys around, we won't speak our language, because in Residential Schools it's an institution, in institutions you got kids that'll do things to get favour from supervisors and stuff. So if they hear you, a kid hears you speaking your language, another kid will be reporting it right away, to get brownie points type of thing. So when we used to go in the wintertime, late fall, winter, after we did our Saturday morning chores, a number of us would go out rabbit hunting. We had a certain structure, the guys that were good with slingshots, they would go down about a mile. The Residential School in Edmonton had about 800 acres, and one area across the track was all good rabbit country, proper trees, and stuff. So they'd go down about a mile or so, with their slingshots and marbles and we'd come along, oh, about 50 feet apart and make all kinds of noise as we march towards the shooters, and pretty soon the rabbits start coming out a running up ahead of us, and we would knock the rabbits off if they were going by and after that the guys that were good at skinning -- these are the guys who have been at Residential School quite a while,

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[146] 1959/1960 school year
[147] pseudonym
[148] pseudonym
[149] pseudonym

> especially the Crees you know, they were really good at skinning rabbits -- and they'd skin them. There's a place we'd go to kind of a camp, there was a big pot there, couple of pots, we'd sneak out onions and potatoes, stuff like that, pepper, salt. After they skinned the rabbits put water in these pots, put the rabbits in there, cut up and boil them. When it's time to eat a deck of cards comes out so we'd decide whether ace was low or ace was high, you know, and either the highest card or lower card gets the first choice of the nice rabbit. The back, the saddle of the rabbit is always the best, so whoever has the winning card that's the first thing they had, and that's how we'd go, keep going in a circle until all the rabbit chucks were gone. And by that time it's close to supper time at school so when we get back for supper we'd pretend we were hungry, cause if you don't eat your supper you'd get whacked.

This generous sharing from Niishnoolh illustrates interpersonal and relational resistance within IRS. He describes his role in engaging with other Gitxsan children to speak their language in secret in order to continue an aspect of being Gitxsan in a space where that was outlawed. He expresses his awareness of institutional pressure on students, to divide and conquer and impose a mentality of scarcity, in contrast to unity and trust among their peers. Furthermore, he shares his memory of his Cree classmates hunting and preparing rabbit from their teachings from their home. As mentioned earlier, Woolford's theory of meshing accounts for nuances like resistant practices within the institutions, without diminishing the overall genocidal agenda of Indian Education.

All of the participants expressed how their mothers, aunts, and grandmothers were influential in passing down Gitxsan teachings in their lives, regardless of where they went to school. The Gitxsan are a Matrilineal society, meaning that kinship is passed down on the mother's side. The Gitxsan are also a gender egalitarian society.[150] Gitxsan have both female and male chiefs. This is critical in the Gitxsan kinship system and societal organization, and overall is an expression of Gitxsan worldview. The roles of men and women are gendered, yet Gitxsan

[150] Smith, *Returning the Feathers*, 20.

women are highly revered, have political and social autonomy and authority, and are in many ways the leaders and teachers in their families, their communities, and the Nation as a whole. Indigenous women have been specially targeted and marginalized as a direct attempt to diminish Indigenous social and governing structures. In the conversations I had with the Gitxsan elders, the role of teaching and grooming is recalled as coming from the women in their families.

The theme of female leadership and female roles in transmitting knowledge in the family and community came out naturally, not as a response to any particular question about female leadership or gender roles in family or community in the interviews. Guxsen, Niishnoolh, and Gwass Hlaam express how mothers, grandmothers and other women in their lives and communities transferred the pillars of Gitxsan knowledge to them, encouraged them to partake in the feast system, and taught them to demonstrate respect to their kin.

Guxsen expresses this view of women's key roles in the following excerpt:

> The biggest part was my mom started teaching me. She always taught me about the feast systems, and she told me to never stop going to feasts, and that's what I've been doing all my life is going to feasts. I was wing chief before I was ten, I was given a name, so I had to attend all the feasts and learn the system. Like, when we serve at the feast and when we sit down at the feast and get invited by other clans, that's the biggest part of learning is when you sit at the feast hall and all the elders start talking about our *Ayook*. They're sharing it with us, so I was really lucky that I know quite a few elders sitting on our table, they always talk about our *Ayook* and our *Adaawk*, and teach us the feast system. That was a big part of learning, just sitting in the feast hall or putting up feasts. We call it "house of learning," the feasts, *wilp siwilaaksa*, cause you're all learning whenever you go there. They call it *wilp ayook* house of law. Yeah, yeah, [my mother] taught me really good. Everything, our language, our feast system. So, I had a really good teacher and mentor. That's what I'm trying to pass on right now, what I was taught. But that's how we work it in Gitxsan, we call it *Ts'ins yeedinhl*, pass it on.[151]
>
> We have to honour other chiefs, their Lax yip, our law is really strong, the way we use it. We aren't supposed to go on anyone else's territory, unless we get permission from the chief that owns that territory. But our law is really strict. We can't marry the same clan,

[151] Guxsen, interviewed by Gina Mowatt, December 5, 2018, Gitanyow.

> cause there's a few guys I know that married in the same clan. It goes back to his mom instead, to say that his mom didn't teach him right, that's the *Ayook* [152]
>
> Yeah, even when we lose our mothers we say that we lose all our *Ayook* and our *Adaawk*. Everything that was passed down from our grandfathers, we pass it down through our mothers.[153]

Similarly, Gwass Hlaam shared about women in his life passing down Gitxsan teachings:

> When we were still young, quite young, the parents would take us for walks to the community and go visit one of my dad's cousins and her, not sure if it was her grandmother or her aunt. And that's the way we connected, we went and visited and when we lived in Gitwangak, we'd come up here and visit our grandmothers. And we had relatives in Moricetown too and not that they were Wet'suwet'en, they married into the Wet'suwet'en, they were from Gitsegukla originally. The lady we knew as our grandmother's there, she was quite old when we went to visit her last, and it was quite the experience to travel.[154]
>
> There was a lady there, T'inimgyet, Art Matthews' mother. She was the midwife in Gitwangak, and she was the one that delivered me in my parents' house and she also delivered my other sister in Gitwangak. So there were two of us that were born in Gitwangak and our mother always taught us to respect them, call her mom and call her kids brothers and sisters. That's how we were taught, to acknowledge who they are, give them the respect that the old people always did.[155]

Guxsen and Gwass Hlaam express the responsibility of the mother to transfer knowledge and ensure that teachings are instilled in the children. This is an expression of Gitxsan worldview and values; women are central to ensure Gitxsan futures. This insight helps to understand how devastating patriarchy has been in imposed western governance structures (e.g., Band Systems), the consequences of patriarchy and misogyny in general, and how patriarchal values from the church have been used as tools to decimate Gitxsan Nationhood. In this following passage,

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[152] Guxsen, interviewed by Gina Mowatt, December 5, 2018, Gitanyow.
[153] Guxsen, interviewed by Gina Mowatt, December 5, 2018, Gitanyow.
[154] Gwass Hlaam, interviewed by Gina Mowatt, December 5, 2018, Gitanyow.
[155] Gwass Hlaam, interviewed by Gina Mowatt, December 5, 2018, Gitanyow.

Gwass Hlaam expresses the role of his mother in the Gitxsan feast system as he experienced it as a child:

> We weren't allowed to sit on the benches, you were told to either sit still, you wanna go to sleep, crawl underneath the bench. And we weren't given anything at a feast, you'd take what your mother was given.[156]

Niishnoolh shared a story of his earliest memory of being at a feast with his grandmother, and expresses how his grandmother was the first person to bring him to the feast hall. He explains,

> I remember going, one of my first memories of the feast was down at the old hall and I was with my grandmother, so we were the ones that were being fed, and I remember this dancer we call the *Halayt*. The *Halayt* came around dancing around the hall where we were sitting. I don't know how old l was, maybe 5 years old or 6. So when he came close to us, the Halayt had full regalia on and [?] a rattle, and he was coming around to where we were sitting. I climbed up and hid behind my grandmother's back while it went by. That's how scared I was, that's my earliest memory of being at a feast.[157]

In these recollections, it is clear that Gitxsan women had leading roles in grooming the children and introducing them to the Feast Hall, which is the backbone of Gitxsan governance and legal order.

The elders and I also had conversations about colonization and the ways in which the federal and provincial governments continue to control Gitxsan lands and create barriers in order to continue to oppress and marginalize Gitxsan people. Some participants reflected on their own experience with the government and some expressed frustration over the historical and ongoing injustices perpetrated by the federal and provincial governments. This theme also came up without much prompting. I had asked about the Delgamuukw court case and its influence on the current social and political landscape. *Delgamuukw v. the Crown* is a significant court case in

[156] Gwass Hlaam, interviewed by Gina Mowatt, December 5, 2018, Gitanyow.
[157] Niishnoolh, interviewed by Gina Mowatt, December 6, 2018, Gitsegukla.

which Gitxsan and Wet'suwet'en Chiefs took British Columbia to court to have their inherent and inextinguishable sovereignty to their territories acknowledged. After 14 years it was decided by the Supreme Court of Canada that Indigenous Nations' rights and title have never been extinguished.

Some of the following commentary is in response to that query, while some of it came up naturally in conversation. Overall, Guxsen and Gwass Hlaam express frustration about the federal and provincial government's ongoing failure to respect Gitxsan laws and sovereignty. They share stories of how the federal and provincial governments have disrespected their land and water.

Guxsen explains how the federal government thwarted him from accessing his territory to host cultural camps and connect survivors, youth and community members to their Lax yip. He also explains that the government would have paid for a trail around his territory if his people signed some sort of agreement,[158] highlighting the ways Canada coerces Indigenous Nations to extinguish their rights and title via bribery. Guxsen expresses:

> I'm not thinking of putting up a blockade, it's not our way. But I'd really like to go up and put up a cultural camp again and have it without the government telling us what to do up there. After we had that cultural camp I had an idea, of building a trail right around the boundary; there's no boundary up there because of logging. There used to be a boundary up there that my grandfathers made. When they first had the territory, they'd mark each tree around the territory, that's what we call nye-ze-yez-ut, markers. But I had this idea that we'd build a trail all around the boundary. My house members really like that idea, they could use it for trapping. Just about three-metre wide trail, that's all I was looking at. Forestry was there when I talked about it, when we had a planning meeting for the cultural camp. They were right there and said we could get funding for that if we signed an agreement, but nobody wanted to sign the agreement. It was really tempting though, they said they would give us funding and we could build that trail, they wanted us to sign an agreement, kind of scratched that idea. [159]

[158] This agreement most likely would eliminate, within Canadian law, some of Gitxsan inherent rights.
[159]Guxsen, interviewed by Gina Mowatt, December 5, 2018, Gitanyow.

Gwass Hlaam's reflections reveal Canada's long history of offering insignificant and offensively small and/or uninhabitable parcels of land back to Indigenous Nations — ironically land that has never been ceded to the crown. He explains,

> We talk to them but our treaty table really hasn't gone very far because we're always hitting the wall -- "Trump's wall" [laughter]. And it really went downhill when they tried to offer us a piece of land from the territory. And there's a piece back there that's amongst rocks and steep hillside, and there [are] some other areas there, they offered a piece on a flood plain, you know how the river flows when it floods? That's the kind of thinking that they go through, plus a few millions bucks. The old people told us, don't take it, hang onto the land, money doesn't last long, money is the root of all evil. Because you can never have enough and only take what you need from the land.[160]

The elders made very clear their vision and their mission to be a part of the healing and the revitalization of Gitxsan language, cultural practices, and land-based re-presencing. All of the participants expressed the urgent need for Gitxsan youth and survivors to know "who they are" as Gitxsan people. The stories shared of hardship, systemic oppression and violence are balanced with stories of resistance and resilience. The participants were adamant that the focus of their work, the work of this thesis, and of the curriculum I am developing, be on the healing, strengthening and futures of Gitxsan language, laws, governance, values and teachings. They all care so deeply about the future for our people, healing for survivors, and supporting Gitxsan youth. Guxsen expresses this in the following excerpt:

> We've been working really hard with Gitxsan language, cause a lot of our kids don't understand our language and don't speak it, and that's what we were really concerned about. How can we teach them our *Ayook* and our *Adaawk* if they don't speak our language? That's what we're concerned about. So we've been working hard with our IRS group trying to have activities with our survivors and our kids, the younger generation. I think it's like that everywhere, most First Nations, their languages are disappearing.[161]

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[160] Gwass Hlaam, interviewed by Gina Mowatt, December 5, 2018, Gitanyow.
[161] Guxsen, interviewed by Gina Mowatt, December 5, 2018, Gitanyow.

> Yeah yeah, it's part of healing for us and the survivors that are taking part. When we went to Port Alberni,[162] the survivors took part there. When they were taking their spirits back they cried really hard. We had a big dinner with them after that, the community put up a dinner for us, and each one of us had a chance to speak to the survivors that were down there. We told them, we aren't done with them, after they took their spirit back, there's lots of work to do with them, like language and working with their kids, have activities for them like hunting and fishing, and that's what we have planned for them when we have meetings with the board. But when they took their spirits back, they felt really good.[163]

Gwass Hlaam shared a parallel perspective on the importance of Gitxsan survivors and youth to learning their language and what it means to be Gitxsan:

> The language [is very important], because right now, we still use language in the feast, and a lot of young people don't understand the language and they start getting fidgety and being parents in the feast hall, like when I was a child going to a feast I did not sit on a chair, back then we had no tables, all it was [was] just benches in rows and they put paper in front of you, that was the table.[164]

Similarly, Git emphasizes the importance of passing on Gitxsan teachings of kinship and governance. They explain how important learning language is in order to understand the teachings of the elders. Git's commentary also illustrates how Gitxsan worldview, which has been attacked by settler colonialism and needs to be revitalized, is critical for Gitxsan to restore healthy family and community relationships. Git explains:

> [Gitxsan people] should know who they are and they need to know their identity and their clan, because all of the sudden the elders are just really big on ***k'aats***, that's marrying your own clan, so they need to know that but they still need to know to respect the land. I use Wegyet the trickster, and for writing I tell the kids stories and then they re-write the stories and they are learning about the culture and then I throw Gitsenimx words in there and we sing in Gitsenimx, but I'm not the language teacher. They should learn the language so they

[162] The Gyets Gitxsan survivors who that attended Port Alberni Residential School traveled to Port Alberni to call their spirit back in 2018.
[163] Guxsen, interviewed by Gina Mowatt, December 5, 2018, Gitanyow.
[164] Gwass Hlaam, interviewed by Gina Mowatt, December 5, 2018, Gitanyow.

> can understand the elders, because they are missing out when I'm re-writing things, especially the humour, everything is so funny in Gitsenimx.[165]
>
> [Growing up with traditional teachings, outside of IRS] people really care, everybody kind of valued you, your elders really valued you, and they're always saying that it takes a community to raise a child, it was like that then, and now I wouldn't even let a kid out on the street, you know it's kind of scary. But everybody cared about the children, really valued them and the identity. Language very important, the feasting system really important, that people know who they were so they could go into the feast hall and not embarrass their relatives.[166]

Smith explains what life was like being raised with Gitxsan teachings and values, as a vision for raising and grooming Gitxsan youth now and in the future. She explains how this practice of raising children was deeply disturbed by the IRS era.

> Unlike the residential school students, who were sent away to such places as Edmonton, Port Alberni, and Lejac residential schools, I went home each day to a loving family, who supported and helped me with everything. I knew who I was and where I belonged my whole life. Spending entire summers at the fish camp at Anlo (where the salmon swims) was a family tradition. As a little girl, my father made me a fishing pole from a hazelnut bush and sat me by the river where I spent many delightful hours catching bullheads and minnows. As the summers rolled into one another I was old enough to help my sisters gather ferns for the women to use while they were gutting salmon on the banks of the 'Xsan. The children would then haul the cleaned salmon in tubs on the red wagon to the smokehouse and canning area, at the fish camp. At the smokehouse, in the early evening I would sit quietly and listen to my two grandmothers tell each other stories. Some were funny like *The Mosquitoes and the Woodpeckers* …. Some were frightening. I remained fascinated and very much afraid. I knew that my father would come in and check on the women to see if they needed help with wood or lifting salmon and I would walk home with him with my hands in his to the cabin that was seven metres away. Listening to the story about *The Wild Woman of the Woods* made me afraid to be alone …. At the Fish camp everyone slept in a one-room cabin. After the lantern was turned off, my Na'a (Grandmother) would tell a story. If one went to sleep, it would be retold again another night. The stories seemed to go in circles. I remember tracing images of the characters and setting [them] in the air with my finger. Na'a's stories were my television. Na'a had many talents, but telling stories was her greatest talent. Before she would begin she would credit all her sources. Soon the listeners would realize that they were listening to the stories from the beginning of time. Na'a would weave a story that would bring forth all the images and action in your imagination. She did not miss the smallest detail; she used humour and

[165] Git, interviewed by Gina Mowatt, December 6, 2018, Gitanmaax.
[166] Git, interviewed by Gina Mowatt, December 6, 2018, Gitanmaax.

> could hold your attention for hours. Sometimes she would stop and scold the characters in the story, and then get back on track. The added bonuses in listening to her tell a story was the wealth of the language one was privileged to hear.[167]

Overall, these conversations reflect the worldview and the values of Gitxsan people. The elders who took part in these conversations with me express not only their own pain and experiences, and those of family and community members, with *Umshewa* education and IRS. Most importantly, as noted earlier, they emphasize the importance of healing through language, cultural teachings and practices, and through re-presencing youth and survivors on the land.

Regardless of the onslaught of colonial violence and harm, these elders insist on the strength and power of Gitxsan ways of knowing and being, and the urgency to teach these ways so the young people can continue to flourish in the culture and know who they are as Gitxsan people. I am extremely humbled by the knowledge and strength of Gitxsan elders and survivors. I am honoured to share time with each of these people, laugh with them, and soak in some of their teachings.

[167] Smith, *Returning the Feathers*, 20.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

In this thesis I have tried to make space to address Indian Education genocidal policy and make space for the truth of Gitxsan experiences with Indian education to be shared, along with a strong assertion for Gitxsan futures from a place of Gitxsan knowledge and teachings. I have argued that impact rather than intent is integral when addressing the historical information that largely comes from a settler perspective, and also that impact over intent should be used as a methodology for historians writing on the topic. I draw from Indigenous methodologies and a Gitxsan perspective as my method in this work. There is a need to name the harms of our history in order to properly address and identify the ongoing colonial violence.

In chapter two I drew from several scholars from different perspectives, including genocide studies, law, sociology and history, to frame my argument that Indian Education was genocidal. Scholars Woolford, Wolfe, Chrisjohn and Young, Starblanket, James, Niezen and others have provided evidence to support my argument and give truth beyond the standard account which was reified by the TRC and the Reconciliation social movement in Canada. These authors provided a framework for me to then examine the historiography of Indian Education in British Columbia and Canada. In analyzing some select histories of Indian Education in Canada and British Columbia, I found that some good work has been done to name genocide and the impact of Indian Education on Indigenous people. In other instances, I found that scholars veered away from addressing structural and systemic power dynamics, which allowed for conclusions to be drawn that Indian Education did not intend to destroy the collective, when in fact these schools have been shown to have had devastating impacts that continue to affect families, communities and land today.

In my third chapter I took up colonial records to analyze Indian Education in Canada and interrogate its roots. This included my perspective on the Flood Davin report to John A Macdonald. I also looked specifically at colonial policy and correspondence between government administrators and church officials in Gitxsan territory and the negotiation between settler groups about jurisdiction around Indian Education. The purpose of this chapter was to identify the intentions and impacts of Indian Education policy and the ways in which government administrators and church leaders played a role in the genocide of Indigenous people via Indian Education in the mid 19th to late 20th century. I found that it is clear in these records that the elimination of Indigenous collectives was overt and undisguised, leading me to wonder why it has taken so long for us to get to a place where we are comfortable with using the term genocide when addressing Indian Education in Canada.

I presented interviews I had with four Gitxsan elders accompanied by the work of Jane Smith in chapter four. The interviewees shared stories of their experience with Indian Education. Although not all of the interviewees attended IRS, all experienced the trauma and pain that rippled out from the IRS system. Two elders spoke of their experiences at Indian Day Schools and the effect these schools had on their lives. One discussed their life outside of the schools and what it means to be raised Gitxsan. All the interviewees provided advice for Gitxsan people to re-connect with their roots and learn who they are as Gitxsan.

I have also found through this work how important it is to name colonial violence for what it is. Today our people and our lands experience violence at alarming rates and if we do not name it for what it was in the past, it makes it hard to name it what it is now: genocide. When the MMIWG report was released on 2, June 2019, and it was announced to Canada that Indigenous women are being killed as a form of genocide, I expected the world to stop around me and to

witness a public outcry.[168] Instead, life went on as usual. This is an example of how our people are still dehumanized by the Canadian public and another reason for us as scholars to push beyond the comfortable to name the impact that non-Indigenous have had on our lives, as explored in my thesis but not limited to: missionaries and churches, Government administrators, public servants, and complicit citizens. All non-Indigenous people in Canada benefit from this genocide and it is time to address it.

Most importantly, in this work I found that the impact of Indian Education has devastated our communities, yet survivors and elders continue to fight for the next generations, and their own, to heal from colonial violence administered through Indian Education. The message sent from all of the participants was that Gitxsan people must know what it means to be Gitxsan. Knowing what it means to be Gitxsan and knowing who you are as Gitxsan will allow our people to carry forward the laws and governance that have the potential to heal and protect our bodies, lands and waters. As clichéd as it may sounds, I do believe that we have to know where we have come from to know how to go forward in a way that will not drag the pain of our past with us, but rather to heal along the way, to know our power, and to be strong in the ongoing fight against settler colonialism on our lives, our people, lands and waters. I hope that at least part of this thesis can contribute something to a safe and strong future for Gitxsan and Indigenous peoples on their homelands.

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[168] National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls volume 1a*. https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1a-1.pdf. accessed July 5, 2019.

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